

Communication on Engagement 2024

Statement by the CDF's Secretary General expressing continued support for the UN Global Compact and renewing the participant's ongoing commitment to the initiative

Center for Democracy Foundation (CDF) has been a Global Compact participant since 2008. CDF fully supports the UN Global Compact and the ten principles regarding human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption. CDF is a non-profit, non-governmental and non-partisan organization which, along 30 years of operation, has undertaken more than 130 projects. Our mission is to fight for a democratic and European Serbia, to empower citizens to participate in decision-making process on community development, to advocate for the principle of solidarity and sustainable development, and to promote economic and social rights.

CDF is one of the leading organizations in Serbia in the field of socio-economic development which in the last 19 years has been constantly increasing its expertise and experience in the monitoring of economic, social and labour rights in a changing economic environment and in the context of the development perspective. CDF has become recognized and credible interlocutor on related topics, invited as consultant and associate by domestic and foreign organizations and institutions. CDF has a wide network of partners and associates, in public and business sector. It influenced public policies through recommending modification of legal and institutional framework. This expertise earned the CDF a position of a Chair of the Working group for monitoring Chapters 2 and 19 (free movement of workers, social policy and employment) within the National Convention on the EU (NCEU), the largest non-profit network in Serbia. The Foundation is a member of the of The Platform of Organizations for Cooperation with UN Human Rights Mechanisms, as well as European Association for Local Democracy (ALDA). Nataša Vučković, Secretary General of CDF is a Vice President and member of the ALDA's Governing Board.

In 2020 the Center for Democracy Foundation became member of the consortium of the NGOs in Serbia establishing the Society Wide Platform Sustainable Development for All, through which it promotes and monitors the implementation of the Agenda 2030 in Serbia (www.sdgs4all.rs).

CDF, as part of the Initiative for Global Solidarity (IGS) project, in 2023 started implementation a dialogue series on promoting human rights and environmental due diligence in global supply chains, as well as responsible business practices and complaint mechanisms.

CDF will continue its commitment and support to the UN Global Compact and its principles through CDF's future activities and projects.

On behalf of the Centre for Democracy Foundation,

Natasa Vuckovic

Secretary General

February 26, 2024

The Center for Democracy Foundation achieves its mission through 3 main programs:

- 1) EU values in Serbia through democracy, rule of law and human rights
- 2) Labour rights, employment and social cohesion
- 3) Public dialogue

Program 1 – EU values in Serbia through democracy, rule of law and human rights

One of the most representative CDF's brands is Politeia School for Youth Participation as a respectable youth education course, started in 1998 and had nearly 2500 students, and from Serbian based became a regional brand within a three-year project **Regional Youth Compact for Europe – RYCE** (2018-2021). RYCE was funded by the European Commission, implemented by Center for Democracy and 13 partners from the Western Balkans Region. Various activities aimed to contribute to empowerment of CSOs, particularly the youth organizations in WB and Turkey, to more effectively participate in reforms relative to the EU accession negotiation process, to dialogue with governments and influence policy through consolidating platforms for regional cooperation, fostering participative culture and promoting active citizenship, accountability of government to citizens and society and nurturing common European identity.

In February 2023, CDF as the coordinator started the implementation of a three-year regional project **“Regional Youth Dialogue for Europe – RYDE”** together with six partners from the Western Balkans, also supported by European Commission, as a continuation of the previous RYCE project. The overall objective of RYDE is to contribute to strengthening participatory democracy, EU integration and regional cooperation in the Western Balkans through increased impact of CSOs and particularly youth organizations in promoting democratic values, political, economic and social benefits of the EU integration of the WB.

CDF has been organizing the **Public Reading of the European Commission's Progress Report on Serbia** since 2019, in cooperation with the European Western Balkans with goal to present to domestic public key findings of the European Commission regarding the progress towards reforms on the Serbian road to European Union.). As the coordinator of Chapters 2 and 19 within the NCEU, the Foundation participates in the creation of the NCEU's annual Book of Recommendations.

Within the **project "The Constitution concerns all of us!"** a series of public debates was held throughout Serbia on the importance of constitutional reforms and promoting changes to the Constitution for the purpose of judicial independence in Serbia.

