CIVIL SOCIETY FACILITY AND MEDIA PROGRAMME 2014-2015

Support to regional thematic networks of Civil Society Organisations

Reference:

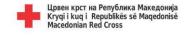EuropeAid/150147/DH/ACT/Multi; Grant Contract 2015/ 370-287

Number & title of lot	Lot 4: Social inclusion
Title of the action:	**Taking action on social inclusion of older people: "Lot 4: Social inclusion"**
Name of the lead partner	Red Cross of Serbia

Inception Phase Report

31 July 2016

Contents:

I. Background

Taking Action on Social Inclusion of Older People is a project created to harness the power of the civil sector in five western Balkans countries in response to demographic ageing: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia.

The ageing of population is a prominent phenomenon across most of Europe: 23.2% of the European population was over the age of 60 in 2014 with estimated share of older people by 2050 climbing to 33.6%. The effects of population ageing are however different from country to country in terms of how the society accommodates to changing demographic structure. Global AgeWatch Index, a tool developed by HelpAge International to gauge and compare the quality of life of older people across the world and covering 96 countries as of 2015, ranks Albania as 53rd, Serbia as 66th and Montenegro as 68th (with data for Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina as yet being incomplete) which clearly indicates that Balkans' societies are underprepared to face demographic ageing.

The project is supported by European Union through its IPA fund, the Austrian Red Cross as well as the Austrian Development Agency. It aims to strengthen the networks of civil society organisations in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia to improve social inclusion of older people in local communities and the society at large across the region. The project will improve

inclusion of older people in decision making processes related to ageing and older age as well as reinforce the positive image of older people in the project countries. The countries selected for the project share a lot of institutional history and practices in relation to social and health protection of older people and the partner organisations in each country have years of experience in implementing projects and programmes focused on older persons and improving the quality of life in the older age. All the countries in the project are also on some of the stages of EU Accession process. This creates opportunities for sharing relevant experience across the region and ensuring that civil sector plays a significant role in assisting the decision makers in all of the countries undergoing transition and preparing for EU membership.

The project was launched in February 2016 and will run for 36 months. The activities will include:

- capacity building for civil society networks and older people themselves in the five countries,
- working with the media,
- educating media professionals in order to reduce discrimination and improve the perception of ageing and older people,
- raising public awareness on healthy ageing, lifelong learning and volunteering through campaigns that will be simultaneously organised in all the project countries.

These campaigns will work on improving the perception of older people as actively contributing to development of their communities and using their knowledge and experience to enhance social cohesion at national and local level. In turn, creating and spreading positive image of older people will help decrease their isolation and motivate them to be more active and take their rightful position in the society.

In addition to these activities, support will be provided for volunteer activities of older people in urban and rural environments.

Public advocacy for improved quality of life of older people will be another important part of the project and this is why research studies in all five countries are planned. The data collected and processed through these exercises will also serve to create recommendations for decision makers in creating inclusive policies.

II. Partners

The Red Cross of Serbia is the leading partner and coordinator of the project. Other partners are Austrian Red Cross (providing technical support), Albanian Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics, Osmijeh NGO, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Red Cross of Montenegro, Macedonian Red Cross and Humanost, NGO from Macedonia. These partners are, each in their respective country, coordinating or founding civil society networks focusing on ageing and older people in their respective countries, leading the research and strategic planning activities and facilitating the capacity building for network members.

Project activities

The project activities have been implemented to schedule so far.

III. The Inception Phase Report

The inception phase of the project is finished. Its overall goal has been reached:

Inception phase: 5 CSO networks and their strategic work plans on advocacy for social inclusion of older people are established, mobilised and refined

Activity 0.1. Conduct a regional project kick-off workshop

The project partners – Albanian Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics, Osmijeh NGO, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonian Red Cross and Humanost NGO from Macedonia, Red Cross of Montenegro as well as the Austrian Red Cross – have met on a kick off meeting in Belgrade, Serbia, hosted by the leading partner, the Red Cross of Serbia between 9 and 11 March and discussed the activities in the first year of the project: strengthening civil society organisations active in advocacy for better inclusion of older people in the activities of their communities and the society. The meeting also had a capacity building component: an expert of HelpAge International from the United Kingdom, Ms Bridget Sleap had a session with the project partners on data collection for efficient advocacy, as one of the preparatory activities for all the project countries. A session with the representatives of the Resource Centre of Technical Assistance for Civil Society Organisations in Belgrade was also organised, and their experts provided helpful clarifications to the partners on various technical details related to project management as well as the issues of the visibility of the activities. Representatives of the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit of the Government of Serbia have talked to the participants of the meeting about social inclusion and work with grassroots organizations on improving inclusion of older people in local context.

The partners finalised the meeting with detailed plans for the next quarter and established communication channels. In the ensuing months a monitoring plan and a communication and visibility plan were developed through joint effort of the Red Cross of Serbia and Austrian Red Cross with inputs provided by all the project partners. A first newsletter covering the first quarter of the project implementation was also produced with inputs from all the partners.

Activity 0.2. Activate or re-establish 2 national CSO networks in Montenegro and Macedonia and refresh networks in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia

Activities in all the countries related to establishment and/ or refreshing of civil society networks have been successfully completed. National kick-off meetings have been organised in all of the project countries by national project partners in April. In addition to civil society partners, all meetings featured representatives of relevant public institutions (ministries as well as providers of social services), with a selection of representatives of UN agencies – notably UNFPA and UNDP – EU delegations, universities and the media. In Albania this meeting was tied in to a public event – a street march for 100 older people, activists of three pensioners associations from Tirana and their provincial branches promoting the meeting and the project.

In Serbia, Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina the meetings were attended by members of the existing three civil society networks – HumanaS in Serbia, MOSHA in Albania and Network for Dignified Ageing in Bosnia and Herzegovina – and the planned project activities were discussed with network partners. In all cases formal consent was obtained from network members to proceed with the planned activities, notably the situation analysis and the subsequent strategic planning for each of the networks. Network members in each of the countries have enthusiastically reacted to the opportunities to discuss and refine strategic orientations of the networks in order to better address the changing demographic trends and developing legislative environments.

In Montenegro and Macedonia the organised meetings were used to formally establish national civil society networks in these two countries, lead by the national project partners and attended by a selection of civil society partners working in the area of ageing, development and human rights and interested in scaling up advocacy capacities through joining forces. In these countries the civil society work with older people has predominantly been linked to service provision and investments in advocacy will mark the next level in the evolution of the civil sector. Memoranda of understanding that formally established these two national networks followed the initial meetings.

The national kickoff meetings were followed by performing national situation analyses. Project coordinators in the project countries hired relevant professionals to conduct a mapping of policy context in order to determine the current state of legislation, strategic documents and other papers of importance for the project topic. The situation analyses reports identified policy gaps in each of the countries having in mind the various stages of EU access processes for each of the countries and the necessary harmonisation with the acquis as well as the most prominent gaps in implementation of existing policies, recommending appropriate action. The exercises also analysed the capacities of the civil society organisations through questionnaires and structured interviews, looking into the gaps and opportunities for development and synergies. They provide recommendations to serve as bases for subsequent strategic planning of each of the national networks.

The situation analyses were performed between May and June with their reports used in the strategic planning exercises that followed.

Activity 0.3 Revision or development of 5 network strategies for future planning

All five national networks of civil society organisations have organised national meetings in June/ July to conduct moderated planning sessions. Their outcomes are national strategic plans for each of the networks, based on the situation analyses reports and the expertise of the participating networks' members. These plans outline the values, goals, visions and missions of the networks, define the priorities in the next four years as well as (re-)examine and set structural rules and procedures to galvanise the work of the networks, improve the efficiency of their coordination and decision-making and further develop capacities for communication, visibility and public advocacy.

