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**Partners for Democratic Change Serbia
Annual Report for 2021**

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

- ADR – Alternative Dispute Resolution
- NCEU – National Convention on the European Union
- CSO – Civil society organizations
- LPDP – Law on Personal Dana Protection
- LFAIPI – Law on Free Access to Information of Public Importance
- EDRI – European Digital Rights Initiative
- GDPR – General Data Protection Regulation
- CSRP – Civil Society Resiliency Project
- CSF – Civil Society Facility
- USAID – United States Agency for International Development
- DEU – Delegation of the EU to Serbia
- ABA ROLI – American Bar Association Rule of Law Initiative
- BTD – Balkan Trust for Democracy
- OSF – Open Society Foundation Serbia
- INL - State Department Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement
- Commissioner – Commissioner for Information of Public Importance and Personal Dana Protection
- MoI – Ministry of Internal Affairs
- SIGMA – Support for Improvement of Governance and Management

Introduction

In 2021, Partners for Democratic Change Serbia (Partners Serbia) implemented a number of educational, research and advocacy initiatives and activities in the fields within its scope of work, defined in the 2020-2022 Strategic Plan. In addition to this, in 2021, we continued to provide legal support to other organizations, movements and individuals who protect the public interest through their activities in local communities. The initiatives and activities were implemented both within donor-supported projects and projects supported independently, from Partners Serbia resources. Finally, we also continued, although to a lesser extent, to implement so-called profitable activities, primarily by providing trainings and advice to legal entities on compliance with the LPDP. Like 2020, last year was also largely marked by the COVID-19 pandemic, which affected our operation, primarily in terms of internal work organization as well as communication with associates, institutions, and other relevant entities. In this document, we will present the most important achievements and information about our operation in 2021.

Projects

In 2021, we continued implementing projects initiated in 2020 and started with the implementation of new ones. Thus, in 2021, we implemented the following projects as a partner or the leading organization:

- *Constituencies for Judicial Reform in Serbia*¹, supported by USAID and implemented by a consortium of 12 CSOs, headed by YUKOM
- *Reconnecting Democracy-Citizens in Power*², supported by USAID and implemented by a consortium of 4 CSOs, headed by CRTA
- *Reclaiming Privacy: A tool to fight oppression*³, supported by DEU and implemented by a consortium of 6 CSOs, headed by Partners Serbia
- *Protection of Marginalized Groups on internet*⁴, supported by ABA ROLI
- *Serbia Anti-Money Laundering Initiative*⁵, supported by ABA ROLI
- *Public Secrets in Public Health*⁶, supported by Balkan Trust for Democracy
- *Back to Basics – Parliament as a Backbone for the Rule of Law*⁷, supported by DEU and

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/protection-of-marginalized-groups-on-internet>

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⁶ <https://www.partners-serbia.org/en/public-secrets-in-public-health>

⁷ <https://www.partners-serbia.org/en/back-to-basics%E2%80%93parliament-as-a-backbone-for-the-rule-of-law>

- implemented by a consortium of 3 CSOs, headed by CRTA
- *Monitoring the Implementation of Gender Responsive Budgeting in the Legislative Process of the Republic of Serbia*, supported by Gender Knowledge Hub, Austrian Development Agency and Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency.
 - *Defending the Right to Access to Information in Serbia*⁸, supported by the Open Society Foundation Serbia.
 - *Strengthening Citizens' Trust in the Serbian Judiciary*⁹, supported by the State Department Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL).
 - *Using New Media to Promote Transparency*¹⁰, supported by National Endowment for Democracy (NED).
 - *Promoting Cross-Border Mediation in Civil and Commercial Matters in the Western Balkans*, supported by the Secretariat of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC).

