

Workshop on the Role of CSOs in the EU Integration of the Western Balkans at the European Civil Meeting 2011

Objectives

In the frame of the European Civil Meeting 2011 the International Centre for Democratic Transition (ICDT) organizes a two-day gathering of key stakeholders of the civil society in the Western Balkans to discuss the countries' EU accession challenges and opportunities, and to map out the necessary steps that still lie ahead. Conceived primarily as an event for bringing different organizations together to share information, experiences and ideas, ICDT hopes that the European Civil Meeting and the panels organized on the Western Balkans issues will enhance the cooperation between think tanks and civil society organizations in the region.

Background

The countries in the target regions of the ICDT are going through a complex and difficult period of political, social and economic reforms. Seven countries in the Balkans region aspire to become EU members; Croatia, Montenegro and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) have been officially accepted as candidates for EU membership. The EU considers four other western Balkan countries as potential candidates: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, and Serbia. Regardless of the varying individual status of the Western Balkan countries in the Euro-Atlantic integration processes, there are certain common regional problems that need more attention. Strengthening civil society development and regional cooperation are expected and widely admitted conditions for the integration of these societies into the „European family”, as defined by EU membership. In accordance with the above mentioned conditions, ICDT wishes to use this opportunity to initiate a debate among key stakeholders on the possibility of strengthening civil society's role in the Western Balkans EU integration.

Project Description

The European Civil Meeting 2011 is an official high visibility event of the Hungarian EU Presidency, organized by the Századvég Political School Foundation in Budapest, between 5-7 June, 2011. The central theme of the event is built around the concept of an 'active European citizenship' and is divided into four topics that will be discussed parallelly at workshop sessions. The ICDT is organizing one of these workshops, on the subject of the Role of CSOs in the EU Integration of the Western Balkans.