IV. Summary of situation analysis and strategic plans per project country

1. Albania

1.1 Context/ Policy framework

Despite being perceived as one of the European countries less affected by demographic ageing the share of the population of 65 years and over in this country increased from 5 to 11 percent between 1989 and 2011. In the future, the change in the age distribution fuelled by fertility and migration trends is expected to be very significant as well. According to official statistical office the proportion of older persons in Albanian population is expected to increase from 11 percent in 2011 to 29 per cent in 2060.

The social protection strategy currently in force in Albania, which was approved in May 2005, has provided in the past decade a framework of the protection policies of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities and reflects the requirements contained in the Prime Minister Order no. 134, dated 12.06.2006. The strategy was reviewed on a regular annual basis but no substantial changes were made unless there were changes in core policies.

Fairly recently, a new Strategy of Social Inclusion and Social Protection for the period 2015-2020 was developed in Albania in line with the strategy of social inclusion of the European Union. This new strategy has set ambitious objectives in the area of social policy reforms in Albania. This strategy puts a special emphasis on the third age. Yet, this strategy needs a detailed working plan in order to make it operational in the years to come. The social protection strategy was based on principles laid out in the Constitution of the Republic of Albania, the Human Rights Convention, the Convention for the Rights of the Children, the European Social Charter, the European Charter for Local Autonomy, the Communiqué of the European Commission on 12 March 1997 "On the modernization and improvement of social protection" and the Communiqué of the European Commission on 30 October 2003 "On equal opportunities for the disabled persons". The vision of this strategy is that Albania will have a system in place that provides adequate social protection to its citizens including, but not limited to, reduction of poverty, reform of the system of social services and support for groups at risk of social exclusion.

Public social services have been provided mostly in residential institutions for special needs groups, including older people. However these services have shown that they are not the best solutions for many of the beneficiaries. Detachment from the family and the community denies them the right to receive services at the place where they live. The provision of residential services in large environments for many beneficiaries obstructs the development of individuality and social skills, creating further difficulties for their re-integration after the exit from the institution.

Besides, the cost of residential centre services is higher in comparison with community-based services, which are generally offered over a shorter time scale. Therefore, a need for a re-orientation of social services is recognized by the authorities. The deinstitutionalization of services is essentially a process of movement from social to residential services to community services.

The process of decentralization and transfer of services to local government began in 2007. Services for older people (five residential centres) as well as for orphans, children with social problems and for people with disabilities are being provided. These centres have a capacity of 1,200 clients and currently there are 1,075 clients attending them, including older people among other groups.

The system of services is being reformed with the aim to better satisfy the needs through decentralization and transfer of responsibilities to local government, establishment of a network of community services in collaboration with the local government structures and inclusion of civil society in their provision. Community services have been established with support from the Social Services Delivery Project of the World Bank. During 2006, 17 day services at community level for older people and other groups were introduced and made operational. Another 27 community services were introduced in 2007, which cover eight regions. In this way, two thirds of the territory is covered with the new model of community services.

Despite the evident efforts in moving from centralised, institution-based forms of service and assistance for older people, as well as the important role the civil sector has to play in this process, Albania has only started to recognise the importance of social inclusion of all population groups, older people among them and the capacity of civil society organisations to act as catalysts and resources.

1.2 Analysis of the current capacity of civil society organisations

The analysis of the capacities of civil society organisations in Albania engaged with the topic of ageing and older people shows great needs in terms of the development of advocacy and representation capacities and practices. Several NGOs in Albania confuse advocacy with information, advice and support services for older people. It is sometimes difficult for them to distinguish between these overlapping, yet different concepts. Awareness of advocacy for older people is limited even within older people's organizations. Social workers in Albania sometimes misunderstand the role of advocates or even are suspicious, seeing them as troublemakers or pursuers of complaints. Advocacy for older people has a low profile in the wider social care and health service provision in Albania and as a matter of fact, advocacy is not explicitly mentioned in the current framework of social care and health service provision for older people in Albania. Yet, there is a great variety in the type of organizations providing advocacy for older people in Albania because there are very few organizations specifically dealing with older people's advocacy and most of the activities related to older people are performed by organizations whose primary goal is not advocacy in itself and are more developed in areas such as service delivery.

The main recommendations stemming from the findings of the current assessment are as follows:

Defining and promoting advocacy should be an important part of NGOs and civil society organizations in Albania. Older people in Albania should be provided with significantly more explanation and ways of accessing services. There is a need for improving links between public and civil sectors especially in order to tap into the capacities of organisations focused on volunteering.

Particularly strong efforts should be done in Albania in order to activate and involve older people in advocacy efforts. The role of civil society organizations is of paramount importance in this regard.

Nonetheless, government guidance must provide an explicit clarity on the role of advocates for older people. The benefits of advocacy for excluded and vulnerable older people in Albania are clear and need to be promoted widely to social care staff and older people themselves. National quality standards for independent advocacy organizations should be established in order to improve accountability and quality across all sectors in Albania.

1.3 Strategic directions

The MOSHA network of civil society organisations will invest strategic efforts in:

- Bridging the gap between older people organisations, other civil society associations and government representatives. It can help all parties adjust their expectations, so they can find common points

- Improving representation of older people. Help them have one voice and common agendas instead of factious, individual and contradictory agendas.

- Providing a platform to promote ideas through constructive debate

- Acting as an important source of information for all stakeholders by pooling member's capacities and experience

- Facilitating learning among MOSHA network members

- Assisting network members to identify problems and weak points, while providing a good basis for developing the broader perspective in ageing issues in Albania

- Working to attract and involve other partners and donors (UN etc.)

A mission for the network

MOSHA network activities should promote:

- Dialogue between government and non government organizations

- Dialogue between experts and professionals with civil society and older people activists.

- More awareness for older people rights

- Better personal networking of older people activists.

- Improved knowledge and skills of older people groups including problem solving and results oriented attitude

Vision of the network

Active, healthy and integrated older people in Albania

Goals of work for the coming 3 years

To produce tangible improvement of awareness and knowledge on older people problems and rise the ageing issues into the priority list among key stakeholders especially policy makers.

To produce positive examples of work against isolation of older people through networking, empowerment, advocacy and community based interventions.

To promote active engagement along with active ageing and support older people making a contribution

Priorities/objectives for the network for the coming 3 years

- To increase capacities of older people organizations and other civil society associations working in the field (advocacy, communication, project management, fund raisings etc.)
- To create models of collaboration among older people in community and their local governments for better identification of problems and more efficient services (monitoring and support for vulnerable older people, community information hubs around older people voluntary groups etc)
- To improve standards and assure implementation of community based health and social services for older people
- To include 'poverty among older people' into government priorities and raise awareness for minimal standards of life.
- To evaluate the need for appropriate legislation or by laws to protect the rights of pensioners
- To improve access to better transportation by finding an acceptable solution for affordable public transportation for older people
- To increase the participation of older women into social life
- To support grass root activities fighting older people isolation and poverty in rural areas
- To support research and disaggregation of data on specific ageing issues
- To provide ideas and models for leisure activities for older people in urban areas
- To support the healthy ageing concept by promoting public events with specific focus (prevention of tobacco obesity, and sedentary life, early detection of metabolic factors etc)
- To support creation of more daily centres for older people in Tirana and other cities
- To raise awareness of intergenerational issues and involve more young people into ageing issues, promoting solidarity and activism
- To raise awareness and urge analyses on long term economical and social solutions to face the crises of ageing population
- To improve the ethics of communication with older people at all levels of administration and public services
- To improve the images of ageing in society and promote the dignity of older people as active and contributing citizens
- To expand activities of the network in other regions of the country
- To support transparency and monitoring about ageing problems at governmental level (collaborating for production of reports etc)
- To raise media interest and professionalism in ageing issues
- To improve communication and coordination on ageing issues by exchanging experience, information and joint interventions

