



# **EU Programmes for Civil Society Organisations**



# **EU Programmes for Civil Society Organisations**

**Research Report**

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## Executive Summary

EU Programmes are multi-annual programmes dedicated to implementation of specific EU policy, with well-defined objectives and budget. These programmes target specific sectors and beneficiaries that can be government institutions, professional/specialised/research institutions and non-government organisations. Different Directorate Generals of the European Commission are responsible for the implementation of the individual EU Programmes according to their scope of work.

Each of the EU Programmes aims to promote/support EU policies and strengthen cooperation between EU Member States (and other members such as accession and pre-accession countries) in certain areas such as research & innovation, education, culture, health, environmental protection, custom and taxation, justice etc.

The Framework Agreement (FA) between Kosovo and the European Commission on general principles for participation in EU Programmes was signed on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2016. The FA includes a list of the 17 EU Programmes that Kosovo is eligible to participate in. During 2017 and 2018 Kosovo has prioritised four EU programmes for which International Agreements with the EU are signed accordingly. These agreements have been ratified by September 2018, in accordance with Kosovo's legislative requirements. This will open the possibilities for Kosovo CSOs to apply even as lead organisations to different calls for proposals launched under this programmes. First opportunity is the programme EU for Citizens with its call for proposals in late 2018.

The research aims at mapping all 17 programmes and emphasising their relevance for CSOs in general and Kosovo CSOs in particular. Furthermore, the research focuses specifically on four EU programmes for which IAs have been signed and provides further information on advantages and challenges for Kosovo CSOs in relation to these programmes.

Through interviews and case studies, the research aims to tackle key advantages and challenges for CSOs when applying for and implementing the EU programmes. Finally, the research provides conclusions and recommendations in terms of level of awareness for the EU programmes among Kosovo CSOs, the need for support be it form government institutions, donors or through targeted and tailor made capacity building programmes.

It is worth mentioning that the research was conducted and the report was drafted by the end of August 2018, and the conclusions and recommendations are provided for this timeframe of the research.

## Introduction

European Commission (EC) in its area of international cooperation and development has indicated that the civil society has a great role in building democratic systems through contributing to development of effective policies, equitable and sustainable development and inclusive growth. This way, citizens needs and concerns will be better represented and taken into consideration. Therefore, the EC calls for strengthened “links with civil society organisations, social partners and local authorities, through regular dialogue and use of best practises”, in particular to “support the emergence of a local civil society which can effectively contribute to dialogue with public authorities and to oversee their work”<sup>1</sup>.

This role of civil society is envisaged within the EU programmes as well. A number of EU programmes and just to mention a few, like, EU for Citizens or Culture for Europe, Erasmus +, have specific priorities and components that mainly target civil society organisations and promote their role in building and strengthening democratic societies.

As Kosovo has expressed interest for Europe for Citizens, Erasmus +, COSME and Creative Europe among the list of total of 17 programmes available under the Framework Agreement signed between the European Union and Kosovo<sup>2</sup> and as KCSF continues to support Kosovo CSOs in their contribution to overall European Integration process, the need of a study to map all 17 EU Programmes and their accessibility by CSOs was identified. This study will aim:

- To elaborate and provide information on Union Programmes which are dedicated for the benefit of CSOs.
- Provide information on the capacities of CSOs in Kosovo to absorb the funds of those programmes
- Provide input for KCSF to design special training programs that would address the needs of CSOs in terms of accessing and absorbing the EU programmes
- Provide input for future advocacy activities for applying for other EU programmes where Kosovo CSOs have capacity and eligibility to apply.

Furthermore, this study will aim at better informing the Kosovo CSOs in EU Programmes, how they can be accessed and implemented. Information from best practises form the region will be provided as concrete examples. Having in mind that Kosovo lacks behind other countries in Western Balkans in terms of benefiting from EU programmes, regional practises can serve as a good guideline for the way forward. Finally, proposals on the way forward for future steps in terms of advocacy and capacity building to strengthen the possibility of Kosovo CSOs to benefit from these funds will be provided.

The research methodology includes desk research and interviews with national and locally based CSOs throughout Kosovo. Other relevant stakeholders are also interviewed for this research purposes.

Although the research, through interviews, has included a number of CSOs (a total of eight), this sample can be seen as limiting factor of research. Furthermore, as EU programmes often require partnerships with other stakeholders, like government institutions or universities, this aspect could be taken into consideration when conducting research related to these programmes. As this is not the case with this research, this may be considered as another limiting factor.

