



Partners Serbia
Svetozara Markovica 60
Belgrade, Serbia
Tel: + 381 11 32 31 551, 32 31 552
www.partners-serbia.org
office@partners-serbia.org

**Annual Report for Partners for Democratic Change Serbia
For 2022**

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Abbreviations:

- PS – Partners for Democratic Change Serbia (Partners Serbia)
- ADR – Alternative Dispute Resolution
- NCEU – National Convention on the European Union
- CSO – Civil society organizations
- PDP Law – Law on Personal Data Protection
- BCSP – Belgrade Centre for Security Policy
- PDP Strategy – Strategy for 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
- ABA ROLI – American Bar Association Rule of Law Initiative
- DEU – Delegation of the European Union to Serbia
- BTM – 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
- ECNL - European Center for Not-for-Profit Law
- ICEDA - Increasing Civic Engagement in the Digital Agenda

Introduction

Partners for Democratic Change Serbia (Partners Serbia, PS) 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, providing assistance and mentorship to different institutions, from state bodies to commercial subjects, in developing and delivering tailor-made training to their staff and clients.

Partners Serbia strives to contribute to strengthening of democracy and rule of law, realization of human rights and promotion of peaceful conflict resolution, by relying on the highest professional standards, local expertise and participatory mechanisms. Through our work, we:

- We create partnerships that bring about knowledge-based change
- We initiate the responsible work of institutions
- We promote and protect citizens' rights while preserving their dignity and freedom of choice
- We empower citizens and local organizations to be the bearers of positive changes in their environment

During 2022, 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. Partners Serbia also continued providing legal support to activists and organizations throughout Serbia, which 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.

As the situation with regards to Covid-19 was starting to get better in 2022, Partners Serbia also got the opportunity to return to the office. However, hybrid way of working continued throughout the year, as it allowed Partners Serbia to organize some meetings and events more efficiently.

In September 2022, Partners Serbia changed the location of their office. The new office is located at Svetozara Markovica 60 in Belgrade. This change also allowed us to have more space for meetings and organize small-scale

events such as roundtables and trainings. On 1 August 2022 Partners Serbia also got the opportunity to welcome a new person to the team. Milica Nikolic was hired as an administrative assistant.

Partners Serbia also continued organizing the basic trainings in the field of mediation and ADR, as well as specialized trainings. Some of the trainings were held in-person, some were held online and some were organized in a hybrid manner.

Projects:

During 2022, 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. Partners Serbia also established long lasting cooperation with some of the organizations from the region, which have primarily worked in area of transparency, rule of law and protection of human rights.

The projects that have been implemented during the course of 2022 are:

- **Constituencies for Judicial Reform**, supported by USAID, as part of a consortium of 12 civil society organizations
- **Reconnecting Democracy - Citizens in Power**, an initiative supported by USAID, as part of a consortium of 4 organizations (PS, Center for Research, Transparency and Accountability - CRTA, Belgrade Centre for Security Policy (BCSP) and National Coalition for Decentralization)
- **Reclaiming Privacy: A Tool to Fight Oppression**, 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 CSOs: ATINA, A11 Initiative for Economic and Social Rights, Belgrade Open School, Da se zna! and SHARE foundation.
- **Using New Media to Promote Government Transparency**, supported by National Endowment for Democracy, in consortium with 3 civil society organizations from the region: Metamorphosis Foundation from North Macedonia, Center for Democratic Transition from Montenegro and Citizens Association Why not? from Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- **Strengthening Citizens Trust in the Serbian Judiciary**, supported by the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, in cooperation with colleagues from Juzne Vesti from Nis.
- **Public Secrets in Public Health**, supported by the Balkan Trust for Democracy (BTD), in cooperation with Law Scanner.
- **Increasing Civic Engagement in the Digital Agenda – ICEDA**, supported by the European Union, as part of a consortium of the following organizations: Metamorphosis Foundation (North Macedonia), Open Data Kosovo (Kosovo), e-Governance Academy (Estonia), NGO 35mm (Montenegro) and Levizja Mjaft! (Albania)
- **Back To Basics: Parliament as a Backbone for the Rule of Law**, supported by the Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Serbia, Civil Society Facility (CSF)
- **Using New Media to promote Transparency**, supported by National Endowment for Democracy, as part of the consortium with the following civil society organizations: Center for Democratic Transition, Citizens' Association "Why not?" and Metamorphosis Foundation.
- **The Civil Society Resilience Strengthening Activity**, a five-year initiative, supported by USAID and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), in cooperation with Project partners: PartnersGlobal, DT Institute, European Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ECNL), CANVAS and Civic Initiatives
- **Information is Power**, supported by Foundation for Open Society, Serbia.
- **Initiative for the Protection of Online Privacy Of Marginalized Groups**, supported by American Bar Association Rule of Law Initiative (ABA ROLI)
- **Serbian Initiative for Anti-Money Laundering**, supported by American Bar Association Rule of Law Initiative (ABA ROLI)