- To provide information and assistance for older people on regard of accessing services and legal opportunities
- To build channels of communication and work closely with relevant ministries, local government, and ombudsman office.
- To support research and raise awareness ion older people abuse

Priorities and topics for advocacy and working with media

- Apart from primary audience (policy makers) other groups should be included in advocacy activities as secondary audiences (opposition groups, media, professionals, business/industry groups and other networks of coalitions operating in other fields)
- To prepare adequate data formats for informing audiences (valid and concise, social math etc)
- To work with journalists associations as members of MOSHA network
- Prepare a database with all potential audience representatives (including lists of journalists working on social and health field)
- Information will be transformed for older people and ageing problems in a form preferred by media; prepare interesting stories, key messages in different channels, members of network be well prepared for key messages.
- Events will be organized with massive participations from older people and invite key stakeholders there (involve high profile politicians).
- Apart of major problems, positive success stories will be prepare. Issues will be dealt with in a apolitical way but with power to 'spin' the messages to engage both sides of the media (ie those looking for positive stories, or negative).
- To link, coordinate or main stream with other big issues of priorities in the country
- To work with parliament specific commission on health and social affairs and other MPs. Now Albanian parliament got very few members over 50!

Priorities for the first year

- To coach, support members of network to prepare mini-projects
- To start with some capacity building initiatives
- To identify more partners for the network and inform them about the plan
- To identify stakeholders
- To prepare framework with key messages and information and involve all network members in discussing them, (issues to be discussed: active ageing mental health in third age, older women empowerment and intergeneration solidarity).
- To collaborate with Academy of Sciences and University in organising a scientific conference on ageing in Albania.

2. Bosnia and Herzegovina

2.1 Context/ Policy framework

According to the national Agency for Statistics, people over the age of 65 represent 15.5% of the total population of Bosnia and Herzegovina. By comparison, people between 6 and 17 years of age represent

16.2% of the total population. It is anticipated that by 2050, the number of older people will exceed the number of young people in Bosnian population.

Older people face the highest risk of poverty due to the lack of policies protecting their rights, with more than half of those over the age of 65 excluded from the pension system. Absence of age sensitive policies at all levels of government, an outdated pension system and the changing structure of the family in comparison to the pre-war family structures are the primary causes. However, there is a notable lack of both qualitative and quantitative research in this area.

Bosnian legislation recognises specific needs of the older population and is built with the intention of providing well targeted social security and health protection to this target group but the existing stipulations in laws at all levels. However, it is also built around the traditional models of centralised support, social transfers and institutional services. There is very little recognition of the role of civil society in this area of work with most of the legislation at all levels recognising public bodies as exclusive providers of services and private actors as potential allies.

A notable positive initiative is embodied in the Country Programme Action Plan between the Council Of Ministers of Bosnia And Herzegovina and the United Nations Population Fund 2010. – 2014. This plan – still a firm basis for policy development – has been set to among other things implement the stipulations of Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) through the European Regional Implementation Strategy and through strategies for older people. Key activities include: (a) providing technical assistance to adapt the European Regional Implementation Strategy (RIS) to Bosnia and Herzegovina and transposing it into Entity Strategies for Older People; and (b) advocacy with parliamentarians regarding the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA).

The output will be achieved in close cooperation with the Bosnia and Herzegovina Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees and the Ministry of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina. UNFPA office in Bosnia and Herzegovina provides technical assistance to a multi-sectoral working group on adaptation of the MIPAA RIS to the context of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a basis for further policy development.

UNFPA also works with the Parliamentary Group on Population and Development in advocating for ICPD Agenda, including issues of older people, and in particular the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA).

Furthermore, UNFPA provides technical support in creating a ten year Strategy for Older People with a plan of action with development starting in 2016 and implementation likely to start from 2018. The strategy will be produced by three working groups – entities' level and Brčko District level –and separated into three entity-level strategic plans

The working groups will involve civil society organisations, but Ministries are the carriers of the working groups and therefore, the Ministries are nominating members of the working groups.

Ministry for human rights and refugees in Bosnia and Herzegovina worked on a policy framework for older people but this document was not adopted. In 2016 this Ministry is working on the development

of Guidelines for reporting by the Madrid Plan of Action, after which Bosnia and Herzegovina will be producing regular reports every five years. A working group for the preparation of the guidelines was formed. The working group consists mostly of the members from government bodies and a single civil society representative, a member of "Osmijeh". Other members of the working group come from the Agency for Gender Equality, Ministry of Civil Affairs, Federal Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Health and Social Policy and FIG.

However, despite the obligations that come with the MIPAA – including the provision of reports every five years – there are as yet no reliable statistics on older people in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the national Bureau of Statistics does not have a set of methodologies and standards on how to collect data on this population. In addition, there is the issue of funding for such data collection and processing which in turn means that the ten year Strategy for Older People may be based on incomplete, unreliable and incompatible data.

As for available services, there are no standards and applicable legislation to regulate the existing ones – such as retirement homes – with, for instance some hostels also providing health assistance. The development of community based, non institutional services is as yet not in any of the adopted documents and will presumably be addressed in the coming Strategy for Older People.

With ageing not officially being on the agenda of the dialogue related to Bosnia and Herzegovina's EU accession, it is not a priority of decision makers at any level. It is expected that once the country is member of the EU it would be obliged to follow standards in this area already in place in EU.

In the meantime the civil society organisations and governmental institutions can work on the improvement of the standards by underlining the intention of Bosnia and Herzegovina to become member of the EU and stressing out the fact that the position of older people in Bosnia and Herzegovina is very bad and that standards of the active aging are not recognised nor applied at any level.

2.2 Analysis of the current capacity of civil society organisations

Analysis of the current capacity of civil society organisations engaged with the topic of ageing and older people shows that their primary interests lie in the areas of

- public advocacy for the rights of older people,
- support in education,
- informing and counselling (expert advice, access to services, guidance, support in decision-making),
- social help and support in primary needs, health and medical care,
- social participation, animation and creativity (social inclusion, volunteering, leisure activities, creative laboratories,
- Support independent living (help care, household maintenance, foster care, living, mobility),
- Short-term care and family support,
- Psychological help.

However, the currently active projects in these organisations still put service delivery at the forefront with advocacy following. It is very encouraging that all of the assessed organisations involve volunteers in their advocacy activities with the actual number of volunteers varying from single digits to hundreds, depending on the capacity of the organisation.

Monitoring capacities seem to be relatively low among these organisations with only one currently having regular monthly monitoring activities and three (out of six) doing annual monitoring activities. Only two use services of external experts for evaluation of the quality of their project activities.

Financial stability also varies with most of them having a budget for one year (only one does not have) which is complementary with their strategic plan. All fund their activities from project and/ or membership fees and apply for project funding regularly. They all agree there is a great need for capacity building, more specifically in programme budgeting and Project Cycle Management (PCM).

Half of the civil society organisations have had training on public advocacy in the last five years. More specifically, they organized and attended trainings on subjects: public advocacy, introduction to law-making procedures and policy writing, strategic documents writing, writing public policy proposals, communication skills and tools for advocacy, reports writing skills, negotiation skills and project cycle management (PCM).

It is however important to emphasize that not all the six interviewed civil society organisations attended these training sessions, so their experience and knowledge varies. In four civil society organisations management and employees of the organization have knowledge and experience on public advocacy while only in two organisations volunteers have knowledge and experience on public advocacy. On the scale from 1 to 5, the civil society organisations assess their influence in public advocacy for the rights of older people as 3.

