



### Report of the WG III Social issues and civic participation

WG Social issues and civic participation – 15 participants ( 8 from Russia, 1 – Hungary, 1 – Bulgaria, 1 – Belgium, 2 – Germany, 1 –Romania) and 3 observers (1 – Russia, 1 – Czech Republic, 1 – Belgium).  
Moderators: Anna Skvortsova, NGO Development Center, François Berthet-Rosenfelder from Solidar,  
notes: Natalia Kaminarskaya, Donor's Forum.

**How we worked:** The first round - short introductions (name, organization, country), then people were asked to answer 3 questions:

- (1) The most important achievement of your organization;
- (2) Challenge;
- (3) Your proposal for the WG.

On the base of the proposals we made a plan of WG for 2011.

#### **Summary:**

As foreseen, a gap appeared between authorities and people. This gap doesn't concern only Russia, but other countries as well. In most speeches were the same words used - social standards are exclusively in the hands of authorities, but should be in the hands of people. *"How to force politicians to understand that they are a part of civil society?"* We are here to reduce this gap, otherwise we could have a situation like in Arabic countries.

The question is - how to reduce this gap?

We have to return to a conversation on citizen's participation at different levels. We have to decide upon criteria on evaluation of such participation and cooperation that should become real and effective.

To do so - there are 2 main ways (words):

- **cooperation** - sharing experience, sharing know-how on how to develop civic participation on local, regional and national level.
- another tool is the usage of **IT** that can help in assistance to transfer of knowledge and methods, as well as setting up specific projects. For instance, a web site allowing to communicate distantly, to place data base about NGOs and a bank of good practices, and specific projects elaboration and search for the partners.

François: *"When a decision is taken by the state – even in France it happens -, they don't pay attention to citizens. But there are 1mln associations in a country with 65 mln of population, so any anticitizen decision will face a public campaign of thousands of people. Other countries have their own way. Russia has to observe all experiences and take the way, suitable for itself".*

#### **Draft plan the WG for 2011:**

##### **3 directions for our possible cooperation:**

###### **1) Civic participation:**

- a. Issues for volunteers, youth work – civic education for the youth
- b. Influencing policy
- c. Development of the territories (local communities)

###### **2) Contract / agreement between states and NGOs** - standards for civic participation, standards for public dialogue, evaluation and monitoring of its implementation;

###### **3) Information-technological exchange** – web site of WG, data base, bulletins and e-mail lists, elaboration of specific projects, best/worst practices exchange. Our WG discussed that we would like to apply for available resources for that work.



**And these all is implemented on 3 levels of interaction and levels of the exchange of experience between organizations:**

- National
- Regional
- Local

### **Concrete proposal for 2011:**

To elaborate standards for real participation of the citizens in public decision and criteria for monitoring of its implementation. How:

- ✓ Analysis of legislation in different countries
- ✓ Analysis of the practices in different countries
- ✓ Summary about different success factors of influence
- ✓ Recommendations for the politicians and various stakeholders including NGOs

**Coordinators of this work on standards: Elena Malitskaya, Novosibirsk, Slaveya Christova, Sofia.**

They will set an e-mail list in order to contact people from the WG and ask for proposals, gather information, examples of the best practices etc., then structure this information, establish template and send it to the people so they can fill it (for ideas, legislation, examples, projects, standards...). They will facilitate those who would like to participate with proposal etc. – for standards of civic participation. If a possibility of autumn meeting of the EU Russia Civil society forum happens, then our WG is ready to report about achieved results. **Oleg Sharipkov**, Penza, will create group on Facebook for our WG.

*(Report by Anna Skvortsova, François Berthet-Rosenfelder, Natalia Kaminarskaya, Slaveya Christova, Prague, March 29, 2011)*