

MCIC

Bulletin



The fifth NGO Fair - Macedonian Civil Society Forum took place

THE CENTER IS WHERE YOU ARE!

A total of 228 civic organizations, of which 19 from abroad, presented themselves at the NGO Fair. Participants and visitors had the opportunity to attend around 60 panels, round tables, educational sessions as well as socio-cultural events. Around 8700 citizens visited the Fair this year.

The central event of the civil sector, the Fifth NGO Fair – Macedonian Civil Society Forum, this year took place between 9 to 11th December 2005, at the Skopje Fair. This year the motto of the Fair was “The center is where you are!” which reflected the topic in focus – decentralization. Focus country for this year’s NGO Fair was Albania. The Fair was organized by the Macedonian Center for International Cooperation. At the opening ceremony of the Fifth NGO Fair – Macedonian Civil Society Forum, the Special Envoy of the European Union and Head of the Delegation of the European Union to Skopje Mr. Erwan Fouéré addressed the present: “A developed civil sector is an indicator of a healthy society, the civil sector is a partner of the government in the implementation of the European regulations and on Macedonia’s path to Europe, however the civil sector is also a sector that is

successful in the struggle for human rights, in the fight for improving social conditions in the country, a sector which has successes in the field of improving education in Macedonia”, stressed Fouere. Talking about decentralization, at the opening of the NGO Fair, Ace Kocovski the Mayor of Veles gave a speech. “With the process of decentralization the state will renounce part of its power but the citizens need to accept that they are power and a decisive factor”, Kocovski pointed out. Those present were addressed also by Ligor Nikola, president of the Association for Albanian-Macedonian friendship from Tirana, who emphasized the need for implementing the agreements for mutual cooperation between Macedonia and Albania. Saso Klekovski, Executive Director of the Macedonian Center for International Cooperation in his address, reminded the present, that the campaign “Zero tolerance for corruption” and the privatization of the Electrical Company of Macedonia are simultaneously beginning. “These events are a great challenge for the civil sector as well, to be actively involved in these processes and to take action”, underlined Klekovski who also added that it should not be overlooked that 2005 is the year of the start of the Roma Decade 2005-2015, as well as that we are half-way towards proposing the first Law on citizens initiative. At the opening of the NGO Fair, besides repre-

sentatives from the civil organizations, the business sector, diplomatic corps and state institutions as well as the president of the Republic of Macedonia, Mr. Branko Crvenkovski were present.



The NGO Fair was visited by elementary and secondary school students

EXHIBITION

A total of 228 civic organizations presented their activities at the stands in the exhibition part. 19 of these organizations were from Albania, Kosovo (S&M) and Kyrgyzstan. This time again, the civil organizations presented themselves in all their ingenuity. Through their promo-

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- The positive - will always be an example for others

tional materials they presented the results of their work. At the stands not only flyers and brochures, posters and bulletins, but the organizations also presented their public relations skills, ready to respond to all questions and assist the visitors with everything they might be interested in. The activists met their potential partners for future projects, crystallized ideas for new activities and potential collaborations. "The Fair is a good opportunity to establish contacts with other civic organizations, to communicate, to promote some issues

Fair and to get an impression about the civil sector in Macedonia. I saw very interesting organizations which I didn't know existed. I would like to review the program and maybe visit some of the forum events", she stated.

The NGO Fair visitors could visit the exhibition, could visit some of the forum events or the socio-cultural events. "Around twenty of us came from our organization", Enis Demiri, from the organization "Sonce" from Tetovo told us. "We had the opportunity to observe many civic organizations in one

good management a civil organizations as well as the role of civil society in providing health and social services and prevention. Those interested had the opportunity to discuss how Macedonia is creating its brand and what could be done in order to improve the brand, while the students discussed the opportunities for internship during studies. While discussing political management and the instruments for applied politics in developing and countries in transition, those present

TASKS MUST BE FULLY COMPLETED DESPITE THE RESPONSE

What after December 15th – was the central issue of the panel "Waiting for the EU response – 5 days before" which was organized by the Delegation of the European Commission and the Macedonian Center for International Cooperation. "A year ago we had doubts whether our administration could respond to the EU questionnaire and whether it is qualified enough. Now we can state that some doubts were justified and some not", stated at the panel Radmila Sekerinska. "The aspiration towards EU membership is very noble", stated Erwan Fouéré, Special Envoy of the EU and Head of the Delegation of the European Union to Skopje. Civil society and civic initiatives are very important in the EU, hence the cooperation of the government and the civil sector is one of the crucial issues", Fouéré emphasized.



One of the most important questions was discussed at the NGO Fair

"To fulfill the Copenhagen criteria means to improve living conditions here in Macedonia. We are not doing this for others but for ourselves", added Slobodan Chasule, Member of the Macedonian Parliament.

"The importance of the civic initiative must be understood, and I am not referring only to the big civic organizations, I refer to a group of people who sat down, agreed and found a joint solution", stated Saso Klekovski, Executive Director of the Macedonian Center for International Cooperation. "We have to learn to talk. We still want my solution to become the joint solution. We have to overcome this", Klekovski explained.

The panelists agreed on one: they are optimistic with regards to the response from the Council of Ministries, but whatever it is, the strides on the path towards Eurointegrations must continue.

and to share opinions", Gjuner Nebiu from the organization "Antico", told us. "We extended our contacts, renewed them and established some new ones. This will surely contribute towards new collaborations and new networks of friends and partnerships", she added.

Around 8700 citizens visited the NGO Fair, 1000 of which came from other cities in Macedonia with the organized transport, subsidized by MCIC. "I saw almost everything. I think it is quite interesting, there are many different organizations and various topics", Urtike Eckman, a visitor to the Fair said. "This is my first NGO Fair in Macedonia and generally. I do not have any special interest; I just came to see the

place and to see their activities. We visited one socio-cultural event, it was very good. I am pleased to have spent a day here. We got many new ideas which I believe will be developed in our organization", he said.

FORUM

In the forum part, organizations and visitors were offered sixty events including panels, round tables, educational sessions, presentations and promotions. Despite the fact that the largest numbers of panels were dedicated to the topic in focus - decentralization, still other topics were also addressed. Those interested could participate in the panels related to citizen participation in the decision-making process,

at the panel discussed the reforms and whether in Macedonia exists the will-power to implement them. At this Fair topics addressing awareness among women for early detection of breast cancer, were also present.

The forum events at this year's fair were visited by 1060 citizens. Organizations from the region had the opportunity to present themselves in the forum also. Those interested could see the presentation of an organization from Albania and from Kyrgyzstan, to participate in the workshop which had guests from Albania, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro and Turkey.