Regardless this fact that some organizations did have opportunity to attend trainings mentioned above, most of the civil society organisations express need for these trainings:

- Public advocacy
- Knowledge of law-making procedures
- Strategic documents writing
- Writing public policy proposals
- Communication skills and tools for advocacy
- Reporting skills
- Negotiation skills
- Project cycle management (PCM)

Only two organization were or still are members of working groups on state level such as: Working group for developing Guidelines for reporting on Madrid action plan on Ageing for Bosnia and Herzegovina; Working group for assessing influence of Law on social work; Coordinating body for

building flooded houses (together with the Ministry for human rights and refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Swiss Caritas, entities, UNDP, HILWERK, Red cross etc.); Coordinating body for migrant crises (together with Ministry of safety of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ministry for human rights and refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina, IOM, UNICEF, City of Bijeljina, Red Cross etc.)

Majority of the civil society organisations were or still are members of working groups at local level such as: Commission for local communities, Team for cohesion in local community, working groups for better cooperation between public and civil society sectors...

Based on these findings it is obvious that civil society organisations have more influence on decision makers and policy creators at local level. However, their own assessment of the level of influence they have on developing policies related to older people is very low: 1.6 out of five. The same estimation was given in relation to capacity to influence policies for older population, and the regularity of communication with relevant stakeholders/decision makers was graded with 1.8 out of five.

The relationship that civil society organisations have with the media was graded with 3.3 out of five with the grade give to frequency of the media covering their activities being 3.4. Most of the respondents are of the opinion that they provide regular information to the media and that they are active in terms of presence on internet as well as on social media. Most of them monitor their coverage in the media. But, half of the interviewed organizations do not have a dedicated PR person. It is also noted that the media as a rule do not find topics related to ageing or older people notable unless it can be sensationalised. The relationship of civil society organisations with the media, as well as media coverage of ageing and issues related to older people needs to be improved and capacity building of the civil society organisations is one way to achieve this.

All 6 of the interviewed civil society organisations are members of NGO Network for Ageing with Dignity.

Members of the network recognise that the communication in the network needs to be improved. Network meetings are organised once per a year or when it is needed, depending of project needs and there is no continuity. Suggested improvements include strengthening leadership, empowering network members, hiring part-time professional staff to administrate network communication and better fundraising

The most frequent factors that help or hinder mobilisation of network members on topics of common interest:
- Available time
- Finances and insufficient resources
- Distance as a factor that prevents coming to meetings
- Donations and projects
- Desire and openness to learn
- Exchanging of information and experiences
- Self-interest
- Weak capacity of members

- Lack of understanding of the process as most of the organizations' activities are based on free non-binding work.

The main achievements of the network so far:

- MIPAA application process at the state level and the participation of citizens in public policies concerning older people and ageing issues
- Older people and their problems are somewhat more prominent in public
- Public advocacy on the rights of older people
- Drawing the attention of the authorities to the existence of the problems of older people
- Encouraging governments to work on strategic documents related to the status of older people
- Informing older people, through network members, of the situation at the state level
- The revival of public interest for the position of older people

It was however recognised that the visibility of the network in public is very low: on the scale from 1 to 5, the network members assessed it at 1.5. Also, the network has very low influence (assessed at 2) on decision makers when it comes to processes of creation of public policies on older people rights.

Answering the question of capacities for the sustainability of the network, member organizations named these risks:

- Non-strategic approach to solving the problems of older people
- Poor leadership and lack of a strong network members
- All activities carried out by one person in the organisation
- Lack of financial resources and financial sustainability
- Motivation and low interest of members of the Network
- Weak capacity of organisations who are members of the network
- A small number of associations and organizations are dealing with older people
- Weak capacity of the Bosnia and Herzegovina state and public institutions
- Weak response from the authorities to the needs and problems of older people
- Not all members of the network participate in writing project proposals with which network applies for funds.

Priorities for further development and improvement of the network:

Based on the members opinion about the priorities for further development and improvement of the network, main suggestions are:

- Strengthening the network with the competent, capable and interested people from across the country
- Better organised communication and budgeting within the network
- More open and more often communications of network leader with or her members
- Having a clear plan and agenda for lobbying
- Better task allocation
- Finding diverse sources of funding to fund the work of network members as well as joint activities

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2.3 Strategic directions

Mission of the Network for Ageing with Dignity

The network was established to promote and work on protecting the rights of older people in Bosnia and Herzegovina and to advocate for a more active role of older people in the society and inclusion of older people in all developmental plans and policies in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Strategic assessment of the current situation

Identified important trends:

Political environment is generally favourable to the topics the network is addressing but the level of interest on the part of policy and decision makers is not very high. It is expected that further EU accession processes will make the topic more significant for the majority of decision makers.

Economic environment is still unfavourable despite the slow economic growth. Funding available for civil society work is still unstable and unreliable, preventing a large part of the civil sector from having a more strategic approach to topics of interest.

Social environment is unfavourable: from the lack of strategic documents and planning related to ageing at national level, to the general perception of older people as passive receivers of assistance throughout Bosnian society.

Strategic directions and objectives:

Direction I: Institutional strengthening of the network

Objectives:
- The network is recognisable in public
- Network members are well educated and informed
- Good quality communication within the network
- Good quality demographic data produced
- Infrastructure and operational policy of the network built
- The network is effective in its work
- The network is active on joint projects and on expansion by attracting younger, well educated staff

Direction II: The network participates in policy creation in topics relevant to older people

Objectives:
- Defined socio-political framework to support older people
- Older people recognised as a distinct population in the Strategy for Human Rights, the Law on Social Protection, Family Law
- The network participates in creation of the Strategy on Development of Bosnia and Herzegovina
- The network follows policy creation in relevant fields
- The network advocates for policy implementation

- Implementation of applicable policies and legislation

Direction III: raising awareness on needs and problems of older people

Objectives:
- Citizens (older and younger) are familiar with needs and problems of older people in Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Institutions actively implement policies addressing these needs and problems
- The network continuously monitors implementation of legislation and strategic policies

3. Macedonia

3.1 Context/ Policy framework

The share of the older population in the Republic of Macedonia is increasing steadily. It has risen from 6.2% in 1948, to 10.6% in 2002, while in the same period the share of the young population aged 0 to 14 continuously decreased, from 33.2% in 1994 to 19.2% in 2006 and 17.3% in 2011, with predictions for continues decrease to 15.4% in 2020 and 14.4% in 2030.

There are numerous institutional forms of assistance available to older people – social transfers, institutional care – but more efficient services and programmes such as life-long learning and community based services have only recently started developing.

In 2010, the Government of the Republic of Macedonia adopted the National Strategy for Older People with strategic objectives, as follows: increasing the institutional capacities for provision of support to older people and complying the norms and standards for opening daily centres for older people for provision of temporary care for the older people, integration of the older people in the social life by providing housing for older people and improvement of the infrastructure in rural areas and active utilization of the free time.

The National Programme for Adoption of the Acquis Communautaire, Eight Revision 2014 - 2016) developed by the Government of the Republic of Macedonia aims to further enhance the institutional capacities of the older people and improvement of the care for older people through opening of daily centres and provision of favourable measures for opening daily centres for older people on local level.

The Programme for work of the Government for the period of 2011-2015 – still in force – aims to ensure dignified life of the older people, through opening of regional nursing homes, with capacity of 50-100 beneficiaries, through public-private partnerships and Daily centres and clubs for older people. Every year the Government adopts Annual Programme for social protection which defines the areas for intervention and plans the appropriate budget for implementation of the activities, among which the older people are continuously one of the groups to benefit support.