<sup>1</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sectors/human-rights-and-governance/civil-society\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sectors/human-rights-and-governance/civil-society_en)

<sup>2</sup> FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT between the European Union and Kosovo on the general principles for the participation of Kosovo in Union programmes

# Problem description

## 1.1 Background

At the end of 2013, the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union came to an agreement on the budget for the EU for the next seven years programming period (2014-2020). A substantial part of this new budgetary plan, with a total amount of €960 billion, is to be used for EU funding instruments, programmes and initiatives. Within this amount is the funding allocated to **EU Programmes** for the period 2014-2020, most of which are the continuation of previously implemented programmes during the period 2007-2013.

EU Programmes are multi-annual programmes dedicated to implementation of specific EU policy, with well-defined objectives and budget. These programmes target specific sectors and beneficiaries that can be government institutions, professional/specialised/research institutions and non-government organisations. Different Directorate Generals of the European Commission are responsible for the implementation of the individual EU Programmes according to their scope of work.

Each of the EU Programmes aims to promote/support EU policies and strengthen cooperation between EU Member States (and other members such as accession and pre-accession countries) in certain areas such as research & innovation, education, culture, health, environmental protection, custom and taxation, justice etc.

Originally the EU Programmes (ex-Community Programmes) were designed only for EU Member State Countries but in 2003 during the European Council meeting in Thessaloniki, it was decided to open the European Union Programmes to countries outside the EU and EEA, who were in the Stabilisation and Association Process. The objective of participation of candidate countries and potential candidates is to facilitate their accession to the EU, as well as to familiarise them with the methods and policies of the EU. The purpose of participating in EU programmes, agencies and committees is to help enlargement countries become familiar with EU policies and instruments and to enhance co-operation before accession. The principle of participation was agreed by the European Council in December 1997 for candidate countries and in 2003 – for Western Balkan countries. Participation is decided on a case by case basis for each programme, agency and committee. Candidate and potential candidate countries can request co-financing through IPA of up to 90% of the country contribution to an EU programme in the first year of participation.

Candidate Countries and potential candidate countries can participate in EU Programmes by signing a Framework Agreement between the Government and EC service. The Framework Agreement defines general principles and rules for participation in the EU Programmes. The next step is that the Government should then express interest (based on the needs and national priorities) on participation in particular EU programmes provided that administrative and absorption capacities are in place. After the EC agrees on the programmes proposed, an international agreement is signed between EC and Government on the specific EU Programmes. Non EU Member State Countries are obliged also to *pay a fee (entry ticket) for participating* in the EU Programmes. The fees are different for the various Programmes and various countries, as each programme has its own rules for participation. Some of EU Programmes have sub-programmes, so eligible Non-EU member Countries can decide to participate in a specific part of the Programme and not in the Programme as a whole (this is also subject of negotiation with European Commission).

## 1.2 Kosovo and its relation to EU Programmes

Since April 2005 the European Commission is committed to support Kosovo to its European path. This commitment was recognised by adopting the Communication to the Council “*A European Future for Kosovo*”, aiming to support the stabilization and association process. On 17 February 2008 the Parliament of Kosovo ratified Kosovo’s declaration on independence from Serbia. On December 2009 the European Commission was asked by the Council to further support Kosovo’s progress towards the EU in line with the European perspective of the region and despite other matters to open up for Kosovo taking part in Union Programmes.

The process of Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) between Kosovo and the EU started on October 2013. The Stabilization and Association Agreement was signed in October 2015 and entered into force on 1 April 2016. By signing this Agreement Kosovo entered for the first time into a contractual agreement with EU, for which it is committed to fulfil the obligations deriving from SAA (alignment of legislation, trade issues etc.).

In order to increase the efficiency in meeting the responsibilities arising from the SAA, Kosovo government decided to use the opportunity to participate in Union Programmes with the aim to further build technical and administrative capacities in line with EU standards. Following decisions by the European Parliament and Council, Kosovo can participate in Union Programmes. The Framework Agreement (FWA) includes (annex 1) a list of the 17 Union Programmes in which Kosovo is eligible to participate.

