

# European Policy Centre - CEP

2016 Annual Report

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## Introduction

CEP marked a successful year 2016. In 2016 CEP continued to develop and grow, in terms of the size of staff, number of publications, number and size of projects designed and implemented. At the end of 2016 our team consisted of 23 employees – managers, researchers, project assistants and communication staff. 20 projects were delivered or were initiated.

CEP's influence on policy making in Serbia also increased in the past year. Our experts participated in the work of the Government's Inter-Ministerial Working group for monitoring the implementation of the public administration reform in Serbia. Our publications were widely distributed and our policy recommendations discussed. The Think Tank Review of the Council of the European Union shared four CEP's insights and thus promoted them with the wider public at the level of the EU. CEP's experts were invited to contribute with their experience to different conferences, workshops, while the events CEP organised were attended by many high-level Government officials, policy makers, diplomatic core and other relevant stakeholders.

CEP's presence in media also increased in the past year and our staff was invited to comment different policy issues for national TV broadcasters (such as N1, RTS, B92...) and radio stations. Cooperation was continued with the "BETA" Press Agency, which regularly followed all our events and published our press releases.

Our partnerships also continued to develop and grow in 2016. Three new organisations (from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo) joined the "Think for Europe" Network of Think Tanks and EU Policy Research Centers in South East Europe (TEN) thus expanding TEN's coverage to all Western Balkan countries.

A new regional platform for monitoring the implementation of public administration reform in Western Balkan (WB) countries (WeBER Platform) was established in November 2016. The platform has 22 members – civil society organisations from all WB countries. Our cooperation with the European think tanks has also been strengthened in 2016, and we established new relations with Central European think tanks.

In 2016 CEP established close cooperation with SIGMA, joint initiative of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development - OECD and the EU. Except cooperation in the scope of WeBER project, CEP is recognised and engaged by SIGMA as the local partner for Serbia with high quality expertise in the PAR area.

This report summarises the most significant results achieved in 2016 in CEP's four programme areas.



## Programme Area 1 „Good Governance“

The Good Governance programme area is the largest, and the most developed programme area of CEP to date. During 2016, it was developed further and upgraded with new project initiatives, with the idea to build on the existing achievements and come up with a new, refreshed approaches to topics of interest. Based on this, visibility and recognition of CEP's work in this programme area continued to grow, especially with regards to the public administration reform (PAR) related topics that have been among the main focus of work in 2016 - civil society's involvement in PAR monitoring, horizontal policymaking, human resources management and civil service, as well as more prominent focus on service delivery and public finance management.

For 2016, the highlights of the Good Governance programme area in terms of results achieved pertain to 1) milestone projects that have accelerated in reporting year – WeBER, and USAID Partnership for Good Governance; 2) cooperation with SIGMA<sup>1</sup> (joint initiative of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development - OECD and the EU); 3) implementation of the United Kingdom's (UK) assistance to Serbia through the Good Governance Fund (GGF); 4) other publishing, and advocacy initiatives.

### *WeBER*

Western Balkans Enabling Project for Civil Society Monitoring of Public Administration Reform - WeBER, financed by the EU and co-funded by the Kingdom of the Netherlands, is a cornerstone, three-year long, regional project within the Good Governance programme area, and it started in December 2015. CEP is a lead organisation (Project Coordinator) among six regional partners of the Think for Europe Network (TEN) that implement WeBER. Support and EU-level visibility of the project is ensured by partnering up with the European Policy Centre (EPC) from Brussels. WeBER target countries are all Western Balkan countries, and the project was designed against the rationale that only by empowering local non-governmental actors and strengthening participatory democracy at the national and local level, can ensure the governments to continue implementing the often painful and inconvenient administrative reforms be maintained post-accession.<sup>2</sup>

In November 2016, regional WeBER Platform has been established – the first regional CSO consultation platform on PAR in the Western Balkans. WeBER Platform serves as the venue for evidence-based dialogue of CSOs and governments on PAR. It gathers 22 CSOs from the Western Balkans; CEP has a leading role in the Serbian national consortium including European Movement in Serbia, Belgrade Open School and Civic Initiatives as members.<sup>3</sup> National consortia in each country are establishing National Working Groups on PAR (NWG), as the second level tier of the WeBER Platform.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Support for Improvement in Governance and Management (SIGMA)

<sup>2</sup> About WeBER: <http://www.par-monitor.org/pages/about-weber>.

