
Fostering interactions between the private sector and civil society, facilitating space for change

September 19, 2024, 14:00-15:30 CEST

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Meeting ID: 370 635 168 238

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While democratic backsliding and closing civic space primarily affect civil society organisations, environments with limited democratic dialogue also negatively impact the private sector. Hence, private businesses and their interest groups are well advised to observe closely how their political and regulatory environment is changing and to take an active role in defending democratic key principles of public dialogue and engagement.

Under the leadership of the regional programme, RECONOMY, and the project Proactive Citizens (PRAGG, Bosnia and Herzegovina), in collaboration with the European Training Foundation (ETF), the webinar seeks to foster innovative responses within the private sector amidst evolving and challenging contexts characterized by democratic backsliding and social conflict. It aims to empower the region's private sector with practical tools and strategies to drive positive societal impact amidst complex and constraining environments. To do so, the webinar explores regional and local initiatives in which the private sector effectively catalysed positive change through collaboration with civil society and policy makers, and extracts insights and lessons learned from successful and failed initiatives.

Key questions

- How does the changing space for advocacy affect private sector actors such as industry associations and chambers of commerce? Which similarities and differences are there if compared to civil society experiences?
- Which strategies do private sector actors use in constrained political contexts to be heard, defend their interests, and promote innovative ideas?
- How can civil society and private sector actors collaborate and support each other with the shared aim of democratic and transparent public dialogue? What works, what not – and where are the limits of such collaboration?
- How can business and civil society organizations build sustainable partnerships that go beyond short-term projects and contribute to long-term societal resilience and development? What are the key challenges faced by businesses engaging in social impact initiatives, and how can these risks be mitigated?

Two case studies will be presented as an inspiration for discussion:

<p>Green Building Council, Serbia (RECONOMY) supported by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and implemented by Helvetas¹</p>	<p>Investment Council, Albania from the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) supported by the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO)².</p>
<p>Serbia Green Building Council (SrbGBC) is a strong community of individuals, companies and organisations that strives to enhance green building in Serbia. It is a place for dialogue, exchange of information and knowledge about sustainability, with the aim of positively influencing the public in understanding the necessity for green building. Starting from transforming the existing, with the final aim of turning the nation's profile entirely net zero, and winning our common fight against climate change</p>	<p>Albania Investment Council has been established as an advisory body of the Government. Its role is to facilitate constructive dialogue and exchange of views between the Government and the private sector to facilitate dialogue in the area of investment climate. The ideas emerging from the webinar will be further explored at the Annual RAN Workshop happening in October 2024 in Sarajevo and hosted by PRAGG.</p>

#	Time	What
1	14:00 14:05	<p>Welcome and setting the stage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Valbona Karakaçi, <i>Advocacy Network Facilitator</i> Csilla Schalbert, <i>PRAGG</i>
2	14:05 14:30	<p>Session 1: Collaboration among civil society and private sector actors on facilitating space for change: what works, what not?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bernd Steimann, <i>Development Policy Coordinator, Helvetas</i> Siria Taurelli, <i>Senior Human Capital Development Expert, ETF</i> <p><i>Followed by Q&A</i></p>
3	14:30 15:00	<p>Session 2: Multi-stakeholder platforms as collaborative spaces for change</p> <p>Examples from the Green Building Council and Investment Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dr. Bojana Zekovic, <i>President of the Green Building Council of Serbia</i> Dr. Diana Leka (Angoni), <i>Head of the Secretariat of the Investment Council</i> <p><i>Followed by Q&A</i></p>
4	15:00- 15:25	<p>Panel discussion with key speakers and representatives from civil society and private sector</p>
4	15:25 15:30	<p>Wrap-up – Takeaways</p> <p>Paulo Rodrigues and Snezana Mistic</p>

This webinar is a collaboration of the Helvetas Regional Advocacy Network (RAN) with

¹ <https://worldgbc.org/gbc/serbia-green-building-council/>

² <https://www.investment.com.al/>