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South-East Europe Leadership
for Development and Integrity



CSOs Acting as Policy Observers

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The mainstream approach in fight against corruption is that it is a security problem and therefore shall be tackled by the Governments, however:

- "Lack of political will to pursue an Anti-Corruption agenda is a rational choice since existing system (political powers) is dependent on the continued reproduction of corruption"

- NORAD, Anti-Corruption Approaches Literature review, Study 2/2008

Role of the CSOs in the fight against corruption

- CSOs due to their traditional engagements in variety of sectors, usually engage in:
- Public Awareness Raising
- Wacthdog - Investigative actions
- Direct assistance
- Policy monitoring, research and assessment
- Advocacy actions

Key issue: Government - CSO relations

- As the main interest of the politicians is to preserve the power, the CSOs, if acting "traditionally", are in a huge risk of becoming a tool for the implementation of hidden political agenda
- In such situations CSOs act simply as "badges" for the government PR with a purpose to "convince" the citizens that certain policy or Government action is OK and in best interest of the people

Risks for the CSOs in engaging with the government

- Public awareness actions are based on explaining to wider public that there is a problem, even everyone is completely aware that there is a problem.
- Watchdog activities target those who are "enemies of the hidden political agenda"
- Direct assistance is almost reserved for those that do not interfere with the Government's actions
- Policy monitoring, research and assessments emphasize the success stories of the Government criticizing the marginal issues
- Advocacy actions are done together with the strong support of the Government actors
- Funding allocations and access to the policy design is reserved exclusively for the "friends and family".

How to respond to such situations?

- Integrity and Accountability mechanisms for the CSOs shall be developed and enforced
- Funding, as well as policy consultations, shall be fully transparent and visible to public
- Consultations shall have the "public debate components" where all policy actors are included.
- Information from the debate shall be visible to majority of citizens

What about capacity of the CSOs?

- Some of the problems occur from the weak and insufficient capacity of the CSOs to engage in such complex issue such as Corruption. This usually leads to:
- Copy paste of the actions across the borders even it is not proven that the same instrument will have any impact on the situation in different countries (local context in fight against corruption is crucial).
- Policy monitoring, research and analysis methodologies do not tackle country specific issues and therefore they lead to misconclusions in different societies

- Building our own capacities, together with the accountability and integrity mechanisms is crucial for the future of fight against corruption in our societies
- Key issue is creation of the free, transparent and fair market for non-profits (CSOs) that engage in the fight against corruption
- Public has the right to know, and we are not excluded from this right!

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Thank you !

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