Through the aforementioned Projects, PS team completed a number of important activities within its four program pillars:

I Rule of Law

- Organized the Privacy Week 2022 to mark the international Personal Data Protection Day. This 4-day hybrid engaged decision makers, legislators, privacy professionals, civil sector and businesses in the discussion on key contemporary privacy-related issues.
- Conducted and produced findings of a comprehensive research on adherence to privacy and personal data protection standards in Serbia in 2021, including legislative gaps and key challenges in implementation of the existing legal framework.
- Developed a number of advocacy tools, such as 8 blog posts for the Constituencies for Judicial Reform Project's website in Serbia and 2 Infographics on the Obligations of journalists prescribed by the Code of Journalists of Serbia and on the new provisions of the Law on Free Access to Information of Public Importance
- Developed a booklet on how to address the European Court of Human Rights, which gives citizens useful information on how to contact this international court, in which cases, how the court operates and decides on applications etc.
- Held 3 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.
- Held their first Privacy School for 40 participants who have successfully passed the main program conducted of 8 online lectures on different aspects of privacy and data protection, one additional lecture on the right to be forgotten and one workshop on digital hygiene.
- Participated in the consultative process for the adoption of judicial laws. PS provided their written contributions for the improvement of the text of the laws, based on previous findings in analyzing the transparency standards and the openness of judicial bodies.
- In August 2022, PS also developed an annual report on the level of transparency of the judicial bodies.
- Organized the conference "Step towards better communication of the judiciary, media and the citizens", in September 2022, in cooperation with NUNS, where PS presented the findings from two analyses on transparency of the judicial bodies and cooperation of the judiciary with the media.
- Developed the Report on the Process of Adopting the Strategy on Personal Data Protection.
- Participated as members in the Working group in charge of developing the PDP Strategy, providing their comments and suggestions.
- Developed the case study "Communication of citizens and the National Assembly of Serbia"
- Developed the case study on the use of video surveillance equipment by local-self government units in Serbia.
- Developed a guide on legislative reform in sectorial domains and its alignment with the personal data protection legal standards.
- Published the report on the privacy needs of vulnerable groups
- Published the Gender analysis of the Social Card Act
- PS also provided their written suggestions for the Draft of the Ethical Guidelines for the Development, Application and Use of Reliable and Responsible Artificial Intelligence, Draft Law on Amendments to the Law on the National DNA Registry, Draft of the PDP Strategy and Draft of the Law on Internal Affairs.
- Provided legal support to activists and organizations in Serbia, which have been fighting for the protection of the public interest, preservation of green spaces and fighting corruption in their local communities.