The following is the summary of the key dates relevant for Kosovo and its relation to EU programmes:

- Potential candidate countries have been eligible to participate to EU Programmes since European Council meeting in Thessaloniki in 2003.
- On 20 April 2005 the EC adopted the Communication on Kosovo to the Council “*A European Future for Kosovo*” which reinforced the Commission’s commitment to support Kosovo in the EU integration process.
- The Republic of Kosovo’s declaration on independence from Serbia was ratified on 17 February 2008 by Parliament of Kosovo.
- On 7 December 2009 the Council welcomed the European Commission’s Communication of 14 October 2009 entitled “*Kosovo – Fulfilling its European Perspective*”. EC was asked to further support Kosovo’s progress towards the Union in line with the European perspective of the region and despite other matters to open up for Kosovo taking part in EU programmes
- On 22 October 2012 the Council authorised the European Commission to open negotiations on behalf of the Union on a framework agreement with Kosovo concerning its participation in Union programmes.
- The Stabilization and Association Agreement was signed in February 2016 and entered into force on 1 April 2016 opening in this way a new perspective for Kosovo. Entering into contractual agreement with EU, Kosovo is committed to fulfilling the obligations deriving from SAA (alignment of legislation, trade issues etc.)
- The Framework Agreement (FA) between Kosovo and the EC on general principles for participation in EU Programmes was signed on the 25<sup>th</sup> November 2016. The FA includes (annex 1) a list of the 17 EU Programmes that Kosovo is eligible to participate in. The following is the full list of programmes that are part of the FA:

During 2017 and 2018 Kosovo has signed and ratified agreements with the EU to join four (4) EU programmes.

The European Commission urges countries that become eligible for the Union Programmes to conduct thorough needs assessment and prioritise their application to programmes of their interest. Upon the signature of the FA, Kosovo government, under the leadership of the Ministry of European Integration has conducted several consultative workshops with different interest groups: government institutions, CSOs, private sector, education related institutions, etc. with the aim of mapping sectoral needs as a first step towards the

prioritising the participation in EU programmes. A preliminary needs assessment was conducted to support the prioritisation process. The needs assessment has taken into consideration key policy documents like the National Development Strategy, SAA Action Plan, European Reform Agenda and other national policies. The following are the Union Programmes for which Kosovo decided to enter negotiations and sign International Agreements:

- **Erasmus +** - *beneficiary: Ministry of Education, Science and Technology*; Erasmus+ is the Union Programme in the fields of education, training, youth and sport with the aim to contribute to the Europe 2020 strategy for growth, jobs, social equity and inclusion. Erasmus+ also aims to promote the sustainable development of its partners in the field of higher education, and contribute to achieving the objectives of the EU Youth Strategy.
- **COSME** – *beneficiary: Ministry of Trade and Industry*; The Programme is established by the Regulation (EU) No 1288/2013 of the European Parliament and the Council of 11 December 2013 with the aim to promote entrepreneurship and improve the business environment for SMEs.
- **Creative Europe** – *beneficiary: Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports*; The Programme is established by the Regulation (EU) No 1295/2013 of the European Parliament and the Council of 11 December 2013 with the aim to support the culture and audio-visual sector initiatives.
- **Europe for citizens** – *beneficiary: Ministry of European Integration*. The Programme is established by the Council Regulation (EU) No 390/2014 of 14 April 2014 with the aim to support: an understanding of the EU, its history and diversity and Democratic engagement and civic participation.

It should be noted that out of four above-mentioned programmes, three are the EU programmes that largely are designed and target the civil society organisations (CSOs). Indeed, programmes like Europe for Citizens or Creative Europe are almost exclusively implemented by the CSOs and promote European democratic values, through the human rights, democracy or cultural perspective. Prioritising this particular programmes for Kosovo as first set of EU programmes for Kosovo to actively participate, provides an additional doorway for CSOs in Kosovo to expand their role in the overall democratisation and EU accession process.

