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**Partners for Democratic Change Serbia
Annual Report for 2020**

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Abbreviations:

- PS – Partners for Democratic Change Serbia (Partners Serbia)
- ADR – Alternative Dispute Resolution
- NCEU – National Convent on the European Union
- CSO – Civil society organizations
- PDP Law – Law on Personal Data Protection
- LFAIPI – Law on Free Access to Information of Public Importance
- EDRI – European Digital Rights Initiative
- GDPR – General Data Protection Regulation
- CSF – Civil Society Facility
- USAID – United States Agency for International Development
- DEU – Delegation of the European Union to Serbia
- BTD – Balkan Trust for Democracy
- OSFS – Open Society Foundation Serbia
- INL – State Department Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement
- Commissioner – Commissioner for Information of Public Importance and Personal Data Protection
- MOI – Ministry of Interior
- ROL – Rule of Law
- EIDHR - European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights
- SNIS - Strengthening the Network of Inspectors Serbia

Introduction

Partners for Democratic Change Serbia (Partners Serbia) is a civil society organization established in 2008 devoted to upholding the rule of law, supporting civil society and institutional development in Serbia and in the region, and building local capacity through a reliance on local expertise, which specializes in the fields of rule of law, democracy, anti-corruption, human rights (with special focus on protection of privacy and personal data protection), as well as alternative dispute resolution, change and conflict management.

Partners Serbia has also developed a distinctive expertise in training, coaching and capacity building, assisting different institutions, from state bodies to commercial subjects, in developing and delivering tailor-made training to their staff and clients.

During 2020, Partners Serbia developed and completed a number of educational, research and advocacy activities, primarily in areas of transparency and accountability, rule of law (ROL), personal data protection (PDP), alternative dispute resolution, protection of human rights and advocating for democratic principles at a local and national level. During 2020, Partners Serbia also continued providing legal support to activists and organizations throughout Serbia, who have been fighting for the protection of the public interest, preservation of green spaces and fighting corruption in their local communities.

All activities have been implemented thanks to the donor support, or from resources of Partners Serbia. Having in mind that the pandemic of Covid-19 started in March 2020, Partners Serbia needed to adapt their activities and ways of working, in order to prevent the spread of the virus.

A lot of the activities have been implemented online, while the dominant way of working was from home, with occasional visits to the office. This crisis also affected almost all project activities, however, Partners Serbia were in constant communication with the donors, our external experts and other relevant institutions in order to ensure the safety of all parties. Because to that, a lot of the activities have been implemented online, via Zoom.

Partners Serbia also continued working on their for-profit activities, primarily through organization of basic trainings in the field of mediation and ADR, as well as specialized trainings.

Projects:

During 2020, Partners Serbia completed the implementation of several projects, but also started several new ones as well. Some projects have been implemented as lead partners, some in a coalition with other CSOs, while some have been implemented only by PS.

The projects that have been implemented during the course of 2020 are:

- **Constituencies for Judicial Reform**, supported by USAID, as part of a consortium of 12 civil society organizations¹
- **Reconnecting Democracy- Citizens in Power**², an initiative supported by USAID, as part of a consortium of 4 organizations (PS, CRTA, Belgrade Centre for Security Policy and National Coalition for Decentralization)
- **Reclaiming Privacy: A Tool to Fight Oppression**³, supported by European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) and the Office for Cooperation with Civil Society (Government of the Republic of Serbia), as lead partner for the consortium of 6 CSO: ATINA, A11 Initiative for Economic and Social Rights, Belgrade Open School, Da se zna! and SHARE foundation.
- **Securing Judicial Transparency and Public Trust in Serbian Courts**⁴, supported by USAID
- **Future of Freedom of Information in Serbia (FFIS) – Strengthening Capacities of Civil Society and Young Generations for Defending the Right to Know**⁵, supported by the Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Serbia, BIRODI and Law Scanner
- **Strengthening Capacities of the Network of Inspectors of Serbia (SNIS)**⁶, supported by USAID Cooperation for Growth Project (USAID CfG)
- **Where is the Public in Public Enterprises**⁷, supported by OSF Serbia
- **How Do We Communicate Democratic Changes**⁸, supported by Centre for Research, Transparency and Accountability (CRTA) and Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA)
- **Your Personal Data is Your Personal Business, - Busting Privacy Myths**⁹, supported by CRTA (SIDA)
- **Resiliency+ (Enabling and Protecting Civic Space (EPCS) Inspires Project), supported by USAID**