II Democratic infrastructure

- As part of the Serbian Initiative for Anti-Money Laundering, Partners Serbia organized a public event on the occasion of starting the Project implementation (30 participants);
- Held 3 trainings for civil society and private sector partners focusing on countering illicit finance and financial crime compliance, organized in Nis, Novi Sad and Kragujevac (20 participants each);
- Held a week-long training on anti-money laundering and financing of terrorism, delivered by USA expert agency - K2 Integrity (50 participants)
- Developed an online training module containing 9 lectures on AML, available on Partners Serbia E-learning platform;
- Organized two online trainings on the AML legal framework and its practical implications for specific groups (for 15 participants each);
- Produced Two manuals: Guide for Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) as a user of certain financial services and as parties subject to regulations in the field of prevention of money laundering and terrorist financing as well as records of beneficial owners, and Guide for real estate agents regarding the field of anti-money laundering, with special emphasis on supervision;
- Developed Guidelines on redistribution of working hours, VAT calculation for Google and Facebook services and work engagement outside of employment contract. Project expert also produced Model Code of Ethics for civil society organizations, with special reference to AML provisions, adequate financing and ethical fulfillment of obligations towards the donors;
- Organized Two cross sector engagement meetings on anti-money laundering mechanisms (25 participants each);
- Organized one public event, in order to educate the public on anti-money laundering initiative, competent institutions and legislative mechanisms for preventing money laundering.
- As part of our Information is Power Project, PS organized one public event on the occasion of marking the International Day of Right to be Informed (for around 40 participants);
- From October 2021 to May 2022, the second cycle of support for students of journalism and communication studies was organized, as a program for 27 students from the faculties of Nis, Novi Sad and Belgrade, after which students worked on developing their own investigative stories.
- Organized three online debates for law and journalism students on the topic of transparency, openness and accountability of public institutions and the topic of anti-corruption. A total of 100 students participated in this activity.
- Organized the conference “Transparent Towards Greater Responsibility of Institutions”, where the results of the two transparency research were presented.”
- Held a conference “ Information is Power – Strengthening the role of the Parliament in improving transparency of public institutions”, together with CRTA and the Coalition for free access to information and Slavko Curuvija Foundation.
- Representative of PS participated as a panelist at the conference “Which information do governments hide from the media, civil society organizations and citizens?”, organized by Centre for Democratic Transition in Podgorica.
- Held third Autumn School for students of journalism and communications from the Faculty of Political Sciences in Belgrade, Faculty of Philosophy in Nis and Faculty of Philosophy in Novi Sad, titled “Future of Freedom on Information”. There was a total of 27 students and 20 lecturers who participated in this event.

- Conducted the analysis of transparency, accessibility, integrity and efficiency of 69 institutions of executive and legislative power, firstly by conducting extensive monitoring of their websites, analyzing freedom of information requests and the questionnaires that have been sent out to the institutions. After that, PS developed the two analysis: „Openness of the executive power in Serbia and the region“ and “Openness of parliaments in Serbia and the region”.
- Organized the Annual Forum, an event for citizens, activists and representatives of the civil sector, in cooperation with CRTA, the National Coalition for Decentralization and the Belgrade Center for Security Policy, in order to encourage greater participation of citizens in decision-making processes.
- Conducted a research on implementation of the Digital Agenda in Serbia and in the region of the Western Balkans for 2021-2022 and produced two reports
- Developed a series of recommendations for public procurement in healthcare, for the Public Procurement Office, Ministry of Health, Republic Fund for Health Insurance, BATUT, and the Agency for Medicines and Medical Devices.
- Developed the case study of the "Fortress" Movement - Successful activist approach of the initiative to defend the public interest in the local community of Smederevo”
- Developed two educational booklets for citizens in order to encourage public participation: “Rights and obligations of citizens during peaceful assembly” and “What is new in the new Law on Free Access to Information of Public Importance?”
- Published two educational videos for citizens on PS Youtube channel: New provisions in the LFAIPI and on Rules and obligations of citizens when attending peaceful gatherings.
- Published a series of blogs on PS website about the importance of protecting the public interest.
- Held a training for activists, journalists and CSO representatives on The New provisions in the LFAIPI. (11 participants)
- Developed of measures/ activities that were included in the Action Plan for the implementation of the Digital Skills Development Strategy in the Republic of Serbia for the period from 2023 to 2024. Within Measure 3.4 of the Action Plan: “Development of digital skills of employees, including employees in the public administration, with a focus on digital skills related to the specifics of the workplace”, three activities Partners Serbia proposed were accepted and included in the Action Plan. All three activities were related to the improvement of data openness (open data) standards in Serbia.