The following **activities** were implemented within these projects:

- A public opinion survey was implemented on the transparency of public procurement during the pandemic on a 1500-strong sample;
- A case study was developed on the public procurement of medical oxygen during the pandemic;¹¹
- Online panel discussions were organized on the transparency of public procurement in Serbia, with a total of 50 participants;
- Meetings were organized with the civil sector and the Commissioner on challenges faced by vulnerable (marginalized) groups in connection with privacy violations;
- Analyses of 8 laws were prepared with the aim of examining the quality of legislative processes, especially from the transparency and participatory aspects¹²;
- Eight blogs on issues of importance for citizens in connection with the operation of the judiciary were developed and posted on the website Open doors of Judiciary;
- Eight local online panels were organized on issues of importance for citizens in connection with the operation of the judiciary;
- The analysis of proactive and reactive transparency of basic and higher courts and prosecutors' offices was developed¹³;
- An analysis of the Law on Social Cards was prepared, with the aim of examining the quality of the legislative process, i.e., the inclusion of a gender perspective;¹⁴
- Support was provided to Serbian civil society organizations (6) with the aim of strengthening their ability to anticipate and reduce external threats and internal vulnerabilities in operation, through the implementation of the Resiliency+ (R+) methodology;
- Three trainings were held for 40 CSOs, human rights defenders and activists on advocacy and legal aspects of community work;

⁸ <https://www.partners-serbia.org/en/defending-the-right-to-access-to-information>

⁹ <https://www.partners-serbia.org/en/strengthening-citizens-trust-in-the-serbian-judiciary>

¹⁰ <https://www.partners-serbia.org/using-new-media-to-promote-transparency-2>

¹¹ https://www.partners-serbia.org//public/news/Analiza_javnih_nabavki.pdf

¹² <https://otvoreniparlament.rs/aktuelno/451>

¹³ https://www.partners-serbia.org//public/news/The_Analysis_of_the_State_of_Transparency_and_Openness_of_the_Judiciary.pdf

¹⁴ <https://www.partners-serbia.org//public/news/rodna-analiza-zakon-o-socijalnoj-karti.pdf>

- Two case studies and two guides on citizen participation in decision-making, strategic advocacy and CSO community work were developed¹⁵;
- About 60 hours of legal support and aid (advice and representation) were provided to CSOs, human rights defenders and activists defending the public interest in local communities;
- Four-day Privacy Week¹⁶ was organized to mark Data Protection Day, with more than 300 participants (hybrid event);
- The analysis of the implementation of sectoral regulations in the field of privacy was developed and published¹⁷;
- Media monitoring was implemented, a report on the application of privacy protection standards in media reporting was made and published¹⁸;
- Support was provided to CSOs (7) for improving internal procedures in order to comply with regulations in the field of personal data protection and privacy;
- Legal support to and representation of privacy violation victims was provided;
- Three case studies and three guides on improving the right to privacy of sensitive social groups were made and published;
- The advocacy campaign was implemented against the introduction of mass biometric surveillance by the MoI;
- Advocacy campaigns were implemented within the Law on Free Access to Information of Public Importance (LFAIPI) amendment process – a policy document was developed for international stakeholders and other CSOs, and media statements were prepared and published;
- Proposals were drafted together with the Coalition for Freedom of Access to Information for LFAIPI amendments¹⁹
- Comments to the Draft Law on Amendments to the LFAIPI were drafted, and other CSOs invited to join the public debate and submit their comments, which was done by more than 20 CSOs²⁰;
- An analysis of the implementation of the Law on Data Secrecy was prepared and published²¹
- The *Epidemija Tajnosti* (Epidemic of Secrecy) analysis was developed and published²²;
- Policy proposals in the field of data secrecy were drafted and communicated to state

¹⁵ https://www.partners-serbia.org//public/news/CS_Uspe%C5%A1ni_aktivisti%C4%8Dki_pristupi.pdf;
https://www.partners-serbia.org//public/news/Prava_i_obaveze_aktivista_-_Buklet.pdf;
https://www.partners-serbia.org//public/news/Pravni_mehanizmi_za_za%C5%A1titu_javnog_interesa.pdf;
https://www.partners-serbia.org//public/news/Pravni_mehanizmi_za_za%C5%A1titu_prava_na_pristup_informacijama_od_javnog_znacaja.pdf;
https://www.partners-serbia.org//public/news/Strate%C5%A1ki_postupci_protiv_u%C4%8De%C5%A1%C4%87a_javnosti_u_Srbiji_-_SLAPP.pdf