Within the aforementioned Projects, PS team completed the following activities:

- Developed an analysis of the proactive and reactive transparency of basic and higher courts in Serbia and conducted an analysis of the legal background in this area and proposed ways in which the transparency standards could be improved.
- Held 5 thematic open-door court meetings throughout Serbia, in order to establish better communication of courts with citizens about important topics related to the work of the judiciary in Serbia and answer the most frequent questions with regards to the work of courts.

¹ <https://www.partners-serbia.org/en/constituencies-for-judicial-reform-in-serbia>

² <https://www.partners-serbia.org/en/reconnecting-democracy%E2%80%93citizens-in-power>

³ <https://www.partners-serbia.org/en/reclaiming-privacy-a-tool-to-fight-oppression>

⁴ <https://www.partners-serbia.org/en/securing-judicial-transparency>

⁵ <https://www.partners-serbia.org/en/future-of-freedom-of-information>

⁶ <https://www.partners-serbia.org/en/strengthening-capacities-of-the-network-of-inspectors-of-serbia>

⁷ <https://www.partners-serbia.org/en/where-is-the-public-in-public-enterprises>

⁸ <https://www.partners-serbia.org/en/how-do-we-communicate-democratic-changes>

⁹ <https://www.partners-serbia.org/en/busting-privacy-myths>

- Developed a number of informative materials, such as 7 blog posts for the Constituencies for Judicial Reform Project’s website in Serbia and 1 infographic about the erasure of data prescribed in the PDP Law. By producing these blog advocacy tools, the public was better informed on the way the judiciary works, the most important regulatory changes etc.
- Produced and published a detailed analysis on transparency standards for courts in Serbia including proactive and reactive transparency of courts, through a series of indicators. Together with the report, Partners Serbia developed a set of guidelines for information seekers on ways in which they can adequately request and access information of public importance.¹⁰ Partners Serbia also, produced set of recommendations for the High Judicial Council and the Ministry of Justice, in the form of practical policy proposals, taking into account the competences of these two institutions in the field of transparency of the work of the courts in the Republic of Serbia.
- Developed an Analysis on the overview of the new provisions in the draft of the Law on Free Access to information of Public Importance.¹¹ That way, the relevant stakeholders were better informed on the key changes in the Law. Analysis contains argumentation for the exclusion of proposed provisions that would have a negative impact on the already reached level of the right to access to information of public importance. This document was used in 2020 for advocacy during the process of amending the above mentioned law.
- Drafted an analysis: “What can we find out about the work of publicly owned companies from other public institutions and public sources?”. This document represents useful information about alternative ways in which information seekers could obtain information about the work of the public companies, after they refuse to answer freedom of information requests. Partners Serbia in addition created short guide for information seekers on the same topic: “Alternative sources of official information on the work of public companies”¹².
- Organized an online conference “*Ensuring Transparency in the Legal System and Citizens' Trust in the Courts in the Republic of Serbia*”. The goal of the conference was to discuss and exchange experiences and knowledge amongst participants, discuss the situation and challenges in the field of transparency of the work of judicial authorities.
- Organized the online conference “*Transparency in the Work of Public Companies - Between the Legal Framework and Practice*”, with the goal of promoting the right to access information of public importance, with a special focus on the process of adopting amendments to the Law on Free Access to Information of Public Importance and the application of transparency standards in publicly owned companies.
- Developed a case study „Influence of the new Free Legal Aid Law on the work of Civil Society Organizations in Serbia”¹³ where PS presented the key issues the law failed to prescribe and how this law affected the work of civil society organizations who have been providing free legal aid and support to citizens in Serbia for decades.