### 1.3 Current situation

The selected Union Programmes are in line with Kosovo short-term priorities and immediate needs deriving from the European Reform Agenda and Stabilization Association Agreement. In addition to that, the above four Union Programmes give an opportunity for participation to different targets groups such as government body, private organizations and civil society organizations. By participating in Union Programmes, Kosovo as other non EU Member States is obliged to contribute to EU budget by *paying a fee (entry ticket)*. The fees are different for the various Programmes and various beneficiaries, as each programme has its own rules for participation. The entry tickets are negotiated with the European Commission during the drafting of International Agreements (IA). The signature of IAs for selected (above) Union Programme is finalized as follows:

COSME	19 December 2017
Creative Europe	5 June 2018
EU for Citizens	26 June 2018
ERASMUS +	5 June 2018

Each of the agreements, in accordance with Kosovo legislation, requires the ratification by Kosovo Parliament. The ratification for the above mentioned four EU programmes was finalised as indicated in the list below:

COSME	23 July 2018
Creative Europe	20 September 2018
EU for Citizens	20 September 2018
ERASMUS+	20 September 2018

Since Kosovo government cannot provide sufficient funding for covering all the costs of entry tickets as per the above mentioned four Union Programmes, the European Commission through IPA 2017 programme is going to reimburse the amount of entry tickets for four Union Programmes for participation in 2018. For the period 2019-2020 the European Commission and Kosovo are going to negotiate under IPA 2018 reimbursement rate and explore the possibility for participation to other Union Programmes.

Furthermore, for participating in Union Programmes a proper planning is needed. Government/beneficiaries should plan the cost of entry tickets in their medium term budget and the cost of entry tickets reimbursed by IPA programmes should be programmed/allocated in advance (one or two year in advance). The key stakeholders affected by this action are the final grant beneficiaries (governmental and non-governmental body) of the Union Programmes selected.

The EU considers civil society as credible partner and beneficiaries across its different programmes. This is a policy that the EU tends to promote beyond its immediate border to the accession and pre-accession countries as well. The same approach is used throughout EU Programmes that are targeted through this research. Civil society organisations are eligible to participate in these programmes either as direct beneficiaries (through application to call for proposals) or as relevant stakeholder or indirect beneficiary (through advocacy roles). The analysis will focus on 17 EU programmes for which Kosovo became eligible. The focus of the analysis will be on the possible benefits of CSOs from the programmes. Specific attention will be given to four EU programmes for which international agreements have been signed.

## 2. Analysis

### 2.1 Mapping of all EU programmes

The Framework Agreement between the European Union and Kosovo on the general principles for the participation of Kosovo in Union programmes includes a total of 17 EU Programmes. They are listed in previous section. This study has mapped all 17 Union Programmes, their main objectives and potential beneficiaries. Most of the programmes are based on Regulations, as their legal base, where the procedural framework is set in terms of the programme implementation. The mapping also includes reference to the eligibility of CSOs to benefit from these programmes. In most of the programmes the CSOs are mentioned in the Regulation as potential beneficiaries. Some of the programmes even are developed to be mainly implemented by CSOs. For those programmes where their implementation is envisaged by specialised government institutions (such as Fiscalis, Customs) indirect link with CSOs is found and their possible contribution to the programme. For programmes with clear narrow focus (such as Justice programme) it was stated that the relation and benefit of CSOs can be of indirect nature and in synergy with other programmes where CSOs are direct beneficiaries. It should be noted that the basic mapping of 17 EU programmes was conducted in 2017 by the EU funded Project Preparation Facility, as part of the preliminary needs assessment that served the Ministry of European Integration to identify four EU programmes for which Kosovo is signed International Agreements with the EU. This analysis has built on this mapping by adding other aspects relevant to this particular research and its objectives.

Out of 17 EU programmes, 10 are designed to target CSOs, either as main beneficiary or among other beneficiaries: government organisations, private sector operators or other stakeholders. The mapping includes the name of the programme, its main objectives, whether the programme is of interest to CSOs, whether the programmes is of specific interest to Kosovo CSOs and of yes, what would be the opportunities and challenges of the participation in such a programme.

The following table includes the mapping of 17 EU programmes and other elements as mentioned above:

No	EU Programmes	Objectives of EU Programmes <sup>3</sup>	Who is eligible	Western Balkans Region experience	CSO interest (Y/N)	Kosovo CSOs interest	Comments on program's relevance for CSOs, including criteria, challenges and opportunities
1.	FISCALIS 2020  235 mln euro  (2014-2020)	<p>-Enabling national tax administrations to create and exchange information and expertise (through training workshops seminars).</p> <p>-developing and operating major trans-European IT systems in partnership,</p> <p>-Establishing various person to person networks by bringing together national officials from across Europe.</p>	<p>Tax administration officials</p> <p>{EU and candidate+ potential candidate countries}</p>	<p>All countries in the Western Balkans region, except Kosovo, are participating in the programme.</p>	<p>NO</p>	<p>Very limited as this programme targets government specialised institutions</p>	<p>This is a technical and specific EU cooperation programme which enables national tax administrations to create and exchange information and expertise. As such, aside of tax administrations and their officials/ experts, it can include chambers of commerce in view of protection of interests and rights of economic operators.</p> <p>Criteria/advantages/ challenge:</p> <p>Both regional and EU experience do not show much room for CSOs participation in this programme.</p>