¹⁶ <https://www.partners-serbia.org/post/details?id=294>

¹⁷ [https://www.partners-serbia.org//public/news/Privacy_and_Personal_Data_Protection_in_Serbia_-_An_Analysis_of_Selected_Sectoral_Regulations_and_Their_Implementation,_PS\(2\).pdf](https://www.partners-serbia.org//public/news/Privacy_and_Personal_Data_Protection_in_Serbia_-_An_Analysis_of_Selected_Sectoral_Regulations_and_Their_Implementation,_PS(2).pdf)

¹⁸ <https://www.partners-serbia.org//public/news/monitoring-medijske-publikacije.pdf>

¹⁹ <https://transparentnost.org.rs/index.php/sr/aktivnosti-2/pod-lupom/11978-predlozi-predstavnika-civilnog-drustva-radnoj-grupi-za-izradu-%20%20amendment-and-amendment-of-the-law-on-free-access-to-information-of-public-importance>

²⁰ <https://www.partners-serbia.org/post?id=348>

²¹ <https://www.partners-serbia.org//public/news/primena-zakona-o-tajnosti-podataka.pdf>

²² https://www.partners-serbia.org//public/news/Pravo_na_slobodan_pristup_informacijama_od_javnog_znacaja,_Epidemija_tajnosti.pdf

- institutions and international players;
- Two consultative meetings were organized with representatives of CSOs, investigative media, and experts on transparency, as well as with SIGMA representatives;
 - Two public events/conferences (June and September 2021) on the public's right to know were organized for representatives of CSOs, media, institutions of the system, judiciary and international community;
 - The study *Promoting Cross-Border Mediation in Civil and Commercial Matters in the Western Balkans*²³ was prepared.

Participation in Joint Initiatives and Networks

In 2021, Partners Serbia continued to build partnerships with a large number of entities belonging to the civil, public and private sectors both in Serbia and on the global level.

Within the INSPIRES program, we continued cooperating with Partners Global on the implementation of the methodology for assessing and improving resilience of the civil sector to internal and external influences on its operation. In addition to this, we participated in regular (online) meetings of the Partners Network.

In 2021, a network of Southeast European organizations active in the field of digital rights ([South-East Europe Digital Rights Network](#)) was established, and its membership includes Partners Serbia.

In September 2021, we joined the ACTION SEE regional network of civil society organizations, which rallies Western Balkans organizations through the Using New Media to Promote Transparency project. The network consists of organizations from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia. Within the project, regional organizations conduct annual research on the openness of executive and legislative institutions in the Western Balkans through the [Openness Index](#), and Partners Serbia have been participating in a new cycle of institution monitoring in Serbia since September 2021.

Together with the member organizations of the [Coalition for Freedom of Access to Information](#), we implemented a series of advocacy and promotional activities with the aim of improving the transparency of operation of Serbian authorities, including the joint marking of International Right to Know Day (September 28). As a representative of this coalition as well as the [National Convention on European Union in Serbia \(NCEU\)](#), we participated in the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government Working Group on amendments to the Law on Free Access to Information of Public Importance. Also, as a representative of NCEU, we became part of the Serbian Government Working Group for the development of the Personal Data Protection Strategy.

In 2021, we also participated in the working group for development of the Action plan for Open Government Partnership ²⁴, contributing to the development and monitoring of the implementation of the [Action Plan](#) in the field of activities aimed at improving transparency and openness of institutions and responsible use of new technologies.

²³ file:///D:/Downloads/2021-09-PCBM_final.pdf

²⁴ <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/members/serbia/>

Together with the SHARE Foundation, CSO Initiative A11, CSO Da se Zna (Let It Be Known), CSOs Atina and Belgrade Open School organization, in January 2021 we organized the first Privacy Week²⁵, where, during four days, we raised a number of issues of importance for the protection of privacy of Serbian citizens. In November 2021, we started preparing the organization of the 2022 Privacy Week.

