



ANNUAL REPORT 2012

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED IN 2012

Grant Amount: € 2,144,881

In 2012 all programs contributed to the achievement of objectives defined within three strategic priority areas: ***accelerating the Republic of Macedonia's EU accession; encouraging civic participation and activism; integration of Roma, youth and socially marginalized groups.***

FOSM achieved the anticipated progress under the strategic priority defined as ***accelerating the Republic of Macedonia's EU accession.*** Four *Accession Watch Reports* and three policy briefs served as valuable source of information to the MPs, civil society and the media in assessing the alignment of governmental policies and practices with the targets set by the *European Commission (EC)*. In its 2011 Progress Report for the Republic of Macedonia, the *EC* integrated many of the findings presented in FOSM's *Accession Watch Reports*. As a result of advocacy efforts in the process on EU financial assistance (IPA) programming, staff member of FOSM was also appointed member of the *Sectoral Monitoring Committee for IPA Component I: Transition Assistance and Institution Building*. Shadow negotiation teams (each comprised of more than 15 civil society representatives) were established and are capable to contribute in the future accession negotiations for the chapters: judiciary and fundamental rights, social policy and employment, competition, and consumer protection. *Institute for European Politics* from Berlin developed and delivered the specialized training program and, in cooperation with the Macedonian Centre for European Training (MCET), developed the mentorship scheme.

Objectives related to influencing education policies on overarching EU reforms were achieved by effective capacity-building trainings delivered to a group of 25 education professionals. FOSM cooperated with the *Centre for Educational Policy Studies* at the Faculty of Education in Ljubljana on developing and delivering nine training modules on education policy, which were completed in December 2012. In the upcoming period, trainees – under CEPS's mentorship – will apply the acquired knowledge and complement their training with preparation of policy papers, policy briefs and/or research papers on issues critical to the education reform in Macedonia.

Progress was achieved under the *Regional Research Promotion Program (RRPP) in the Western Balkans*, implemented by the University of Fribourg and financed by the Swiss Agency for Development and cooperation (SDC), aimed at supporting researchers to contribute to social, economic and institutional reforms in the region. Funding was approved for an additional research project focused on monetary transfers in Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo, led by a Macedonian research institution. This project involves eight researchers, three of which are women. More than 20 researchers from Macedonia benefited from capacity building and networking opportunities provided as part of the

Program. Four national policy papers were financed and aimed to contribute to the debate on advancing research policies in the country.

Several initiatives of Macedonian CSOs, supported through the *East-East Program: Partnership Beyond Borders*, contributed to the attainment of anticipated progress. Ever-innovative *Youth Educational Forum (YEF)*, as member of several *transparency in education* networks, developed synergies with regional and international networks. Their efforts were rewarded with an impressive interest and attendance of 47 participants from more than 15 countries. Many joined as a result of peer-to-peer consultations made by EE PBB coordinators. Networks are committed to work on scaling up engagement to advance the impact internationally. Empowered by the knowledge exchange with the CEE Bankwatch Network, *Ekosvest* from Skopje started a capacity building initiative for the national civil society network to prevent construction of hydro power plants *that could destroy the flora and fauna* in the national park Mavrovo. Monitoring findings were presented to the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning and the World Bank Office in Skopje for further reconsideration. Efforts to promote use of ICTs in education and to advance production of open source and available knowledge were discussed among civil society organizations and policy-makers from the region at the conference organized by the *Metamorphosis Foundation*. Moldavian CSOs and representatives of local and regional governments were hosted by *SFERA NOVA* to learn from their Macedonian counterparts about administrative-territorial reforms.

To increase the public spending accountability of central and local governments, FOSM – in partnership with the Centre for Civil Communications (CCC) – developed a comparative analysis and four *Indices of Rationality*. These findings received extensive media coverage and served as relevant source of information for the journalists, especially those investigating corruption cases. For the purpose of amending the Law on Public Procurement, 45 proposals to improve the public procurement system were developed and submitted to the Parliament, six of which were integrated in the newly adopted law. In its latest *Compliance Report on Macedonia*, the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) acknowledged FOSM's concerns with the political party financing.