In 2010, in direction of improvement of the quality of life of the older people, the Government of the Republic of Macedonia adopted the National Strategy for older people 2010-2020, which represents the fundamental strategic document for promotion of the rights and improvement of the protection of the older people. The National Coordination Body is responsible for the activities for coordination and control of the implementation of activities in compliance with the strategic priorities. The resource ministries in cooperation with the local-self-government units and the civil society sector develop annual operational plans, while the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy is the chair which develops the integral annual operational plan and the annual report about the undertaken measures and activities for implementation of the strategy, which are subsequently submitted to the Government of the Republic of Macedonia.

The National Strategy for Poverty Reduction and Social Exclusion 2010-2020, provides strategic framework for ensuring full inclusion of the older people in the society, poverty risk reduction, provision of appropriate housing, improvement of the access and availability of transport, ensuring appropriate level of health care protection and continuous development of long-term care.

The Strategy for regional Development of the Republic of Macedonia 2009-2019 is focused on the regional development in the Republic of Macedonia, which includes opening nursing homes for older people, provision of services for provision of care to older people in the smaller municipalities and rural areas (mountainous regions).

The National Programme for the Development of the Social Protection 2011-2022 covers the existing situation in terms of protection of the older population and the measures for development and promotion of the forms for institutional protection and development of forms for non-institutional protection, with emphasis on the development of services on local level.

Recognising the need for closer cooperation between civil and public sector, as well as the need for better financial predictability/ stability in the civil sector, the Government adopted the Strategy for cooperation of the Government with the civil sector 2012-2017. With the adoption of the Strategy as an institutional mechanism for cooperation between the government and the civil society sector, the Government of the Republic of Macedonia follows the European and world standards in this area. In the course of 2007, the Government joint the first wave of the countries in Europe which adopted similar documents. Moreover, associations of citizens participate in the inter-sectorial advisory bodies and in implementation of joint projects, such as for example, the EU-Republic of Macedonia Civil Society Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) and the National Coordination Body on Corporate Social Responsibility. The Strategy for Cooperation of the Government with the Civil Society 2012-2017 contains a framework of activities that enable further enhancement and development of the cooperation with the civil society sector. The Government, through this Strategy, will strive to strengthen the existing mechanisms of cooperation and partnership with the civic sector in the process of reforms of the state. Also, the Government will make one step more by creating new institutional mechanisms and measures aimed at stimulating the cooperation in areas where there are possibilities for its further enhancement.

It is generally believed that the operation of the civil society organizations is not very sustainable, because they are predominantly financed by international donors, compared to national funding which are less represented. Besides foreign donors, dominant sources of funding are grants provided by the Government, membership fees and activities which bring profit. The smallest share in the financing of the organizations comes from individuals and the corporate sector.

3.2 Analysis of the current capacity of civil society organisations

Analysing the capacities of civil society organisations engaged with the topic of ageing and older people, it is notable that the concept of advocacy is as yet to be fully understood by the majority of actors. Only the Red Cross and the association of citizens Humanost understand the term advocacy well, emphasizing that advocacy "means to speak about, and to raise public awareness in the community on some important issue and to point out decision makers who can provide assistance and support for reaching appropriate solution. Advocacy means cooperation with other people and organizations in order to make a specific change".

The respondents participated in the development of the National Strategy for older people 2010-2020, but only in the initial phase and in the phase of the public debate and not in the overall process of passing the documents.

The impact on policies is particularly evident in case of big associations of citizens such as the Union of the Associations of pensioners which estimates its impact in terms of development of policies linked with the older people with the grade three out of five. Only some of the associations of citizens have regular contacts with people on high positions that can influence the process of decision making of importance to the older people. The estimated grades of the impact of the associations of citizens in the decision making process are rather low although many of the associations of citizens stated that they have experience in writing recommendations for decision makers. Only a couple of the responding associations of citizens believe that they impact the process through participation in the work of the Coordinative Body for monitoring and evaluation of the National Strategy on older people and the cooperation with the respective local authorities.

Most of the respondents believe that advocacy requires trainings for development of negotiating skills. These findings once again show that there is insufficient knowledge among the associations of citizens about advocacy and that they require education and training in this area. Some of the associations of citizens stated that they require trainings on the procedures for development and enactment of laws, how to develop proposals for public policies, development of advocacy tools, negotiation skills and skills for writing short reports.

In terms of capacities for media engagement most of the associations of citizens stated that they regularly develop reports and they are shared with the media through the designated persons for communication with the media. Some of the associations of citizens have their own web pages, newspapers and magazines and they also from time to time appear in talk shows in different television and radio stations. However, when information was requested in terms of implemented project activities it could be seen that the web pages are not regularly updated. The best grades were given in

terms of the cooperation with the media. The associations of citizens graded this question with 5, emphasizing that their activities are regularly covered by the media. On the other hand, the media is not interested much about the older people except for the social transfers (expenditures from the state budget)

The associations emphasized that they need trainings in the forthcoming period in the area of promotion of presentation skills and public speaking and communication, but some of them could not put forward appropriate proposals as a result of lack of knowledge on the issue of advocacy.

In the past period Republic of Macedonia made significant efforts to expand the national institutional and non-institutional forms for provision of care to older persons. The Ministry of Labor and Social Policy invited all nursing homes for older people that used to work as trade companies, to license themselves as institutions for social protection for older people, because this was the only legal ground for their functioning. Also, the Government of the Republic of Macedonia adopted a set of measures for encouraging construction of nursing homes for older people. All these activities contributed for increasing the number of the private nursing homes for older people to 18, but this number is planned to increase to 25 nursing homes for older people in the course of 2016/2017.

However, the funds allocated to the public institutions – nursing homes for older people, as block grants are not sufficient and do not reflect the factual needs, and the absence of financing from the local self-governments has significant impact on the maintenance of the facilities and the possibilities for their reconstruction. The high price for accommodation of older people in the private nursing homes limits the possibilities of the less wealthy people to access these institutions. Therefore the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy needs to instrument the possibility given in the Law on Social Protection for concluding administrative contracts with private service providers, which would enable subvention price for accommodation for this category of older people.

The analysis of the provisions of the Law on Social Protection does not show that there is exclusion of the older people as a category of beneficiary of services and the rights foreseen within the legal framework. There is no exclusion in terms of access to these rights on any basis: nationality, gender, age, place of residence (rural/urban). However, in practice there are specific situations of limited or more difficult access on some of previously mentioned basis, or tendency for increased utilization of specific rights at some groups of older people, compared to others. For example, although there is no specific evidence in the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy in terms of exercising the right on social assistance on basis of the nationality of the beneficiaries, the assessment from the practice indicates that older people with ethnic Albanian origin realized the right to social assistance far more than the other ethnic groups, while on the other hand, they are less frequent beneficiaries of services for institutional protection.

There is a need for increased engagement of the associations of citizens in provision of support to the older people in terms of provision of information and support for exercising their rights in the area of social and health protection. However associations of citizens do not have sufficient information about the possible forms for advocating the older people in terms of achieving their rights, needs and for

improvement of the quality of life of the older people. They need further training about the process of advocating the older people for their better integration in the social environment. The biggest challenge for organizing these types of services by the associations of citizens is the lack of stable sources of financing. This makes the non-institutional forms for protection of people, organized by the associations of citizens to be project-oriented and unsustainable.

3.3 Strategic directions

Strategic plan of INKLUZIVAM network of civil society organisations for years 2016-2018

Mission

INKLUZIVAM has a mission to represent the rights of older people in all spheres of social life, as a basis for promoting policies for active aging, as well as their social inclusion and integration into society.