In September 2021, after the publication of the controversial Draft Law on Internal Affairs, together with other CSOs which are active in the field of data security and protection, we critiqued this Draft, which resulted in its withdrawal from the official procedure. Our organization has since become part of the consultative process with the Ministry of Interior on the reform of the internal affairs system (with a focus on the potential introduction of biometric surveillance) in Serbia.

Media Visibility and Recognizability in the Community

In 2021, Partners Serbia significantly increased their presence in the media. This implied regular communication with PR agencies, preparation of media announcements and statements, as well as social media campaigns (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter). In 2021, Partners Serbia had 35 appearances on television or radio broadcasts, and our statements, event announcements, event reports and all topics followed by Partners Serbia were shared with the public more than 400 times in printed or online media. The total reach of all announcements in the media, according to the news clipping report, was more than 30,000,000 views in 2021.

Services

In 2021, we continued to provide services to businesses and the civil sector, as follows:

- Services of business operation compliance with LDPD and GDPR (two business clients)
- Trainings on mediation in dispute resolution, 3 basic trainings (41 participants in total) and 3 specialized trainings (58 participants in total): mediation in commercial disputes, mediation in mobbing cases, mediation in family disputes.
- Mediation services in the resolution of disputes, a total of 19 initiated or completed mediation procedures.

Financial Operation

Financial statements for 2021 were submitted in accordance with statutory time frames. Total revenues in 2021 amounted to 36.357.000,00 RSD, while total expenditure amounted to 36.357.000,00 RSD.

²⁵ <https://www.partners-serbia.org/post/details?id=290>; <https://www.partners-serbia.org/post/details?id=294>;

Human Resources

Management Bodies

The Assembly of the organization was held in May 2021 to consider the work report and the financial report and plan of the organization. All documents were adopted.

In accordance with the organization's Statute, an extraordinary assembly was held on July 20, 2021 and management bodies were elected to a period of 4 years. As members of the Board, the Assembly appointed Blažo Nedić, Dragan Joksimović, Jelena Arsić, PhD, Vladan Simeunović and Miodrag Stojadinović. Blažo Nedić was elected Board president, while persons appointed for representation became Blažo Nedić. Ana Toskić Cvetinović was appointed as the organization executive director.

In 2021, the Board met regularly in accordance with the Statute of the organization.

Employees

At the beginning of 2021, the Partners Serbia team was made up of 11 full-time members, specifically: two researchers, a project coordinator, a communication coordinator, an ADR coordinator, a training and capacity building coordinator, an associate for business development, monitoring and evaluation, the head of the program, the head of finance and compliance, an office coordinator, the executive director and the Steering Committee president. In September 2021, two members – the office coordinator and the training and capacity building coordinator - left the team, while another researcher joined the team in November. In the process of internal reorganization, it was decided that the duties of the training and capacity building coordinator should be taken over by the ADR coordinator, while the administrative affairs were taken over by an assistant hired in 2022. Between August and October 2021, Partners Serbia engaged one volunteer.

In December 2021, Partners Serbia organized a five-day teambuilding event for its employees in Barcelona, Spain.

External Associates

Partners Serbia implement an array of activities with the support and engagement of external associates. Thus, in 2021, we continued cooperating with the Active8 company on the maintenance and management of our website, with the Blink PR agency on the promotion of our operation and with the external accountant who supports our financial staff in the preparation of financial reports. In 2021, within preparations for the 2022 Privacy Week, we engaged in cooperation with the DNA

marketing agency, which worked on the visual identity and key messages of the event, and we also continued our cooperation with the Dosije and Kliker graphic studios, which provide the designing and editing services for our publications.

In 2021, our external legal team, made up of lawyers Nina Nicović, Petar Učajev, Mihailo Pavlović, Marina Mijatović and Nenad Kovačević continued to provide support to groups, organizations and activists fighting for the protection of the public interest.