<sup>3</sup> WeBER Platform officially established: <http://www.par-monitor.org/posts/weber-platform-officially-established>

<sup>4</sup> WeBER Platform structure: <http://www.par-monitor.org/pages/structure>



PAR Monitor that is being established within the WeBER project, and its methodology<sup>5</sup>, represent a foundation for the dialogue within the WeBER Platform. Methodology provides all necessary resources for independent monitoring on PAR by civil society in the WB, through national and regional PAR Monitor reports. The Methodology closely follows the Principles of Public Administration developed by SIGMA. It is based on the selected SIGMA principles that are best fitted to be monitored by the civil society, and the development of own quantitative and qualitative indicators for measurement. In 2016, in parallel with the process of the PAR Monitor Methodology development, intermittent consultations with SIGMA have been held with positive reactions on the draft Methodology, which is currently being in the finalisation phase. Also, Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) and its representatives have been involved in the discussion on the draft Methodology with the idea to make synergies in the future with the Balkan Barometer<sup>6</sup> surveys implemented by the RCC in the region. Other national, regional and international stakeholders of the project have been consulted, involved or familiarised with WeBER, and the project has been highly recognised and evaluated among key stakeholders to date.<sup>7</sup>

In the scope of this project, CEP also hosted a seminar about the SIGMA Principles of Public Administration for 27 representatives of civil society organisations from Serbia, establishing cooperation and channels of communication with CSO's from Serbia for subsequent activities within WeBER. Seminars on the same topic followed in each Western Balkan country.<sup>8</sup>

Overall, engagement in promoting the WeBER from the onset of the project has increased the outreach and leverage of CEP in the area of PAR monitoring, and overall good governance, both at national and regional level. Multi-media presentations developed within WeBER, aiming at familiarising wider, non-expert public with PAR process in the Western Balkans and the role of the EU, have had highly positive reactions within SIGMA and DG NEAR, resulting in making these multi-media products visible at the SIGMA website.<sup>9</sup>

### *Partnership for Good Governance*

In 2016 implementation of a two-year project „Partnership for Good Governance“<sup>10</sup> supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has started. The overall goal is to ensure a more participatory and citizen-centric design and implementation of PAR policy, with an emphasis on the quality of public services in the areas of education, primary healthcare and services provided by the Ministry of Interior – issuing of personal documents. It is the first major CEP project (in cooperation with the European Movement in Serbia) that strongly focuses on the quality of public

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<sup>5</sup> More on PAR Monitor: <http://www.par-monitor.org/pages/principles-of-public-administration>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.rcc.int/seeds/>

<sup>7</sup> Representatives of WeBER project participated in three meetings with DG NEAR representatives; contributed to the regional conference „Role of Civil Society in Public Administration Reform – EU Standards and Practice“ organised in June 2016 in Prishtina; attended ReSPA's Annual Conference in November 2016, presenting the WeBER Platform rationale to the conference participants

<sup>8</sup> Workshop for Civil Society in Serbia on the Principles of Public Administration: <http://www.sigmaxweb.org/events/principles-public-administration-civil-society-serbia.htm>

<sup>9</sup> CEP has produced three out of six planned multi-media presentations; Multi-media presentations are available at:

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCh-d\\_kHzoU3h--n-i8BYOBw](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCh-d_kHzoU3h--n-i8BYOBw)

<sup>10</sup> More info on this project: <http://cep.org.rs/en/projects/partnership-for-public-administration-reform-and-public-services-in-serbia-partnerships/>



services provided by administration bodies, and it is the result of strategic approach to expand the scope of the Good Governance programme area to topics related to public services.