Vision

INKLUZIVAM is a national, dynamic and flexible network with members who need support in creating policies for social inclusion and active aging of older people. INKLUZIVAM is a recognizable actor in the elderly care needs and advocacy, thereby contributing to improving the quality of life in the older age.

Strategic priorities and strategic goals

Strategic priority 1

1. Advocacy in the process of policy crating for older people

Strategic goals for priority 1

1.1. Active involvement of the network in policy creating for older people

1.2. Increasing awareness of the possibility of advocating

 Strategic priority 2

2. Advocacy to develop forms of care for older people

Strategic goals for priority 2

2.1. Increasing the number of entities that provide quality non-institutional services for older people

4. Montenegro

4.1 Context/ Policy framework

The process demographic ageing has become notable in Montenegro in the last two decades. The official statistics show that between 1991 and 2011 the share of people over the age of 65 in

Montenegro has risen from 8.3% to 18.3%. The internal and external migration trends have also contributed to uneven demographic ageing with certain – usually rural – areas having an even higher share of older people in the population. The projections suggest that the trend will not be reversed by mid-century.

The main document related to protection of older people in Montenegro is Strategy for development of the system of social protection of older people 2013-2017. It is widely recognised that this strategy and its annual action plans have contributed to better social protection of older people through institutional means (retirement homes in several locations throughout the country) but also through development of non-institutional and community based capacities (such as geronto-housewives and day care centres).

Another important document is the Law on Social and Child Protection that sets out a wide range of services and practices in the area of social protection that can be used in the future development of specific services for older people. Municipal level regulation has already been used in creating targeted community based services for older people, (such as home care, clubs for older people, day care centres...) with some of the municipalities also creating and adopting their local plans for social protection of older people. This is in line with the priorities of the Strategy for development of the system of social protection of older people 2013-2017 that stipulate development of community based services aiming to increase the quality of life of older people and decrease the need for institutional care.

A lot of the capacity was built with UNDP support over the past several years as this UN agency has influenced refining of social services, cooperation between public and civil sector, evidence-based policy making as well as in creating local plans for social inclusion that are increasingly created and adopted in Montenegrin municipalities.

The Strategy also discusses the financing of these services noting that the current model is highly centralised and relies exclusively on the national budget. The innovative community based services that have been developed in recent years are mostly project-funded – relying on donations – and in a very limited amount supported by municipal budgets or donations provided to civil society organisations. The Strategy foresees a bigger role for municipal authorities in future financing of these activities and services but there is still a lot of work to be done on defining the role of civil sector in this area and the most efficient ways of cooperation between public, civil and private sectors. This is especially important in light of the 2013 research done by Alternative Institute showing that 80% of all providers of social services at local level are civil society organisations that also provide 80% of all social services (in comparison, public institutions provide 5.6% of all social services).

On the other hand, the decision making in Montenegro is still a fairly centralised process with a small number of citizens interested in participating in a public debate on new legislation. Some civil society organisations are members of working groups related to specific pieces of legislation but this is not yet a common practice. At the same time, civil society organisations themselves are somewhat inert in sharing information among themselves and with the appropriate ministries, with governmental reports

commonly only covering achievements by public sector as these are the activities funded directly from national budget.

On a positive side, when social support for older people is discussed today, the discussion is not only about material provisions, but also about other systems that enhance integration, support and improvements of quality of life of older people in their communities by expanding the programmes they need. It is underlined that the action plans related to the implementation of the abovementioned law are tied to two strategies at national level and a myriad of municipal, local level action plans.

Significant positive developments can be identified related to this topic. Today, older people are at least in the focus of the responsible authorities through projects and networking. It is good that new services for local support are being established. There are several organisations in Montenegro today that work with older population in different ways. Some of them are focused on social inclusion and intergenerational cooperation because younger and older generations can work together and have joint activities. Some organisations are focused on small scale activities and others have established longer, continuing programmes. Some organisations have younger people as volunteers whereas in the others volunteers are older.

It is necessary to formalise and standardise social services provided by civil and private sectors through a licensing process which is way overdue. This process would also help get a better overview of the existing capacities to provide these services. The quality of services is affected by the lack of professional capacities – a result of financial constraints – but also by the gaps in the systems of monitoring and evaluation of social protection services. Civil society organisations are not familiar enough with the procedure and the dynamics of this process which indicates the need for organised education on this topic.

Sustainability of services is one of the key issues directly connected to resource mobilisation which is in turn connected to securing professional capacity to ensure provision of services at the appropriate level quality. It is necessary to establish, as soon as possible, continuing and sustainable source of funding that will first and foremost support the existing services established through the "Reform of the social and children's protection system – improving social inclusion" project. Even though actors at local level work in the same area, the degree of their cooperation as well as the exchange of information on the content of services and activities is not very high. This causes the awareness of the availability of services in a given local community to be exceptionally low. These gaps in cooperation can be bridged through forming working bodies in municipal administration that will be tasked with planning, development and improving the quality of social protection services. These bodies would be coordinated by local administration or by a board of experts consisting of relevant local professionals. It is notable that municipal administration is already recognised as responsible for coordinating the process of planning and development of social protection services. It is necessary to as soon as possible establish a database on available services and service providers, not just to improve the level of information and the quality of services but also to help identify which services are needed but are not available at the moment.

4.2 Analysis of the current capacity of civil society organisations

The analysis of the capacities of civil society organisations engaged with the topic of ageing and older people highlighted some of the common issues and suggestions to overcome problems:

Low level of awareness among the target group of the existence of social protection services is a problem. In near future efforts should be made to promote the existing services and develop/ create mechanisms to inform older people as well as their whole communities.

It is necessary to ensure an easy overview of the continuity and the analysis of planned/ implemented activities in the now seven year old strategic process of protection of older people – these will be the resources for more efficient planning of future strategic activities.

Some of the important activities that should be stipulated by the future strategies and plans include: supporting volunteer work, motivating employers with tax breaks to employ older workers more frequently, more comprehensive health protection of older people, prevention of neglect, violence and elder abuse.

Even though EU initiatives point to ensuring older people stay in their own environment/ family household for as long as possible as the desired outcome, one of the big problems burdening Montenegro is that the rural areas have become almost exclusively inhabited by older people. In some villages the only residents are one or two older people. Support services are not available in rural areas.

Adopting necessary documentation means having them provided for public discussion first. This is something to put special effort into as the EU accession process emphasises the public-civil sector dialogue with the focus being on including civil society organisations in all decision making processes.

It is also of note that civil society organisations can obtain information via different networks and coalitions (CRNVO, TACSO...) that publish invitations and information on public discussions and adopted documents. Civil society organisations, however, do not use this capacity enough. Civil society organisations can participate in working groups or influence the contents of these documents through public discussion. However, not all of them are sufficiently active or active in the same way. Some that already have a higher public profile are more active. In any case, the standard that the decision makers follow is that relevant public documents are not to be adopted without the civil sector's input – but it is the duty of the civil sector to use these opportunities.

There is also the opinion that civil society organisations are included in the decision making processes because this is a prescribed standard but that there is no genuine interest in the real contribution they can make. But if a civil society organisation is good in some area, it should be included in the relevant process even if it did not formally apply for it. Therefore, it is important that both public and civil sector are aware of the potential and capacities of individual organisations so that they can be utilised when necessary.

Duplicating of activities should be avoided. There is no standard practice of analysing the current situation with provided services before planning next steps.

It is necessary to harmonise the activities of different actors and programmes at state level that are related to development of social services and protection of population groups at risk – activities of public services, international actors and the civil sector. At the same time, further development of social services for population groups at risk needs to be supported by diverse funding sources and expert knowledge.