<sup>3</sup> Data received from web pages of each EU Programmes

2.	<p>CUSTOMS 2020</p> <p>548 mln euro (2014-2020)</p>	<p>The specific objectives shall be achieved, in particular by:</p> <p>(a) Funding IT systems to enable the development of a fully-fledged electronic customs in Europe.</p> <p>(b) ensuring modern and harmonized approaches to customs procedures and controls;</p> <p>(c) facilitating legitimate trade;</p> <p>(d) reducing compliance costs and administrative burden; and</p> <p>(e) Enhancing the functioning of the customs authorities.</p>	<p>Custom administration officials (EU and candidate+ potential countries)</p>	<p>All countries in the Western Balkans region, except Kosovo, are participating in the programme.</p>	<p>NO</p>	<p>Very limited as this programme targets government specialised institutions</p>	<p>One of the specific objectives of this program is to improve cooperation between customs authorities and international organisations, third countries, other governmental authorities, including Union and national market surveillance authorities, as well as economic operators and organisations representing economic operators. In this sense, Chambers of Commerce might be a possible beneficiary or partner or party of interest that could contribute to this objective.</p> <p>Criteria/advantages/challenge:</p> <p>Aside of customs officials and other relevant public administration officials, economic operators have a crucial role in this programme. The Kosovo Chamber of Commerce should also be included in the activities – in any capacity.</p> <p>Both regional and EU experience do not show much room for CSOs participation in this programme.</p>
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3	<p>COSME</p> <p>2.3 billion euro</p>	<p>Programme aims to: Improve the framework conditions to make for the competitiveness and sustainability of Union</p> <p>Enterprises including in the tourism sector</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encouraging an entrepreneurial culture and promoting the creation and growth of SMEs.</li> <li>• Improving access to finance for SMEs in the form of equity and debt (COSME aims to make it easier for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to access finance in all phases of their lifecycle – creation, expansion, or business transfer.</li> <li>• Improving access to markets inside the Union and globally (COSME helps businesses to access markets in the EU and beyond. It funds the Enterprise Europe Network that helps SMEs find business and technology partners, and understand EU legislation; the Your Europe Business portal that provides practical information on doing business within Europe; and the SME Internationalization Portal for companies who want to develop their activities outside Europe).</li> </ul>	<p>All EU countries, EFTA countries and Acceding countries, candidate countries and potential candidates.</p> <p>Public administration and SMEs.</p>	<p>All countries in the region are participating in the COSME.</p>	<p>NO</p>	<p>Very limited and in cases of social enterprises</p>	<p>This programme targets in particular SMEs as well as the public administration responsible for this field. Nevertheless, in terms of social enterprises and different associations, there is a room for CSO involvement.</p> <p>Criteria/advantages/challenge:</p> <p>With the new approach and legislation towards social enterprises, this programme can become more important for CSOs in Kosovo as well. Currently, it primary targets SMEs.</p> <p>Desk Office for this programme is within the Ministry of Trade and Industry. Up to date, the office is fully functional. National Contact Point is Ms. Arjeta Islami Muja, the Head of Division for European Integration at Department for European Integration and Policy Coordination, Ministry of Trade and Industry in Kosovo (<a href="mailto:Arjeta.Islami@rks-gov.net">Arjeta.Islami@rks-gov.net</a>) / Tel: +381 (0) 38 200 36 624)</p>
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4.	Erasmus+  14.4 billion euro	<p>Erasmus+ is the new programme for education, training, youth and sport that aims to contribute</p> <p>to the reduction of early school leaving rates and increase the number of 30-34 years old students having completed third level of education.</p> <p><b>The aims of Erasmus+ are:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To support young people gain more and better skills by studying &amp; training abroad.</li> <li>• To enhance teaching quality in the EU and beyond.</li> <li>• To support Member States and partner countries in modernizing their education and</li> </ul> <p>Vocational training systems.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To promote youth participation in society.</li> <li>• To support teaching and research on European integration.</li> <li>• To support European grass-roots sport.</li> </ul>	<p>Erasmus+ is open to many individuals and organizations, although eligibility varies from one action to another and from one country to another. Individuals can take part in many of the opportunities funded by Erasmus+, although most will have to do so through an organization taking part in the programme. The eligibility of individuals and organizations depends on the country in which they are based.