Monitoring reports on the decentralization process and performances of 12 municipalities in the fields of education, urban planning, fiscal decentralization and local economic development for the period 2009-2012 showed small progress in delivery of municipal services. They served the municipal officials and citizens as credible source of information in policy-making and advocacy for change. For the purpose of building the capacity of local CSOs to monitor the local authorities, 10 organizations were trained to implement the methodology for monitoring the performance of municipal competences and municipal budget spending in 13 local governments.

As a result of FOSM's advocacy efforts, specific budget allocations for Roma immunization activities were incorporated in the *2011 National Program for Active Health Protection of Mothers and Children*. Moreover, further advocacy efforts based on budget and community monitoring of the implementation of the program resulted in introduction of pediatrician services in one of the targeted Roma

communities, gynecology services in the biggest Roma community and establishment of ambulance services in a rural settlement with majority Roma population.

Efforts to monitor the free legal aid system resulted in registration of five CSOs as providers of legal assistance, covering around 1,400 citizens. The leading organization among the free legal aid providers, *Macedonian Young Lawyers Association*, is represented in the working group at the Ministry of Justice tasked to draft the amendments to the *Law on Free Legal Aid*.

FOSM's support to eight CSOs – members of the *Network for Protection against Discrimination* resulted in initiation of 16 cases in front of the *Commission for Protection against Discrimination*. The *Network* releases monthly reports on anti-discrimination issues. 17 of the total of 24 cases motioned in front of the *Commission for Protection against Discrimination* were submitted by the *Network*.

Upon FOSM's initiative, on 9th April 2012, the *Constitutional Court* annulled several provisions from the *Lustration Law*. In order to assess the capacity of the *Commission for Verification of Facts* to implement the lustration process in compliance with the international standards on human rights protection, FOSM conducted a research on the implementation of the lustration process.

As part of the edition "*Law Watch Analyses: A Closer Look at the Implementation of the Laws*", detailed analyses were published and aimed at assessing the adherent implementation of several key reform laws adopted with a view to bring the national legislation in line with the EU *acquis*. Publications/analyses published in 2012 include: (1) *More Efforts for More Efficient Courts – Court Protection of Human Rights in Administrative Disputes*; (2) *Misdemeanor Body – Positive Reform?*; (3) *Shadow Report for Shadowed Commission – Report on the Commission for Protection against Discrimination's Performance in the First Year of Operation*; (4) *Parliamentary Control over the Government of the Republic of Macedonia*; and (5) *Macedonian Lustration (1999 – 2012); Events, Statements and Newspaper Articles – Application of the Lustration Laws*.

Progress in promoting the application of human rights principles in delivery of health services was achieved through continuous cooperation within the network of legal professionals/attorneys and civil society representatives profiled in protection of patients' rights of different marginalized communities (drug users, sex workers, PLHIV, Roma, persons with intellectual disabilities, etc.). The analysis of the implementation of the *Law on Patients' Rights*, with special focus on marginalized groups, and the recommendations for control of the quality of health services and the mechanisms for protection of patients' rights were presented in front of representatives from all relevant health institutions. Aimed at making information on patients' rights more available to members of marginalized communities, four *Guides on Patient's Rights* (concerning: Roma, drug users, persons with intellectual disabilities and the general population) were developed and broadly distributed. Follow-up number of visits on the designated website <http://www.healthrights.mk/> confirms the need for such information and their usefulness for both, health professionals and the general public.

Seven trained young journalists-fellows, engaged at national electronic and printed media, enriched the quantity and the quality of public debate with their monthly production of more than 60 media stories/articles on EU topics. Five *Media Mirror* reports were developed and distributed to all media

outlets and to relevant domestic and international institutions. The *alternative print distribution network* provided citizens with free access to the issues of independent daily and weekly *Fokus*. Ten *online media outlets* became alternative sources of information. Actions of the *Media Development Centre* resulted in continued international attention on the deteriorated media freedoms.