¹⁰ <https://www.partners-serbia.org/public/news/Analiza%20primene%20standarda%20transparentnosti%20u%20sudovima%20u%20Republi%20Srbiji%20WEB.pdf>

¹¹ <https://www.partners-serbia.org/public/news/zakon-o-slobodnom-pristupu-informacijama.pdf>

¹² https://www.partners-serbia.org/public/news/Alternativni_izvori_zvanicnih_informacija_o_radu_drustava_kapitala_i_javnih_preduzeca.pdf

¹³ [https://www.partners-serbia.org/public/news/Uticaj-novog-Zakona-o-BPP-na-OCD-Partneri-Srbija\(2\).pdf](https://www.partners-serbia.org/public/news/Uticaj-novog-Zakona-o-BPP-na-OCD-Partneri-Srbija(2).pdf)

- Published a report Media and the Right to Privacy¹⁴, during the pandemic of Covid-19. The report addresses the treatment of citizens' personal data in media reporting on the Covid-19 related topics.
- Started an initiative to provide support to civil society organizations to improve their resilience in relation to external threats and internal challenges, through the support for three organizations with whom the expert from Partners Serbia worked.
- Together with Share Foundation and a consortium of CSOs, published a database of privacy violations,¹⁵ which maps out incidents related to the personal data of citizens, taking into account the type of violation of rights, violators of rights, where the privacy violation occurs etc.
- Developed a case study „Video surveillance: a Means of Enhancing Security or Violating Citizens' Privacy“¹⁶ where PS presented the key issues when establishing these types of invasive systems and the dangers unmonitored video surveillance poses on the privacy rights of citizens in Serbia.
- Together with the Share Foundation, A11 - Initiative for Economic and Social Rights, ATINA, the Belgrade Open School and Da se zna! developed a guide on the protection of personal data during the pandemic of Covid-19¹⁷. The guide is intended for public authorities, the media, employers, and other entities that process the health and other personal data of Serbian citizens during the pandemic, in order to better harmonize their work with the legal framework of the Republic of Serbia, and with the aim of protecting the rights and dignity of citizens.
- Organized 6 trainings on personal data protection for more than 130 civil society organizations in cooperation with CSO Atina.
- Organized a series of trainings for more than 60 representatives of civil society organizations, activists and attorneys in order to better prepare them for the protection of the public interest. The trainings that were organized were: Capacity Building Training for Attorneys, Towards Safer Activism - Rights and Obligations of Activists (organized two times in order to educate as many activists as possible) and the Training for CSOs on the Law on the Prevention of Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism.
- Attended a series of capacity building sessions: Through the Project How Do We Communicate Democratic Changes?, Partners Serbia were able to raise the general internal capacities of Partners Serbia in the area of communications. Through the workshops in the field of communication and technical support, the project enabled us to communicate with citizens and other interested subjects in a structured and clear manner, and to be more successful in communicating messages to various different target groups. As a result, we created our first well- structured public campaign aimed at educating citizens about the right to personal data protection, but also processors on how to improve their own standards in the field of personal data protection.
- Developed a new version of the [E-learning Platform](#) of Partners Serbia.
- During 2020, Partners Serbia also published 13 blog posts on their website, on several important topics with regards to the protection of privacy, access to information of public importance, protection of human rights and promotion of democracy, alternative dispute resolutions etc.
- Lastly, in December 2020, as a part of the project Your personal data is your business – Busting Privacy Myths, a media and social media campaign was carried out in order to contribute to the improvement of citizens' awareness of the importance of privacy protection in order to take an active role in defending

¹⁴ <https://www.partners-serbia.org//public/news/Mediji-i-pravo-na-privatnost-tokom-epidemije-virusa-korona1.pdf>

¹⁵ <https://monitoring.mojipodaci.rs/>

¹⁶ [https://www.partners-serbia.org//public/news/Studija-slucaja-Video-nadzor-Partneri-Srbija\(2\).pdf](https://www.partners-serbia.org//public/news/Studija-slucaja-Video-nadzor-Partneri-Srbija(2).pdf)

¹⁷ <https://www.partners-serbia.org/post?id=137>

their own rights. As part of the campaign, 4 educational blogs, 4 promotional videos, billboards in several locations in Belgrade and Novi Sad, and articles in weekly magazines and TV appearances were created. The campaign “Privacy is the Heart of Freedom”, was seen by a total of 1,315,075 Facebook and Instagram users and the media campaign was seen by over 2 million people.

Cooperation in Different Initiatives and Networks

During 2020, Partners Serbia continued their cooperation with a variety of subjects from civil society, private sector and institutions, primarily in Serbia but in the region as well.

