

Economic and Investment Plan Flagship Projects and the Role of the Civil Society

Date: 8 June 2021, at 10.00 – 13.00 h | Hybrid Event hosted in Tirana and Belgrade

Background

Before the 2020 Sofia Summit, the European Commission published the “Economic and Investment plan for the Western Balkans” (EIP). The plan contains guidelines on good governance as the foundation for sustainable economic growth, and offers an investment package that combines grants up to EUR 9 bn with matching loans up to 20 bn.

The EIP promotes investments in the sustainable transport, clean energy and environment protection, digital infrastructure, and in the regional economic integration and integration with EU.

The EIP contains a list of 10 investments flagships in the region. The Commission has engaged to examine their prioritization, costs, benefits and the impact of selected projects with a view to taking them forward actively and expediently.

But according to the IMF and EU, the management of public investment in the Western Balkans exhibits significant weaknesses that increase the risks linked to the identification, planning, procurement, implementation and handover of infrastructure projects. World Bank complains about the incomplete data and poor monitoring systems that undermines the effectiveness and efficiency of public investment management decisions. Planning and analyzing of project effects is done with no guidelines, while lack of transparency in project selection and prioritization as well as poor multi-annual costing of major projects harm financial efficiency.

State capture and low administrative capacity are being tackled through deep cutting reforms and by external assistance. However, the potential of local CSO has not been used in full. The Western Balkan CSOs can provide real and meaningful contribution to the EIP and the successful implementation of the 10 flagships not only in the ESIA stage or through public consultations, but in every stage of project cycle management and / or policy making.

In the framework of Tirana Connectivity Forum 2021 (TCF21), CDI in partnership with European Movement in Serbia is organizing the Tirana – Belgrade joint event with focus on the state of affairs of the Flagship Projects, on the factors that support or inhibit their implementation, and discuss about the role of NGO in their advancement. This event is also part of the CDI-implemented initiative “Preparing and Supporting Albania for the EU accession process (ALBE)”, and is co-supported by Konrad Adenauer Stiftung in Serbia.

Goal

Promote the role of the Western Balkan NGOs in the successful implementation of EIP and Flagship Projects.

Objective

To present, debate, discuss and come up with suggestions about the structural weaknesses that may affect the implementation of Flagship Projects, and on how the Western Balkan NGOs can contribute in dealing with them.

PROGRAM

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10.00 – 10.10 OPENING REMARKS

- **Krisela Hackaj**, Executive Director of Cooperation and Development Institute
- **Jelica Minić**, President, European Movement in Serbia

10.10– 10.30 WELCOME NOTES

- **H.E. Guusje Korthals Altes**, Ambassador of the Embassy of the Netherlands in Albania
- **Norbert Beckmann-Dierkes**, Director of the Serbia/Montenegro Office Belgrade, Konrad Adenauer Foundation

10.30 – 10.40 SETTING THE SCENE: ECONOMIC AND INVESTMENT PLAN & FLAGSHIP PROJECTS

- **Yngve Engstroem**, Head of Cooperation · Delegation of the European Union to Serbia

10.40 – 10.50 STOCKTAKING FROM CIVIL SOCIETY & THINK TANK FORUM

- **Christian Hagemann**, Deputy Director, Southeast Europe Association - SOGDE

10.50 – 12.00 PANEL 1. FLAGSHIP PROJECTS IN ENERGY, TRANSPORT, GREEN AGENDA AND DIGITAL: STATE OF AFFAIRS AND CHALLENGES

- **Pranvera Kastrati**, Senior Expert on Economic and Digital Connectivity, Regional Cooperation Council (RCC)
- **Mirza Kušljagić**, Head of Board, Center for Sustainable Energy Transition (RESET), Sarajevo
- **Tatjana Jovanović**, Head of Division in charge of Project Preparation and Financing, Transport Community Treaty Permanent Secretariat
- **Aleksandar Macura**, Programme Director, RES Foundation, Belgrade

Moderator: Jelica Minić, President, European Movement in Serbia

12.00 – 13.10 PANEL 2. PROJECT GOVERNANCE DURING CONNECTIVITY AGENDA IMPLEMENTATION, AND ROLE OF CSO

- **Michael Voegele**, Head of Sector, WBIF, DG NEAR
- **Ana Krstinovska**, President, ESTIMA, Skopje
- **Ardian Hackaj**, Coordinator of Tirana Connectivity Forum
- **Marko Sošić**, Researcher at Institut Alternativa, Montenegro

Moderator: Albana Rexha, Senior Policy Analyst, Democracy Plus

13.10 – 13.15 CONCLUDING REMARKS

- **Ardian Hackaj**, Coordinator of Tirana Connectivity Forum

**The working language of this hybrid event will be English.*