CEP, as the coordinator for the research component of the project, took a leading role in developing research methodology, collecting data and analysing the process and practices through which three targeted service delivery policies are developed. The research additionally enhanced the analytical capacities of CEP's research team, as the CEP participation in the design of the survey for measuring citizens' satisfaction with public services nicely fit with other CEP activities aimed at improving in-house capacities for qualitative research. In that sense, the research team involved in the project had an opportunity to cooperate closely with the partner on the project (social enterprise Pro Pozitiv) that focuses on implementing new technology and techniques in the field of market and public opinion research, and CEP will continue to participate in data processing along with conducting a qualitative research on policy-making in selected policy areas. The further results of the work on the project are expected to be gained in 2017.

#### *Cooperation with OECD/SIGMA*

Throughout the 2016, CEP has cooperated with SIGMA on several initiatives aiming at improvement of the design, monitoring and implementation of PAR. As the result of the previous track record in the Good Governance programme area, CEP is recognised by SIGMA as the local partner for Serbia with high quality expertise in the PAR related areas covered by SIGMA Principles of Public Administration: Strategic Framework of PAR; Policy Co-ordination and Development, Public Service and Human Resources Management, Accountability, Service Delivery and Public Finance Management.<sup>11</sup> Cooperation with SIGMA is expected to continue and intensify in the subsequent years.

Beside the cooperation within the WeBER project, CEP has been active in 2016 in assisting SIGMA on many occasions, including assistance in: preparing and implementing SIGMA assessments for monitoring progress of PAR in Serbia; improving framework of performance indicators for monitoring PAR implementation; performing analysis of gaps in administrative data and recommending solutions; analysis and calculation of values for indicators measuring progress in PAR related areas.

Moreover, in 2016 CEP has started working on the comprehensive policy study on the state of managerial accountability in state administration initiated by SIGMA, the first in-depth analysis on this topic in Serbia to date. It is expected to be finalised in 2017 and used by SIGMA for further advocacy for improving overall accountability framework for managers in the state administration. For this research study, CEP engaged in both qualitative and quantitative research of practice and perceptions on managerial accountability in different areas – organisation of Serbian administration system, policy making and coordination, human resources management, public finance management, and public procurement. It is expected that this activity will be a springboard for research and advocacy endeavours in the future.

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<sup>11</sup> SIGMA Principles of Public Administration: <http://www.sigmaxweb.org/publications/principles-public-administration.htm>



### *UK Good Governance Fund (GGF)*

In the scope of GGF<sup>12</sup>, four projects that fall under this Programme area were delivered while three projects have started with the implementation in 2016. These projects mainly supported public administration reform in Serbia (establishment of national academy for public administration, advancement of e-government, implementation of the Law on General Administrative Procedures and establishment of citizen-oriented administration, merit-based human resource management in public administration and improve involvement of the citizen and civil society organization in legislative procedure). Additionally, one project aimed to strengthen the capacities of the judges to implement the Law on Protection of the Right to Trial Within a Reasonable Time.

### *Open Government Partnership (OGP) – Independent Reporting Mechanism*

As the National Researcher of the Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) as a part of the Open Government Partnership (OGP), CEP researchers have cooperated with the OGP office in Washington DC to finalise the Serbia End-of-Term Report 2014-2016. During this period, our researchers worked on analysing new insights regarding government openness commitments, responded to comments and queries of both government and civil society stakeholders, as well as continued following the progress of the new OGP Action Plan for 2016-2018. Moreover, in relation to the OGP initiative, the CEP research team participated in workshops and discussions at the Open Government Partnership Global Summit in Paris. OGP is a multilateral initiative with headquarters in Washington DC, that promotes transparency, citizens' empowerment and participation in policy making, and promotion of public accountability through the use of new technologies. The goal of the IRM is to monitor the creation and implementation of national two-year OGP action plans and enable constructive dialogue between government and civil society sectors.

### *Other publishing, and advocacy initiatives*

#### **Regional initiatives within the Think for Europe Network**

In 2016, CEP implemented CEPS WeB project<sup>13</sup>, whose aim was to create a Centre of Excellence for Policymaking in the Western Balkans, within the institutional framework provided by the Think for Europe Network (TEN). With the CEPS WeB initiative, together with partner organisations from TEN network, CEP started to advocate more strongly for the use of research as a basis for policy and decision making in the Western Balkans region, by providing evidence-based and high quality contributions to advance the existing policy processes. The project is financed under the framework of the Regional Research Promotion Programme (RRPP).