This cooperation was especially important during the pandemic of Covid-19 as most people were working online. The most frequent cooperation, apart from other civil society organizations whose primary focus is the protection of human rights in Serbia, was with Partners Global on resiliency of CSOs during these uncertain times. Partners Serbia also participated in regular meeting with Partners Network.

During 2020, Partners Serbia were actively participating in the work of the Coalition for Free Access to Information of Public Importance, and participated in the Working group for Chapter 23 of the National Convention on European Union.

During 2020, Partners Serbia also became part of the newly established Network for Digital Rights in Southeast Europe (SEE Digital Rights Network), which aims to improve the protection of digital rights and solve the growing challenges brought by the widespread use of advanced technologies in society. Initiated by the Balkan Research Network (BIRN) and the SHARE Foundation, the SEE Digital Rights Network is the first network of its kind focused on the digital environment and digital rights challenges in Southeast Europe.

Media Visibility

During 2020, Partners Serbia were present in different forms of media, both in daily newspaper and in different TV programmes. 2020 was the first year Partners Serbia collaborated with PR Agency and designers on the creation of a big and extensive public media campaign. The biggest outreach was achieved during the campaign “Privacy is the Heart of Freedom”. The campaign was seen by a total of 1,315,075 Facebook and Instagram users and the media campaign was seen by over 2 million people.

Services

In 2020, Partners Serbia continued providing trainings in the field of mediation in alternative dispute resolution. Partners Serbia held 2 basic trainings (with 32 participants in total) and a specialized program for professional training of mediators (consisting of 5 modules): mediation in the world and resolution of international trade disputes, online mediation and web-conferencing skills, advanced negotiation and mediation skills, the power of apology in resolving disputes, the role of mediators and lawyers in resolving disputes (for 130 participants in total).

Partners Serbia also prepared a team of students from the Faculty of Law from Belgrade for participation in the 16th ICC International Commercial Mediation Competition within the framework of the International Chamber of Commerce from Paris (16th ICC International Commercial Mediation Competition).

Partners Serbia were also actively providing mediation services, consisting of a total of 2 initiated and concluded mediations.

Finances

All financial reports from Partners Serbia have been submitted in accordance with the regulatory requirements. The total revenues of Partners Serbia in 2020 amounted to 33.614.000,00 RSD while total expenditures amounted to 33.614.000,00 RSD.

Human Resources

During 2020, in spite of the start of the pandemic of Covid-19, Partners Serbia have not made any changes with regard to their team. In order to prevent the spread of the virus, we transfer to work from home mostly, with occasional visits to the office. The schedule of coming to the office was agreed upon the beginning of the pandemic, as well as the maximum number of employees who can be in the office at the same time. During the pandemic Partners Serbia employed all obligatory and recommended measures by the Government of Serbia. Including: health and sanitary measures in office space, masks, and other equipment and supplies. Also, Partners Serbia provided staff with additional technical equipment for working remotely: laptops, microphones, ring lights, headphones etc.

Employees

During 2020, their team consisted of Ana Toskic Cvetinovic (Executive Director), Blazo Nedic (President of the Managing Board), Uros Misljenovic (Program Officer), Ana Desic (Financial and Compliance Officer), Nastasija Stojanovic (Projects and Communications Coordinator), Kristina Kalajdzic (Researcher), Damjan Mileusnic (Researcher), Tamara Ljubovic (Training and Capacity Building Coordinator) and Oriana LaVilla (Associate).

Management Bodies

The Assembly of the organization was held in April 2020 to review the work report, the financial report, and the financial plan of the organization. All documents were adopted. In 2020, the Board met regularly in accordance with the Statute of the organization.

External Associates

Partners Serbia also continued their long standing cooperations with a variety of external experts – with colleagues from Active8 (who were in charge on maintenance and management of PS website), and an external accountant, who has been providing support to our finance department, graphic studios Dosije and Kliker and translator Vera Gojkovic.

PS also continued their cooperation with their external team of legal experts consisting of Nina Nicovic, Petar Ucajev, Mihailo Pavlovic, Marina Mijatovic and Nenad Kovacevic, attorneys at law who have been providing legal

support to human rights defenders, civil society organizations and activists who have been fighting for preserving the public interest and green spaces in Serbia.