

ANNUAL PROGRAMME REPORT

FM14-21

Croatia

HR-ACTIVECITIZENS Civil Society

2022

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The financial mechanism of the European Economic Area (EEA) and the Norwegian financial mechanism contribute to the reduction of social and economic inequalities in Europe and at the same time strengthen bilateral cooperation between the donor countries (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway) and the Republic of Croatia.

The programme Active Citizens Fund supports the objective "Civil Society and active citizenship strengthened and vulnerable groups empowered" through seven calls for thematic projects cross-covering all outcomes and all five areas of support including technical assistance to potential applicants and capacity building for potential applicants and project promoters. The Program for the Republic of Croatia is implemented by the Community Foundation Slagalica, the SOLIDARNA foundation for human rights and solidarity and the Association for the Development of Civil Society SMART from Croatia, and the Center for Information and Development of NGOs from Slovenia.

The Programme was amended in 2022, adding 560,000€ to the initially planned budget (Reserve funds within the EEA and Norway grants financial mechanisms with 508,000€ from the Norway grants and 52,000€ EEA). We have made extra efforts for a quick reaction and in addition to already planned six calls, the call for organisational grants was launched enabling 20 months for implementation for 7 project promoters. Beside, 2 additional grants were contracted under the call for medium projects, Lot 1 (community based associations, one is Roma association) and supported within the amended budget.

After 3 years of implementation, the Programme is on its peak, all contracted projects are in the implementation stage except 30 ad-hoc action and 4 small projects, completed by the end of 2022. We can report successful implementations with no delay nor excessive reallocation of funds comparing the initial plan for all outcomes (+18,2% for outcome 1 and +18,63% for outcome 3). Achievement of results will gradually grow as 117 of large, sectoral innovations, medium and small grants as well as organisational grants are still in the implementation stage with completion expected in Q4 2023 and Q1 2024. Only the rolling call for ad-hoc action grants with available 58,665€ is still open.

Number of people engaged and number of CSOs funded by the programme are overachieved as well as some other indicators over all outcomes. The number of evidence-based policy submissions by CSOs is also overachieved due to substantial number of laws and regulations that were in the process at the

Parliament, all relevant for project promoters (i.e. prevention of domestic violence, early and preschool education, advocacy for gender equality in the labour market as a tool to implement wage equality policy, law on youth councils etc.).

Media appearances of the project promoters is gradually growing especially in relation to projects contracted during the lockdown which prevented many of usual off-line activities, public campaigns, study visits etc. The most successful and visible project results until now are connected to the protection of women's rights in healthcare, parental leave for fathers etc.

Underachievement is expected for output 1.1. Strategic litigation supported (1 case supported with 2 CSOs engaged) although this indicator reflects results of the needs assessment and stakeholder consultations held prior to submission of the result framework.

Number of projects involving cooperation with a donor project partner is overachieved (45 of planned 10) with 34 Norway and 11 Icelandic organisations. Results for the Regional Civil Society Initiatives are also overachieved; after two years with lockdown many new initiatives grow, Community of Actions is leading initiator for new cooperation and exchange (we have joined the team early 2020).

The programme addressed all country-specific concerns. The capacity and sustainability of the civil society sector is strengthened through comprehensive capacity building and earmarked 13% for organisational development within the contracted budgets for large and medium projects; 45 project promoters are from underserved areas and even more supported for undeserved target groups (Roma children and young women, victims of domestic violence, migrants, vulnerable groups with mental and physical disabilities, socially excluded groups of LGBTIQ community etc.). Partnership between developed and less developed CSOs is well promoted for exchange and development of new associations.

During 2021 and 2022 we had overlapping of project monitoring and processing of reports (71 projects) with development of three new calls including evaluation and contracting which temporary caused some delays in the processing of reports.

The call for ad-hoc action projects is rolling call with still available 58,000€, closing date is August 24, 2023 unless funds are spent early.

The call for bilateral initiatives will be open in Q1 2023 for all project promoters with bilateral partners. Available is 65,000€ which may slightly increase in case funds reserved for the Active Citizens Day are not spent.