Published Position Paper of the CEPS WeB presents arguments to highlight the necessity for more streamlined engagement of the civil society to act as effective scrutinisers of policymaking reforms as well as to take a more constructive role in policymaking processes, consequently rendering it more transparent and evidence-based. The Position Paper of the CEPS WeB can be accessed [here](#).

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<sup>12</sup> More information on this programme is provided below, in the part "Horizontal project and programmes"

<sup>13</sup> CEPS WeB: <http://ten.europeanpolicy.org/ceps-web/>



## **Publications**

### *Policy Studies and Briefs*

The topic of open data in public administration is gaining ground and interest among think tanks and among stakeholders in civil society in general. CEP has recognised the importance of availability of free, reliable and high-quality data for the improvement of research and analytical skills within civil society organisations so they are capable of proposing more sustainable solutions and recommendations for better public policy making practices. The study is available [here](#).

Policy brief on gender mainstreaming of public policies in Serbia discusses the importance of ensuring that the new Law on the Planning System contains a provision that will explicitly stipulate the obligation for state institutions to conduct gender impact assessment and offers very concrete policy recommendations for policy makers. Besides being relevant for the Good Governance programme area, this policy brief is thematically also part of the cross-cutting topics relevant for all programme areas in CEP's work. The brief can be accessed [here](#).

### *CEP Insight and CEP Presents*

In 2016, CEP continued to actively promote and publish policy products CEP Insight, short analytical pieces on various topics, and CEP Presents, which intends to present reports, analyses, and other relevant selected publications to our readership. These policy products are relatively recently developed and used to promptly reflect on the current developments relevant within and across CEP programme areas.

In 2016, CEP analysed the results of the European Commission's assessment of compliance and progress in the Serbia EU accession process, in the light of changing reporting schedule. The next report is expected in Spring of 2018 as the Commission intends to harmonise its actions with the schedule of Economic Reform Programs (ERP) for candidate countries. In published CEP Insight, we analysed novelties in the new EC reporting methodology, and provide comments on the findings of the newest Serbia 2016 Country Report. This issue of CEP Insight is available [here](#).

Moreover, in the same Serbia 2016 Report Serbia received a positive assessment in the field of PAR, as this area is labelled with the progress achieved. In the separate issue of CEP Insight, we analysed the EC's assessment of Serbia's results in the field of public administration reform, as a more detailed reading of the report reveals certain deficiencies of the system, especially regarding depoliticisation and professionalisation of public administration, the introduction of a merit-based recruitment system, improvement of public policy making, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. This issue of CEP Insight is available [here](#).

In the first edition of CEP Presents in 2016 we presented findings of the recently published special report on the impact of EU pre-accession assistance on strengthening the administrative capacity of the countries of the Western Balkans by the European Court of Auditors. The general conclusion of the report is that the pre-accession assistance positively contributed to the strengthening of the administrative capacity of the beneficiary countries, and that support to rule of law and public administration reform through the IPA projects has proven to be partially sustainable. This CEP Presents can be accessed [here](#).



## Programme Area 2 „Internal Market and Competitiveness“

Following activities that were implemented in 2015 in the second Programme area “Internal Market and Competitiveness”, such as regional programme in the field of consumer protection related to provision of municipal services in South-East Europe and competition policy research that provided a study „Competition Policy in Serbia – What is the problem?“<sup>14</sup>, just to name the most relevant, in 2016 activities were more focused on support for EU integration process in negotiating chapters related to economy and market regulations.

Under the scope of GGF programme, a project of support for preparation of the Serbian business sector for the changing trade regime was implemented in the period January-May 2016. This project provided technical support to the Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunication and the Ministry of Economy and consisted of two components: (i) support for adjustment of Serbian business community to the new trade arrangements that will be introduced with EU accession of Serbia, and (ii) improvement of competitiveness of the economy through new services for Serbian exporters. Some of the most important outputs that were delivered are preparation of analysis of changes in trade policy due to Serbia's EU accession, with a special focus on five product sectors, including macroeconomic cost-benefit analysis of joining EU single market, GAP analysis of services provided to export-oriented SMEs, development of practical guidebooks for existing and future exporters "How to export to the market ...", for the EU market/EFTA and CEFTA, as well as estimates for preconditions for the establishment of e-commerce platform for sale of SMEs services and products. Beside studies and materials, tailor-made training for Serbian businesses were developed and delivered. These activities were closely related to the framework of negotiating chapters 20 - Enterprise and Industrial Policy and 30 - External Relations.