III Institutional and Organizational Development

- Organized One public event (Kick off conference) as part of our Civil Society Resilience Strengthening Activity Project
- Organized 19 online House in Order training for civil society representatives to ensure compliance of CSOs with the existing legal framework in various domains, and to further strengthen their resilience (for over 200 participants)
- Selected 25 civil society organizations from 5 regions of Serbia as Resiliency Nodes (local project partners);
- 7 Local Resiliency+ Coaches and one international Resiliency+ Coach provided support to 25 Resiliency Nodes, which has resulted in 25 individual R+ heatmaps presenting organizational strengths and weaknesses of the selected CSOs.

IV Conflict Management

- Organized a training for activists and CSOs on negotiation skills (14 participants)

- Other activities within this pillar were performed through services (see Section “Services” below)

Cooperation in Different Initiatives and Networks

During 2022, Partners Serbia continued their cooperation with a variety of subjects from civil society, private sector and public institutions, primarily in Serbia but in the Western Balkans and the rest of Europe as well.

Partners Serbia also participated in regular meeting with Partners Network, conducted joint initiatives such as the Regional Openness Index with civil society organizations from the region – Zastojne, Center for Democratic Transition and Metamorphosis Foundations, and worked jointly with other civil society organizations from Serbia on preventing the problematic Law on Internal Affairs from being adopted. After a series of media appearances and coordinated action, the Law was revoked from procedure in December 2022.

During 2022, Partners Serbia were actively participating in the work of the Coalition for Free Access to Information of Public Importance.

From 2020, Partners Serbia 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. In 2022, two PS representatives participated in the regional conference Internet Freedom Meet in Tirana, Albania, from 24 until 28 September 2022.

Media Visibility

During 2022, Partners Serbia were present in different forms of media, both in daily newspaper, and in different TV programmes, in order to reach as many people as possible and discuss privacy related issues and promote the most important project activities and research findings. They were also in contact with a PR agency in order to maximize the reach of their publications, TV and radio guest appearances.

According to data from the PR agency that sends us clippings for each month, Partners Serbia had a total reach of 84,494,000.

Partners Serbia were especially active during their Privacy Week event, during which an entire media campaign was implemented. In December 2022, Partners Serbia were also quite present in the media, in order to educate the general public on the dangers that the new Draft Law on Internal Affairs might bring, especially with regards to the biometric video surveillance. The Law was revoked from procedure by the Prime minister of Serbia at the end of the year, after a coordinated response from various civil society organizations.

Services

In 2022, PS continued to provide services to businesses and the civil sector, as follows: Trainings on mediation in dispute resolution, 2 basic mediation trainings (31 participants in total) and one specialized training (10 participants in total) on Advanced Negotiation and Communication Skills in the Commercial Dispute. PS also provided mediation services in the field of dispute resolution, with a total of 4 initiated or completed mediation procedures.

Employees

At the beginning of 2022, the Partners Serbia team was made up of 9 full-time members. 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 (Communications and Project Coordinator), Kristina Kalajdzic (Project Coordinator and Researcher), Damjan Mileusnic (Project Coordinator and Researcher), Milica Andric (Training and Capacity Building Coordinator), Milica Tomic (Project Coordinator and Researcher) and Oriana LaVilla (Monitoring and Evaluation Associate).

In August 2022, PS hired an Office Assistant Milica Nikolic to support our team due to the increased workload. The addition of this new team member has allowed us to efficiently manage our day-to-day operations and focus on the completion of important projects. With the administrative assistant's assistance, we were able to streamline our processes and ensure timely completion of tasks.

Finances

All financial reports from Partners Serbia have been submitted in accordance with the Serbian laws.

Total revenues of Partners Serbia in 2022 amounted to 45.653.000 RSD (2.019.000 RSD from services and 43.634.000 RSD from grant contracts), while total expenditures amounted to 45.653.000 RSD.