4.3 Strategic directions

Strategic priorities of the newly established DIGNITAS network of civil society organisations in Montenegro

Dignitas is the first ever network of civil society organisations established to address the issues of ageing and older people in Montenegro.

Vision of the network

Society in which older people exercise their rights and live dignified, healthy, active and safe lives

Mission of the network

Network that advocates for respect of human rights of older people, improvement of their quality of life and a more active role in development of the society

Values of the network

- Respect
- Solidarity
- Tolerance
- Humanity
- Responsibility
- Volunteering
- Understanding
- Impartiality

Strategic goals of the network

5. Improving social security of older people through continued information, education and direct work in the field

6. Sensitising the public to recognise and value the rights, needs and contributions of older people in their communities

7. Improving health and social services for older people through active participation of the network members in creation of public policies and cooperation with relevant organisations and institutions

The network also defined priority topics of interest for the work in the following period:

Topic 1: Defining a priority issue that demands implementation of a research

A number of issues have been identified as potentially important:

- Lack of appropriate records in the public social institutions on the needs. Need for new assessment.
- Large number of older people in rural areas having no access to services
- Lack of information on the real needs of older people
- Lack of knowledge on human rights of older people among both the public at large and the older population itself

The network is likely to prioritise the research on the needs and social status of older people in its immediate future

Topic 2: Defining a list of stakeholders

The initial list includes local authorities at municipal and sub-municipal level, pensioner associations, academia and other education institutions, Ministries of Labour and Social Welfare, Health, Human and Minority Rights and Education, Institutes for Social and Child Protection, institutions for social protection of adults, national pension fund, other organisations of civil society, day care centres for older people and Statistical Office of Montenegro.

5. Serbia

5.1 Context/ Policy framework

The demographic ageing in Serbia has been a steady trend for the past two decades with decreasing fertility rates and migration contributing to an increasing share of people over the age of 65 in the population. According to the latest census of 2011, 17.4% of Serbian population is over this age with 3.6% being over the age of 80. This population – at the moment predominantly female with 57.9% of it being women – is projected to continue to grow and the estimation is that by 2060 one third of Serbian population will be over the age of 65.

With approximately 85% of the over the 65 population covered by the state pension programme, the risk of poverty in this group was estimated at 25.6% in 2014. However, with the trends in the job market over the past two decades (gray market employment, failure to pay contributions to insurance funds) it is expected that a significant decrease in pension coverage will occur within the next ten year, putting the future population over 65 in a social disadvantage. There are additional social welfare systems accessible to different population, but at the moment less than 1% of older households (households where all members are over 65) receive such payments. At the same time, research shows that 7% of all older people in Serbia cannot perform independently any of the activities of daily life (ADL) and almost 30% need assistance in some of the ADL (15% of older people need assistance with maintaining personal hygiene, 10% with basic mobility in their home, 33% need assistance in visiting a physician, purchasing

medication or groceries, and 26% in preparing and consuming food) – while only 4% do receive this assistance on regular basis.

Emerging synergies between the public and civil sector in this area show the developing understanding among the decision makers of the benefits of non-institutional care and the versatility of home-based, community level social services that empower older people rather than turning them into passive receivers of help. The latest version of the Law on Social Protection adopted in 2011, marked a shift in social protection in Serbia by stipulating the possibility of civil and private sectors providing standardised social support services via licensing and thus pluralising and improving the accessibility of these services.

Formal social services in Serbia are provided from both national and local structures. The national level provides foster & residential care, counselling and assisted living while the local level is responsible for day care, assistance in independent living, and counselling. The Serbian Statistical office states that 14.6% of older people (51.2% female) accessed social welfare through their municipality in 2014. Yet informal care is even more important in the lives of older people. Almost a third of older people need assistance with ADLs, of whom 80% rely on family members for this support; 30% rely on friends and 27% on neighbours.

In 2007 the government established a National Council for Ageing, tasked with initiating changes in legislation and improvements in cooperation between public services, experts, humanitarian and professional organisations. The Council, including representatives of notable civil society organisations has not been operational since government change in 2014 and with the current status of government in Serbia being "technical" (after the April elections) there is no possibility of discussion about it being reinstated. Yet, the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs has pledged to increase its efforts in tackling issues of ageing and older people – including social welfare and protection – and it is expected that discussions about the role of the Council will ensue. The future Council will advocate for introduction of new models of social service provision – especially in rural areas – drawing on the practices of past projects performed by some of the HumanaS network members, notably the Red Cross of Serbia. The Council will also be responsible for creating a new Strategy on Ageing, and offering learning from practise as to open the path to development policies that will ensure better targeted and better supported social services such as models for long term care, and various changes to existing services in order to improve efficiency.

The Employment and Social Reform Programme by the government of Serbia adopted in June 2016 is an integral part of the Serbian EU accession process and will be a subject of annual reporting to the European Commission. There are explicit objectives, measures and activities targeting older people directly or indirectly in the ERSP. Objective 3 covers the continuing process of de-institutionalisation and development of non-institutional local capacities for assisted living. Objective 5 describes the improvements to social protection at local level through better quality of services, monitoring and evaluation, improving licensing of service providers and supporting non-state providers of social services with a special emphasis on outreach initiatives to identify and cover persons otherwise left out from service provision. Other objectives target reforms of the pension system, preservation and improvement

of the minimum standard of living of older people, better health protection for older people and better protection from discrimination.

5.2 Analysis of current capacity of civil society organisations

Analysis of the current capacity of civil society organisations engaged with the topic of ageing and older people shows that most of the interviewed organisations (seven members of HumanaS) cite project funding as their primary way of resource mobilisation. There are organisations that partially rely on provisions from the national budget yet these funds have become more sparse in the last several years. Delivery of licensed services by accredited civil society providers at community level is a viable option for some organisations but this is a more limited scope of activities than these organisations undertake.

However, even project funding that relies on international donations is increasingly more difficult to come by due to a relatively low interest among the donors as well as the policy makers in issues of ageing and older people. Provision of services directly to the population in need seems to be the best way to access this sort of funding with fewer options to get funded for education, advocacy or promotion of inclusive models.

Interviewed organisations understand the importance of investments in human resources and structure and all invest efforts into education of their staff/ volunteers. Monitoring and evaluation of own activities are also recognised across the board as essential in improving performance and building reputation with partners and donors so almost all of the interviewees use external monitoring and evaluation professionals in their annual practice – a necessary but positive consequence or reliance on project and/ or national budget funding.

All of the interviewed organisations are aware of the opportunities as well as needs related to advocacy on behalf and with older people and of the need to continue building their capacity, as well as that of the HumanaS network to harness the momentum of Serbia's EU accession and the social and political developments that this entails. There are obstacles to these developments too, from the need for some of the organisations to radically transform their business philosophy, to the fact that the policy makers and the responsible authorities still tend to view civil society organisations as predominantly providers of service, not as partners in creation of public policies. This does not mean that there are no options for civil society to influence policymaking but rather that the level of influence varies across the political spectrum and that participation of the civil sector and citizens in policymaking does not yet fall under any defined standard practice. It is expected that with further EU accession activities and the process of harmonisation of Serbian legislation with the acquis, civil sector will have more opportunities for structured dialogue with policymakers. In the meantime, advocacy will be designed at all levels, from grassroots initiatives to participation in global movements.

HumanaS members have agreed on the necessity to jointly build advocacy capacities, individually, as well as those of the network. There is recognition of the need to have a more intensive but also more structured, clearer dialogue with both private and public sector, at all levels, particularly since some of HumanaS members work in local context, while others have national reach and access to higher level policymakers. Importantly, there is universal recognition that activating and involving members of older

population in advocacy processes at all levels is key in achieving not only clarity of messages but also empowerment of the same population organisations are working to support. There is agreement on the necessity to develop more efficient and transparent tools to have older people communicate their will with the public and the decision makers.