Another project that was implemented in 2016, under the scope of GGF, was support to the National Convention for the European Union (NCEU) - a civil society platform for monitoring and dialogue with the government in the EU accession negotiations, in their activities related to chapters 1 - Free Movement of Good, 3 – Right of Establishment and Freedom to Provide Services, 10 – Information Society and Media, 20 – Industrial policy and entrepreneurship, 28 – Consumer Protection, 30 – External Relations. CEP provided expert support through number of activities targeted to improve the capacity of CSOs that participate on NCEU platform, within thematic working groups for particular chapters. Some of the activities that were delivered were trainings for CSO representatives on general provisions of the EU acquis Chapter 1 and the phases of the negotiation process in this area, for developing their analytical capacity for monitoring the performance of industrial policy (Chapter 20), on the roles of consumer organizations and businesses in the implementation of the acquis related to placement of safe products on the market and links between Chapter 28 and Chapter 1, as well as content of Chapter 30 and expected process in the negotiations in this chapter.

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<sup>14</sup> Available at: <http://cep.org.rs/en/publications/competition-policy-in-serbia-what-is-the-problem-2/>



Within the framework of NCEU, CEP has a significant role as one of co-founders of this CSO platform (currently, more than 700 national and local NGOs are members of NCEU), and as a coordinator-organization for NCEU Working Groups for Chapter 1 – Free movement of goods, and for Chapter 28 - Consumer and health protection. In that capacity, CEP organised meetings of these working groups and other activities related to monitoring of the negotiating process in these chapters. The format and structure of NCEU working groups provide for discussion between the government bodies that are competent for particular chapters or activities that are covered by the framework of the chapter (Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications, Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Trade, etc.) and active role of participating CSOs through their suggestions, comments or analytical materials provided. The most important conclusions and recommendations with regard to current state of play in these chapters CEP provided for the Annual Book of Recommendations of NCEU, published in April 2016. This format was also used as a forum for direct consultations with representatives of EU in order to provide comments and contributions related to economic criteria, for the annual report of the European Commission (April 2016).

Beside coordinating the work of two NCEU Working groups, CEP's experts participated in and actively contributed to the work of other working groups, such as the one on Chapter 3 "Right to Establishment and Freedom to Provide Services" and Chapter 20 Enterprise and Industrial Policy".

## Programme Area 3 „Regional Policy, Energy, Environment“

During 2016 CEP participated in the implementation of two projects that fall within this Programme Area and CEP has commenced with the implementation of one institutional grant.

CEP participated in the implementation of the project „The Banat Platform – Participation of Local Communities in Serbia's EC Accession Process“ (1 May 2015 – 30 April 2016) during which the Banat Platform was established and further strengthened in order to serve as a medium-level network between local communities in Banat and national institutions (public administration and NKEU) with a focus on Negotiating Chapters 11, 12 and 27. The lead organization of this project is Ecological Centre Habitat and the project is funded by the Open Society Foundation (OSF) in Serbia. CEP contributed significantly in the implementation of its activities via participation in the writing of the policy document regarding: nature protection areas and the EU accession process; holding workshops for representatives of municipalities, local CSOs and other associations (e.g. farmer associations) in Banat with regard to the EU accession process, the role of CSOs in this process, Negotiating Chapter 27 (Environment), Nature protection and EU network NATURA 2000 and IPARD II; and participation in the development of a TV show and a multimedia presentation.

In October 2016 support to the Banat Platform continued as part of the new project funded by the OSF. Within this new project, CEP participates in delivery of a series of workshops in Banat, as well as in elaborating further on the subjects tackled during the first project on Banat Platform including



Negotiating Chapter 27. Moreover, a new policy document on Serbia's agriculture policy and challenges pertaining to Negotiating Chapter 11 (EU Common Agriculture Policy) is being developed.