</p> <p>Eligible countries are divided into two groups, Programme countries and Partner countries (WB countries). Although Programme countries are eligible for all actions of Erasmus+, Partner countries can only take part in some, and are subject to specific conditions</p>	All countries in the region (except Kosovo) are participating in the Programme.	YES	Substantial interest as this programme promotes the role of youth in different areas of social and economic development, with specific emphasis on education	<p>Article 22 of the Regulation states that "cooperation under the Programme with civil society organisations in the fields of education, training, youth and sport, at national and Union level is of great importance in order to create a broad sense of ownership in relation to lifelong learning strategies and policies and to take into consideration stakeholders' ideas and concerns at all levels". More specifically, Support to policy reform within this programme focuses on youth and different youth organisations.</p> <p>Criteria/advantages/ challenges: Aside education institutions (with emphasis on higher education), youth NGOs but also those active in education (be it higher or vocational) can benefit from this programme. Closer link and cooperation to relevant European networks is essential.</p> <p>There are already concrete examples of participation of Kosovo CSOs in this programme (7 Arte from Mitrovica in partnership with European and Regional Networks).</p> <p>Key Action 2: Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices and Key ction 3: Support to policy reforms are of particular importance as they target exchange of good practices concerning youth as well as support to youth policy development. Kosovo CSOs have vast experience in youth programmes and they can bring an added value to partnerships with EU organisations.</p> <p>Specific challenge here is that as youth organisations in Kosovo are mainly locally located and are smaller in size and operations, co-financing would be one of the main challenges.</p> <p>Desk Office for this programme:</p> <p>Address: Str. Sejdi Kryeziu, no. 49, Pejton, 10 000 Pristina  <a href="mailto:office@erasmuspluskosovo.org">office@erasmuspluskosovo.org</a>  +383 (0) 38 609 884</p> <p>Web: <a href="http://erasmuspluskosovo.org">http://erasmuspluskosovo.org</a></p>
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5	<p>Creative Europe</p> <p>1.46 billion euro</p>	<p>Support to the culture, audio-visual sectors and cross-cutting sectors (the indicative budgetary allocation will be 15 % for the Cross-sectoral Strand, 30 % for the Culture Strand and 55% for the MEDIA Strand).</p> <p>Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To support the capacity of the European cultural and creative sectors to operate transnationally;</li> <li>• To promote the transnational circulation of cultural and creative works and operators and reach new audiences in Europe and beyond;</li> <li>• To strengthen the financial capacity of the cultural and creative sectors, and in particular small and medium-sized enterprises and organizations;</li> <li>• To support transnational policy cooperation in order to foster policy development, innovation, audience building and new business models.</li> </ul>	<p>The Member States;</p> <p>The EFTA and EEA member countries,</p> <p>The candidate countries and potential candidates,</p> <p>The Swiss Confederation; Countries of the European neighbourhood area</p>	<p>All countries in the region (except Kosovo) are participating in the Programme.</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>Substantial interest as this programme promotes culture and cultural organisations in their creative actions</p>	<p>Article 3 of the Regulation states that the programme aims to promote cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue, culture as a catalyst for creativity in the framework for growth and jobs and culture as a vital element in the Union's international relations. Furthermore, Article 21 states that in the regard to the implementation of the Programme, the intrinsic value of culture and the specific nature of the cultural and creative sectors should be taken into account, including the importance of not-for-profit organisations and projects under a Culture Sub-programme.</p> <p>By November 2018, Kosovo was still not eligible for the Media strand, due to incompliance of a certain national legal act with EU acquis.</p> <p>Criteria/advantages/ challenge: This is one of the most attractive programs for the CSOs, including Kosovo ones. There are number of strong NGOs, active in culture and media area that can access the funds of this program. Regional and EU cooperation, participation in different networks should be strengthened further. Organisations like Dokufest and ODA Theatre have already participated in this programme. Their experience should be shared with other NGOs in Kosovo.</p> <p>In this programme, Kosovo CSOs can even have a leading role in partnership with regional and EU-based cultural organisations. Kosovo's rich culture can contribute greatly to designing actions and apply in call for proposals under this programme. Nevertheless, partnerships with EU-based and regional organisations should be intensively explored. Co-financing is a challenge although some of Kosovo CSOs can manage this responsibility depending on the requested funds.</p> <p>Desk office is within the ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports:</p> <p>CULTURE SUB-PROGRAMME</p> <p>Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports</p> <p>Ms. Rina GurguleMother Theresa Square No. 35</p> <p>10000 Prishtina</p> <p>Republic of Kosovo</p> <p>+383 38 200 22 266 - +383 45 651 005</p> <p>E-Mail: ced@rks-gov.net</p> <p>By November 2018, the desk office for media sub-programme was not established.</p>