FOSM significantly contributed to ***encouraging civic participation and activism*** in response to non-democratic policies and practices, aimed at reaffirming open society values through policy advocacy actions and public expression of critical views. *Citizens for European Macedonia (CEM)* movement organized 31 nation-wide debates with total of 3,505 participants. 62 CSOs, informal groups, publishing houses and think-thank institutions organized 181 public events with total of 3,834 participants at the *CEM Club* in Skopje on issues related to human rights, youth, marginalized groups, gender equality, identity and history, reform of institutions, civic activism, EU accession, etc. In 2012, live streaming was introduced for 33 debates, attracting additional 2,650 viewers.

Efforts to support the civil society were acknowledged by *USAID* and resulted in the signing of the Cooperation Agreement for Implementation of the *USAID Civil Society Project* in total amount of \$ 2.5 million (for the period February 2012 – August 2014). This enabled FOSM to expand its interventions through the CSO grant-awarding scheme, i.e. more than 26 grants were awarded to CSOs for civic activism, oversight, advocacy, cooperation and networking projects, and 640 representatives from youth and civil society organizations benefited from capacity building activities, with special focus on youth and online tools for activism.

FOSM financially supported five initiatives of CSOs and individuals, aimed to encourage and develop intercultural understanding and cooperation among citizens of different ethnic background. Five books on the Macedonian history and identity authored by prominent foreign scholars and writers were translated and served as basis for informed debates with 680 participants. Roma artists from the Shutka Municipality who fuse hip-hop and traditional Romani music toured Macedonia, Serbia, Croatia, Austria, Denmark and Hungary and recorded a new album "*I am Underground*" (*Me sijum underground*). The band was selected among more than 300 applications to perform at the 2012 *Club Balkan Stage* at *Womex* in Thessaloniki.

Community Forums Program, funded by the *Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)* and implemented in 11 municipalities, resulted in the adoption of a model for participatory decision making as part of the municipal statutes. The latest *Memorandum of Understanding* signed by FOSM and SDC in 2012 extends the program cooperation and provides support for five new municipalities. Initiatives selected at these community forums are co-financed by the municipalities.

FOSM made significant progress in achieving the objectives defined under the strategic priority defined as ***integration of Roma, youth and socially marginalized groups***. As in the previous years, the most significant progress was achieved in relation to FOSM's commitment to ensure greater access to quality education for Roma. Over 1,000 beneficiaries of the *Roma Education Program (REP)* continued to demonstrate far better school performance compared to non-project Roma students. To date, more

than half of 84 graduated university students are employed in international organizations or state and public administration bodies, and are in position to directly influence Roma-related policies.

The extensive Roma education portfolio strengthened the strategic partnerships with other donors. Additional \$ 1,050,000 awarded by *USAID* and € 120,000 awarded by the *Pestalozzi Children's Foundation* extended REP activities until May 2014, while the grant in the amount of € 35,000 from the *Roma Education Fund* supports *Romaverzitas* activities for the academic year 2012/2013.

The Ministry of Education and Science continued the implementation of the scholarship and mentoring scheme for Roma secondary school students, which it assumed from the Roma Education Program in 2008. REP was selected for the *Catalogue of Good Practices for Roma Inclusion*, developed as part of the EU-funded project for supporting the implementation of the *National Strategy for Roma Inclusion*.

Successful implementation of the *Roma Health Scholarship Program* resulted in increased number of Roma medical students (72 students) in the academic year 2012/2013 (49 students were supported in the first year of implementation) and contributed to development of Roma leadership in health. In the academic year 2011/2012, the *Roma Memorial University Scholarship Program* secured additional 106 scholarships for Roma students.

Although the assigned objectives were fully met, the existing strategic environment necessitates time and greater efforts to decrease the gap between youth and open society values. Within the *Youth for Open Society Program*, more than 1,000 young people were trained in civic activism, debate, and youth rights. 700 of them took part in national and international debate tournaments and other youth activities. More than 300 young people participated in the summer academy themed *Freedom of Democratic Stop*. Interethnic approach is perpetual in all activities and the clubs have matured enough to regularly manifest multicultural values. *Online radio MOF*, operated by 80 students of diverse cultural and ethnic background, produces regular programmes on issues related to youth policies and youth participation and activism.