In October 2016 CEP started with the implementation of the institutional grant under CSOnnect programme which is implemented by the Regional Environmental Centre (REC) and financially supported by Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA). Via CSOnnect institutional grant CEP and partner organizations (Ecological Centre Habitat, Ecological Movement of Odzaci, Local Ecological Centre from Smederevo and Business and Economy Centre) are contributing to the improvement of civil society participation on the accession process concerning Negotiating Chapter 27. This will be achieved by strengthening the capacities of the civil society (through trainings/seminars, policy research on environmental financing, production and dissemination of media materials etc.). Implementation of some of these activities has already begun (environmental education in schools, data collection for policy research, training on communication skills).<sup>15</sup>

Beside aforementioned projects and CSOnnect institutional grant, CEP representatives gave contributions for the development of Serbia 2016 Progress report and participated in various public events on environment and energy topics both in Serbia (Belgrade, Smederevo) and within the region (Budapest and Zagreb).

Activities falling under the Third programme area positively affected both CEP as well as stakeholders and target groups CEP has cooperated with. Workshops and round tables where CEP representatives delivered lectures improved knowledge and understanding among different stakeholders (civil servants, local CSOs etc.) concerning EU accession process and the role of local communities. Policy document on nature protection and the development of a new document on agricultural policy contributed to a more deeper understanding of the EU environmental policies and challenges Serbia faces in the accession process concerning these topics. In overall, all the aforementioned activities contributed to the development of CEP's network of contacts at the national and local level, by establishing new contacts and strengthening the existing ones.

## Programme Area 4 „Europe&us“

In 2016, the youngest CEP's Programme Area "Europe&us" continued to develop and increase its share in CEP's overall workload. With two ongoing projects, several project proposals in the pipeline and numerous initiatives planned for 2017, this program area promises to expand further in the incumbent year. The anticipated growth is expected to make CEP even more renown and recognized think tank on the issues where the EU developments have direct impact on Serbia and its citizens.

Previous year was extremely intense in the EU and beyond and as such it generated an abundance of topics of attention to Europe&Us program area. In 2016, CEP researchers attempted to comment

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<sup>15</sup> More info on CSOnnect institutional grant on: <http://cep.org.rs/en/projects/institucionalni-grant-csonnect-programa-podrske-civilnom-drustvu-u-oblasti-zivotne-sredine-2/>



and analyse the important events and phenomena in a timely manner, thus maintaining CEP's proactive stance and presence in the EU-Serbia policy debates. In that respect, seven CEP Insights were published, on the topics of Slovak and Maltese presidencies, Brexit, Visegrad countries' ambitions, Apple case, European Commission (EC) country report analysis and analysis of the EC's findings in public administration reform area.<sup>16</sup> Serbian and foreign media outlets reported on the Insights, while their abbreviated versions appeared in daily newspaper "Danas". Moreover, they were closely followed by the expert community, based on the number of interactions on CEP's Facebook and Twitter accounts. In addition, CEP Insights found their place in the Think Tank Reviews of the Council of the European Union.<sup>17</sup> Each CEP Insight was followed by the press release published on newspaper agency's BETA and Euroactiv's websites. Based on the outreach these policy products have attained, it could be claimed that they have considerably impacted CEP's position and leverage as an independent, expert source of information and analysis on EU-Serbia related matters. It should be noted when it comes to production of CEP Insights, CEP dedicates its resources on a pro bono principle, which it sees as a sound investment with the aim to strengthen its position in the policy debates.

CEP events have brought another important and complementary dimension to the development of the Europe&Us area. All three CEP events gained important media coverage and outreach. In June 2016, CEP, together with the think tank European Policy Centre (EPC) from Brussels, held a high-level discussion on the role of the member states in the enlargement process. The main panellists included, among others, Tanja Mišćević, the Head of the Negotiating Team for Accession of Serbia to the EU, Dejan Jović, Professor at the Faculty of Political Science in Zagreb and former Advisor to the President of Croatia, Corina Stratulat, Senior Policy Analyst at EPC, and Nebojša Lazarević, Director of CEP. This event was a chance to familiarize the Serbian expert public with the critical influence the EU member states have on the accession process and to discuss the impact of unresolved bilateral issues on the enlargement policy and the candidate countries.