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6.	<p>Hercule III</p> <p>105 mln euro</p> <p>(2014-2020)</p>	<p>Hercule III aims to help EU countries fight fraud, corruption and other illegal activities. It helps finance practical projects, such as the purchase by national authorities of x-ray scanners and other technical equipment to stamp out smuggling and other criminal activities against the EU's financial interests.</p> <p>Supported activities: technical assistance, specialized trainings and supply</p>	<p>Public administration (national and regional level) NGOs, international organization</p>	<p>- Lack of regional experiences</p>	<p>NO</p>	<p>Indirect interest for Kosovo CSOs for watch dog and monitoring role. Kosovo CSOs can contribute towards increased awareness of this programme as well as increased transparency of its implementation</p>	<p>CSOs more as monitoring role of the results of eventual programme actions implemented in the field of fight against fraud, corruption and smuggling</p> <p><b>Criteria/advantages/challenge:</b> While the programme mainly targets institutions with technical assistance as well as supply with equipment, CSOs can have a watch-dog role in overall fight against corruption and organised crime. CSOs can also have a monitoring role in terms of this programme implementation in order for Kosovo to reach the EU standards and requirement in this field.</p>
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7.	Justice  378 mln euro  (2014-2020)	<p>Shall contribute to the further development of a European area of justice based on mutual recognition and mutual trust. It promotes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-judicial cooperation in civil matters, including civil and commercial matters, insolvencies, family matters and successions, etc.</li> <li>-judicial cooperation in criminal matters</li> <li>-judicial training, including language training on legal terminology, with a view to fostering a common legal and judicial culture</li> <li>-effective access to justice in Europe, including rights of victims of crime and procedural rights in criminal proceedings</li> <li>- initiatives in the field of drugs policy (judicial cooperation and crime prevention aspects)</li> </ul> <p>Types of actions funded</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Training activities (staff exchanges, workshops, development of training modules,); Mutual learning, cooperation activities, exchange of good practices, peer reviews, development of ICT tools; Awareness-raising activities, dissemination, conferences, Analytical activities (studies, data collection, development of common methodologies, indicators, surveys, preparation of guides...)</li> </ul>	<p>Access to the Programme shall be open to all public and/or private bodies and entities legally established in Member States; EFTA countries which are party to the EEA Agreement</p> <p>Accession countries, candidate countries and potential candidates</p>	Serbia is part of Justice Programme. Bosnia and Hercegovina since 2016 and Albania signed the Agreement in 2016 in the frame of Justice Reform.	NO	Similar to previous programme, indirect interest and in coordination with other programmes (aside of these 17) to contribute towards transparent and accessible justice for all	<p>This program mainly targets judiciary institutions, practitioners, justice training institutions and justice profession trainees and similar. In synergy with other programs, it may include inputs of CSO-led actions that are participating in other programs.</p> <p><b>Criteria/advantages/challenge:</b> Civil society in Kosovo has developed valuable experience in monitoring the work and role of judiciary in Kosovo. By continuing and strengthening this role, CSOs can indirectly contribute to this programme.</p>
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8.	<p>Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme</p> <p>439 mln euro</p> <p>(2014-2020)</p>	<p>Shall contribute to the further development of an area where equality and the rights of persons, as enshrined in the Treaty, the Charter and international human rights conventions, are promoted and protected</p> <p>Its nine specific objectives are to:</p> <p>Promote non-discrimination; Combat racism, xenophobia, homophobia and other forms of intolerance; Promote rights of persons with disabilities; Promote equality between women and men and gender mainstreaming; Prevent violence against children, young people, women and other groups at risk (Daphne); Promote the rights of the child; Ensure the highest level of data protection; Promote the rights deriving from Union citizenship; Enforce consumer rights</p> <p><b>Supported activities:</b> training/workshop; raising awareness; exchange of good practices, peer reviews, development of ICT tools, networking etc.