HumanaS members identify numerous gaps in legislation and/ or implementation of existing legislation related to older people or ageing:

- In social sphere there is a lack of action plans for implementation of the Strategy for Social protection, no efficient model of appropriate long term care (institutional care is still the preferred model), procedures to apply for social transfers are too complicated for the majority of those in need, volunteering is still not sufficiently recognised as a powerful tool in non-institutional social care..
- In financial sphere, there is no recognition of the need for new mechanisms of ensuring financial security in the older age with the existing legislation regulating pensions not being appropriate for the labour market trends that will define older age financial income in the near future
- In public health sphere there is the need to reform many of the systems related to assistance to older people, from palliative care through day care programmes to increasing the number of gerontology professionals and introducing screening programmes for depression and dementia.
- In protection from discrimination and abuse, it is necessary to legally recognise older people as a specific group targeted by specific and interconnected forms of discrimination and abuse – at the moment they are lumped with the general population which causes many of the instances of abusive, negligent or discriminatory behaviour to go unnoticed and unregistered. Introduction of screening for abuse in primary health protection as well as legislation to protect older employees from mobbing would be two systemic changes with long reaching consequences.

There is also understanding that the data on older people is still collected through projects rather than systematically and that there is a need to establish trends in order to build stronger evidence for future advocacy efforts. Creating a standard set of indicators that can be followed over a longer time period will lead to development of a body of data that will be used for evidence based advocacy for policy change.

All interviewees agree on the need for more capacity building for advocacy and cite the following items as missing or underdeveloped within the civil society: communication skills and advocacy tools, negotiation skills, succinct reporting skills, knowledge on policy creation, skills of creating and proposing new or changed public policy.

In terms of media relationships, while most of the interviewees agree that they have good relations with the media, there are still great challenges in altering the language used to address issues of older people as well as the prevailing image of older people as a population of dependants. Structured and longer term education of key media reporters and producers is seen as a way to address this important issue.

5.3 Strategic directions

The strategic planning exercise for HumanaS network has yielded the following results:

A mission for the network

HumanaS is a network of civil society organisations that supports full exercise of human rights of older people, supports their better inclusion and calls for better recognition of their contribution to the development of Serbian society.

Vision of the network

A world where all older people live healthy, dignified, active and safe lives

Values of the network

- Solidarity
- Absence of discrimination and abuse
- Respect for diversity
- Openness
- Humanity
- Responsibility
- Respect for human rights
- Neutrality
- Equality

Strategic areas of interest for 2016-2020

1. Increase influence on policy makers
   - Social welfare
   - Health
   - Social pensions
   - Discrimination and abuse/ human rights

2. Public information campaigns, sensitising the public
   - Positive image of older people
   - Status of older people

3. Social inclusion of older people, participation of older people in communities, life ling learning

Strategic goals 2016-2020

Area One

1. Ensuring minimum of financial security in the older age through introduction of social pensions
2. Improved quality of life in the older age through development of social services and better access to these services as well as through programmes of activation, respecting the principles of individual access and participation of older people
3. Improving health services for older people as well as access to those services

4. Decreased discrimination, improved access to human rights and better safety in the older age

Area Two

1. Sensitising the public to understand and value contributions of older people to their communities, through media campaigns, education programmes and development of intergenerational solidarity
2. Introducing the public and communities to the phenomenon of ageing and the varying needs of older people (training for media professionals, annual campaigns, topical radio and TV programmes, topical workshops to be introduced to the public schools curriculum, awards for promoting positive image of older people...)

Area Three

1. Supporting active participation in all aspects of life of older people in Serbia, in line with their needs, capacities, affinities and skills
2. Raising awareness of and providing motivation to older people in local communities to contribute to achieving sustainable development of the society
3. Contribute to higher rate of social inclusion of older people through education, information and psychosocial support
4. Increase the inclusion of older people in lifelong learning programmes through information, promotional campaigns and advocacy

The network members also discussed and defined new rules and procedures for internal and external communication, membership, decision making, and project coordination as well as committed to improve the visibility and public profile of the network and its members.

V. Other activities and future plans

The project coordination team in the Red Cross of Serbia presented the project and elements of the planned strategic initiatives in a meeting with the Serbian Deputy Minister of Health Dr Vesna Knjeginjić. This was a part of the annual Age Demands Action – ADA for Health campaign globally coordinated by HelpAge. More information can be found on the Red Cross of Serbia Website. The Red Cross of Serbia also took part on the session organised by the national Commissioner for Protection of Equality on discussing the Commissioner's Strategic Plan for the 2016-2020 period. The plan foresees creating of a national network against discrimination and the Red Cross and other HumanaS members will take part.

The Red Cross marked the 15 June – World Elder Abuse Awareness Day with an event in its conference hall. A round table panel discussion entitled "Don't close your eyes: Stop elder abuse" was organised in cooperation with the Commissioner for protection of Equality and supported by the United nations Population Fund (UNFPA). This year's round table panel focused on sensitising the public and professionals on discrimination and elder abuse while emphasising the promotion of the new UN convention on the rights of older people and it featured speakers such as the Serbian Minister for Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs and the UNFPA representative.

The project coordination team participated in the Healthy Ageing workshop organised in Budapest, Hungary by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in May. During the meeting it was underlined how successful the Red Cross of Serbia is in running the programme supporting older people without external funding and with managing to thrive on innovation and achieve sustainability while providing many examples of good practice. The team also took part in the regional kick-off conference organised for the 16 long-term grants awarded through EuropeAid 151014, in Brussels Belgium in late June by TACSO Regional Office. Topics arising from practical work in the projects such as Vat exemption of future subgrantee partners as well as visibility issues were discussed.

Member of the Red Cross of Serbia project coordination team participated in the Strategic Planning workshop of the Network for Ageing with Dignity in July, in monitoring and support capacity.

Design of visibility material in all the project countries has been entered.

Project websites are being developed and getting ready to be launched by the end of month.

To increase the visibility of the project in Albania on 6 May AAGG and MOSHA organised a street march for 100 older people, activists of three pensioners associations from Tirana and their provincial branches to follow up the kick off meeting. Media representatives were invited to cover the event and at the start of the march AAGG representative answered their questions. At the Amphitheatre speeches were given by other AAGG representatives, presenting facts about low participation of older people in Albania's civil society and public life as well as underlining opportunities provided by the project initiative. Other representatives of MOSHA talked discussed as well. A group of public health students provided some simple tests and measurements on health and mobility for interested participants.

The next steps in the project until the end of the year include a study visit to Slovenia by representatives of all national networks. This visit will include participation and presentation of the project at the annual fair of services targeting older people. The visit will be coordinated with the Slovenian Philanthropy NGO who will be hosting the visit and providing the study programme. This opportunity will also be used to organise a project partners' meeting.

Later in the year the project partners will work on identifying and selecting local level partners for implementation of community inclusion initiatives via provision of sub-grants – the activity that will be taking place in the second year of the project.

Also later in the year all partners will also organise workshops that will serve as kick-off for the research phase of the project. They will feature workshops to discuss the policy maps and strategic work plans and they will serve to define advocacy goals and research areas. Each of the national networks will produce advocacy priorities as well as inputs for the terms of reference documents that will be used in subsequent research.

The research will follow as planned with eight months long research and data processing activities in each of the project countries. The research will establish a baseline and will involve representatives of older people, interviews with experts, focus groups and questionnaires – depending on the topic and the suggested methodology by the agency or expert. Finally, in the second year of the project the research results will be used as basis for development of national advocacy strategies through joint work effort of the network members as well as other key stakeholders and experts in the relevant field.