This event was equally an occasion to promote the partnership established with the Brussels-based EPC.

In October 2016, CEP organised a series of public debates together with the Belgrade European Union Model, a student association that organizes every year in Belgrade the biggest EU simulation game competition in the world. Under the common title "Europe in Crisis: Thinking Forward", the two panels discussed the issues of Brexit, the refugee influx, the rise of extreme political parties, and terrorism threats and the future of EU enlargement policy. The event attended by more than 300 students, who had a chance to ask questions to the distinguished panel and engage in the discussions. The panellists were, among others, Ambassador of the Slovak Republic to Serbia Dagmar Repčková, Tanja Miscevic, World Bank Country Manager for Serbia Tony Verheijen, Bruegel Secretary General Matt Dann, etc.

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<sup>16</sup> <http://cep.org.rs/en/publication-category/cep-insight/>

<sup>17</sup> [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uploadedFiles/Blogs/Library-Blog/Posts/TTR\\_2016\\_38.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uploadedFiles/Blogs/Library-Blog/Posts/TTR_2016_38.pdf)



In December 2016, CEP in cooperation with the EU Info Centre organized a debate on the priorities and achievements of the outgoing Slovak presidency and upcoming Maltese presidency of the Council of the EU. The discussion featured H.E. Michael Davenport, Head of EU Delegation in Serbia, Ambassador of the Slovak Republic to Serbia Dagmar Repčėková, Fabian Psaila from the Maltese Permanent Representation in Brussels and Tanja Miscevic. Members of the diplomatic corps in Serbia, CSO representatives, government officials and students attended the event.

In 2016, Europe&Us program area grew in number of full-time researchers employed. In the framework of the grant obtained from OSF's Think Tank Young Professional Development program, CEP hired a Research Fellow who is conducting a research on the topic of Serbia's diplomatic and lobbying capacities towards the EU institutions. The communication team, consisting of a senior communication officer and communication assistant, have been engaged in the previous year, with the aim to assist the CEP team to position itself in the policy debates. Their contribution is most prominent in the Europe &Us program area, given that CEP's appearance in the media has been most frequent on the questions covered by this program area.

Under the framework of the Think for Europe Network (TEN), CEP was granted a regional project which aims to assess the effectiveness of the EU's benchmarking mechanism on the candidate countries. The project is financed by the European Fund for the Balkans and its implementation started on 1st January 2017. From the January 2017, CEP has also started a project within the abovementioned TTF YPP program on the assessment of diplomatic and lobbying capacities of the Serbian administration towards Brussels. The outcome of these projects are meant to increase CEP's relevance and recognition in Europe&Us program area and hence attract additional interest from donor and expert community.

CEP continued to take active and constructive part in the framework of National Convention on the EU. Besides coordination of the two working groups (described above in the second Programme Area) CEP researchers actively participated in the working groups for the chapters 23, related to rule of law and judiciary and 24, related to security issues. These two negotiating chapters have a special status in the accession process (i.e. accession negotiations can be suspended in case of no progress in the areas covered by the two chapters), therefore CEP is particularly interested in bringing forward its issues of concern and in constructively participating in the group meetings.

The achievements and impact in 2016 are expected to bring multiplier effects in 2017, in which CEP intends to additionally strengthen this youngest program area. There are currently two project proposals whose approval is expected in the foreseeable future and one big high-level event planned to mark the 60th anniversary of the Rome Treaty and the establishment of the European communities. With the expected acceleration in dynamics of Serbia's EU accession process and more chapters waiting to be open, CEP is supposed to engage more often in the public and provide expert analysis on the topics related to Serbia's accession in the EU. In the upcoming period, CEP will equally strive to comment and analyse the hot topics in the EU from the perspective of a candidate country, especially from the perspective of its proximity and influence on the developments within the EU. In doing so, it will forge partnerships with the renowned think tanks in Brussels and the European



capitals. In that way, CEP intends to become recognisable beyond the Serbian and Western Balkan circles and advocate for its mission towards the European public.