Aimed at supporting the law-based protection of health rights of socially marginalized communities (LGBTI population, sex workers, drug users, PLHIV and Roma), throughout 2012 FOSM provided continuous capacity building for staff members of CSOs and created an atmosphere for sustainable cooperation, communication and joint actions in the context that generates overlapping problems of different marginalized communities. In addition to regular Annual Reports on Sexual and Health Rights of Socially Marginalized Groups, strategic litigation actions were taken by providing legal representation in 14 lawsuits involving different SMGs (drug users, transgender persons and PLHIV). Furthermore, advocacy efforts for adequate ARV treatment, led by an informal group for support of PLHIV, resulted in the establishment of an *Inter-Parliamentarian Group on HIV*.

Significant contribution was made towards capacity building and greater engagement of Roma CSOs to advance the health rights of Roma. *Community-Based Paralegal Program* was successfully established in two municipalities. Organizations providing paralegal assistance are recognized and accepted by the communities and the relevant institutions (health care centers, regional offices of the Health Insurance Funds and local governments) as Roma advocates and as important links to the community, while

introducing changes to health-related policies and laws. The model of *Roma Health Mediators*, developed with FOSM's support, is accepted and financed by the Government as an innovative approach to improve delivery of health care and social protection services for Roma. This model was also selected in the aforementioned *Catalogue of Good Practices for Roma Inclusion*.

The *Project on Legalization of Roma Housing* used the rare and time-limited legal possibility to assist poor Roma household in obtaining ownership documents for their homes, thus making them more secure in recovering from the consequences of the economic crisis. The project provided monitoring, legal assistance and advocacy to facilitate the legalization process. The established *Roma Housing Legalization Fund* provided interest-free micro-loans to cover their expenses for the legal and administrative procedure. This project's implementation timeframe is three years, until the beginning of 2015, and it is expected that by that time more than 1,300 Roma families will be assisted in obtaining ownership documents for their homes. In 2012, the established database registered around 1,500 legalization cases and the project provided 50 legal advices and disbursed 185 loans.

Partnerships

FOSM employs a combination of following approaches in identifying and selecting its strategic partners and organizations: 1) engagement of and cooperation with the spin-off organizations due to their specific knowledge and skills and utilization of previous FOSM investments, for example, FOSM's EU-related projects are implemented in cooperation with the *Macedonian Center for European Training*, as one of the few organizations with credible expertise on EU issues, while FOSM's Education Program closely cooperates with the *Youth Educational Forum*, which has extensive portfolio and experience in youth mobilization; 2) open calls for institutional, program and networking grant schemes to wide range of CSOs that work on issues of joint concerns, for example, USAID and FOSM grant schemes for CSOs, 3) FOSM oftentimes identifies its strategic partners by working with specific target audiences or on specific issues (Roma and other marginalized groups, media advocacy, etc.) in cooperation with the *OSF Network Programs*, as is the case with the *Network Media* and *Public Health Program*.

Partner CSOs: Youth Educational Forum (YEF), KHAM, *Vrama si*, *Dendo vas*, Aid for Poor and Handicapped, Macedonian Center for European Training (MCET), Center for Civil Communications (CCC), Center for Local Democracy Development (CLDD), Macedonian Young Lawyers Association (MYLA), Transparency Macedonia (TM), Macedonian Helsinki Committee of Human Rights (MHC), Healthy Options Project Skopje (HOPS), HERA, Coalition "Health and Sexual Rights of Marginalized Communities", ROMA S.O.S, Association for Solidarity and Emancipation (ESE), Republic Center for Support of Persons with Intellectual Disability-PORAKA, Media Development Center (MDC), NGO Infocenter, NGO Reactor – Research in Action, Forum – Center for Strategic Research and Documentation, Metamorphosis Foundation, MIA – Association for Health Promotion and Education, Roma Resource Centre (RRC), Center for Democratic Development and Initiatives (CDRIM), LIL – Association of Education Workers for Protection of Women's and Children's Rights, University of Fribourg, SFERA NOVA – Institute for Dynamic Development, EKO Svest – Center for Research and Informing on Environment, Habitat for Humanity Macedonia, National Roma Centrum (NRC).

Donors: USAID, Pestalozzi Children’s Foundation, Roma Education Fund, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, Habitat for Humanity Macedonia.