Project **LAWGEM**, supported by the Erasmus + Program, led by the Faculty of Law from Belgrade, with Center for Democracy as a partner, aims firstly, to build a fully innovative systemic curriculum of master legal studies (the main intellectual outcome), which would encompass all relevant fields of legal education and legal practice, as well as non-legal relevant fields such as the economic analysis of law, criminology, and other social-psychological fields of research and knowledge. It started in December 2019.

Program 2 - Labour rights, employment and social cohesion

Society Wide Platform Sustainable Development for All – SDGs is a three-year project launched in 2020. The platform is structured in three pillars corresponding to the three dimensions of sustainable development: social, economic and environmental, but from the overall management perspective, it is operated in an integrated manner, recognizing that the SDGs and targets are closely interlinked. CDF undertakes analytical, monitoring, advocacy and training activities on local and national level within the social pillar of the platform. The CDF expert team has contributed through relevant analyses and reports to the promotion and better understanding of the Agenda 2030 and its implementation mechanisms.

Labour Rights are Our Rights – six-year lasting project supported by the Olof Palme International Center, implements set of activities with aim to contribute to improvement of implementation of decent work standards and protection of labour rights, which includes different stakeholders (state institutions, trade unions, NGOs, citizens...). As part of this project, CDF has been preparing an Annual report on the state of labor rights in Serbia since 2019.

Policies for the Benefit All – Measuring Social Impact of Public Policies through Empowerment and Inclusion of Citizens (2019-2023) – The project aims to contribute to strengthening of the social dimension of the process of Serbia's accession to the EU, through promoting the European Pillar of Social Rights, through the creation of a methodology for measuring impact of public policies onto society and through empowerment and inclusion of citizens in debating public policies and providing inputs through their organizations, groups and movements. The project aims to advance cooperation among different stakeholders so as to make more voices heard in the process of policy design. Project started in 2019 and will last until 2023.

Inclusion of Roma and Other Marginalized Groups in Serbia – as partner of GiZ (German Organization for International Development), the CDF prepared sets of analyses related to the position of marginalized groups in the Serbian society. Through dialogue sessions with government bodies, local governments, NGOs and businesses valuable and highly relevant recommendations for public policies were debated and advocated for.

During 2022/2023, the Center for Democracy Foundation in cooperation with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) conducted activities within the Joint United Nations Program „**Extending Social Protection to families in Serbia with enhanced shock-responsiveness**“. The documents „The Impact of the Global Crisis on Vulnerable Groups - Findings from the Focus Group Discussions“ and the analysis of „Poverty Projections for Older Persons - The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Ukrainian crisis on the poverty of older persons in the Republic of Serbia“ were published by CDF. UN Joint Programme Extending Social Protection to families in Serbia with enhanced shock-responsiveness focuses on strengthening shock-responsive social protection system to mitigate the socio-economic impacts of the consecutive crisis that hit the country.

In 2023, the CDF with the support of German Cooperation in Serbia is implementing the Mentoring and Monitoring for Real Impact project with the aim of promoting gender equality in Serbia by empowering women's organisations to respond to key gender challenges in society. We contribute to the promotion of social inclusion in Serbia - improving the provision of social services for women and marginalised groups, economic empowerment of women, anti-discrimination and intersectionality, especially in the domains of unpaid work, gender-based violence, the position of women on the labour market, women with disabilities, etc.

Program 3 – Promoting Public Dialogue

Since 2007, more than 130 debates have been organized by CDF through the **Dialogue in the Center Platform**, where important political, security, economic and social issues are put in the public's focus, key stakeholders are connected, and citizens actively participate in discussions. CDF participates in all relevant EU accession-related dialogue and events. In 2023, the Center for Democracy Foundation has been elected as a member of The Serbian Government's Council for creating a stimulating environment for the development of civil society. In the last years, the CDF also has been elected as a member of the EU-Serbia Joint Consultative Committee (JCC), enabling representatives of both the EU and the Serbian civil society to monitor the country's accession negotiations, discuss issues of common interest and point out concerns to be tackled on the Serbian path towards the European Union.