## Horizontal projects and programmes

In this section projects and programmes that were implemented in 2016 but were of horizontal nature and covered all CEP's programme areas are presented. In 2016, two of such project were under implementation: Organisational Development Grant and Good Governance Programme (GGF).

### *Organisational Development Grant*

In 2016 CEP benefited the support of OSF's Think Tank Fund through the Organisational Development Grant (ODG). In June 2016, CEP's first ODG was successfully finalised after two years of implementation. This ODG significantly improved CEP's internal capacities in three areas: i) research quality; ii) communication and advocacy; and iii) internal governance and management.

In December 2016, new two-year ODG started with the implementation. This ODG will help CEP to further strengthened quality of its research and its research products, its communication and advocacy capacity and internal governance and management.

### *Good Governance Programme*

Good Governance Programme (GGF) is an initiative of the British Government designed to provide reform assistance to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Moldova, Serbia and Ukraine. GGF consists of three delivery mechanism, one of which is the Managed fund. This mechanism is designed to support reforms in two priority areas – good governance and economic development, within which special attention will be paid to the following thematic areas: fight against corruption, improvement of business environment, justice system reform, key sector reforms (e.g. banking and energy), strengthening the rule of Law and support to independent media. GGF goal is to strengthen political and economic stability and support further poverty reduction and growth. The Managed fund in Serbia is operated by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) UK, together with PwC Serbia and CEP, working closely with the British Embassy in Serbia.

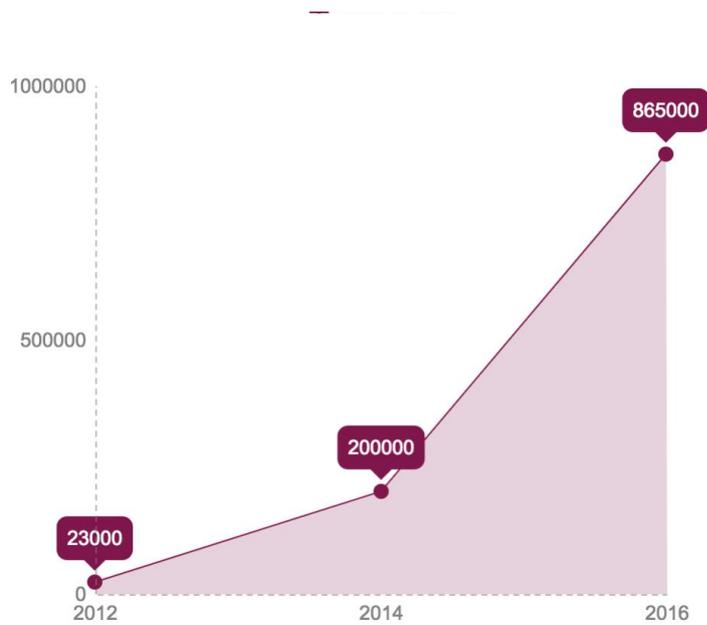
CEP's experts participate in the work of GGF Managed Fund's Programme Management Unit (PMU). PMU is in charge of scoping the project ideas for quick and flexible technical assistance to Serbian public institutions, development of projects in cooperation with the British Embassy, mobilising experts that work on specific projects, and monitoring the implementation of the approved projects.

In the scope of GGF CEP has implemented nine projects that fall into CEP's first and second programme areas and are described above.



# Financial data

In 2016, CEP's annual turnover amounted 865,000 EUR which represents a significant increase compared to previous years – turnover was increased for around 300% in 2016 compared to 2015.



Turnover

5



Number of projects



The **financial sources** for CEP's work in 2016 were the following:

- ✓ European Union through the Regional Civil Society Facility Programme;
- ✓ Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands through the regional Rule of Law programme;
- ✓ Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) through the CSOnnect;
- ✓ UK Government through the Good Governance Fund (GGF);
- ✓ US Agency for International Development (USAID);
- ✓ Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) through Regional Research Promotion Programme (RRPP) and through the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit;
- ✓ German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ);
- ✓ Open Society Foundation through Think Tank Fund (TTF);
- ✓ OECD through the SIGMA programme;
- ✓ Open Government Partnership (for the Independent Reporting Mechanism).