</p>	<p>Access to the Programme shall be open to all public and/or private bodies and entities legally established in Member States; EFTA countries which are party to the EEA Agreement</p> <p>Accession countries, candidate countries and potential candidates</p>	No experience in the region	YES	Kosovo CSOs cannot participate in this programme as signature of the IA is one of the main conditions.	<p>This is one of the EU programmes that is to be implemented mainly through the cooperation with CSOs. The protection of human rights and equality is an area where CSOs can bring the best and most added value.</p> <p><b>Criteria/advantages/challenge:</b> Kosovo CSOs now have many years of experience in this particular area. There are Kosovo-based thematic networks of CSOs (Kosovo Women's Network, Coalition of Kosovo NGOs for Child Protection, etc.) that can be powerful participants and active contributors to this program. Kosovo CSOs are also members of EU-base or regional networks active in relevant areas and this should be further explored in terms of participating in this programme upon signature of the IA.</p>
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9.	<p>Europe for Citizens</p> <p>229 mln euro</p> <p>(2014-2020)</p>	<p>Programme aims to contribute to citizens' understanding of the EU, its history and diversity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Foster European citizenship and improve conditions for civic and democratic participation at EU level</li> </ul>	<p>Member States of EU, EFTA countries, the Candidate and potential Countries. European research institutions, local authorities, policy research organisations (think-tanks), citizens' groups and other civil organisations, educational institutions, which promote active European citizenship, are eligible for funding.</p>	<p>All countries in the region are participating in the Programme.</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>Substantial interest for Kosovo CSOs as the IA has been recently ratified</p>	<p>This programme is almost fully accessible to CSOs. The It covers a wide spectrum of different actions, including, citizens' meetings, contacts and debates on citizenship issues, initiatives to raise awareness of, and to promote reflection on, defining moments in European history, initiatives to make European citizens, particularly young people, aware of the history of the Union and of the functioning of the Union institutions, and debates on European policy issues, with a view to invigorating all aspects of public life. All these action can be implemented by CSOs.</p> <p>Criteria/advantages/ challenges: Having a European perspective, Kosovo can benefit enormously from this programme. Especially Kosovo based CSOs. Close cooperation with MEI is also crucial. Cooperation with EU based CSOs is a necessity and much recommended. As the IA for this programme is signed and ratified, CSOs can participate in the call for proposals as of September 2018.</p> <p>First step is to register on The Participant Portal of the programme (<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/education/participants/portal/desktop/en/home.html">http://ec.europa.eu/education/participants/portal/desktop/en/home.html</a> ).</p> <p>Co-financing is one of the key challenges. Another challenge is the financial and professional capacity of Kosovo CSOs.</p> <p>To check the deadlines for Civil Society projects under call for proposals 2018</p> <p>Kosovo Desk Office is within Ministry of European Integration, Department of Development Assistance, and Ms. Rita Saraci is appointed as National Contact Point. rita.saraci@rks-gov.net +381 38 200 27028</p>
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10.	<p>Civil Protection Mechanism</p> <p>368.3 million (223.7 inside EU and 144.6 outside EU)</p>	<p>The main objectives of the Civil Protection Mechanism are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• achieve a high level of protection against disasters by preventing or reducing their effects and by fostering a culture of prevention;</li> <li>• enhance the Union's state of preparedness to respond to disasters;</li> <li>• facilitate rapid and efficient emergency response interventions in the event of major disasters or their imminence</li> </ul>	<p>Member States, EEA countries and EU candidate countries and potential candidates. Depending on the Call for Proposals, different potential beneficiaries can participate in the programme (as long as projects are not profit generating) State administration bodies, Universities, International organizations, Non-government organizations, Commercial companies, including small and medium size enterprises.</p>	<p>Montenegro, Serbia and Macedonia are participating in the programme. During last years flood Countries benefited from the mechanism.</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>The program is of interest to Kosovo CSOs in cooperation and coordination with relevant government institutions responsible for this particular field</p>	<p>Article 18 of the Regulation states that <i>"When planning response operations, it is useful to also liaise with relevant non-governmental organisations and other relevant entities to identify any additional response capacities that they may be able to make available in case of disasters via the competent authorities of the Member States"</i>. In general, in terms of disaster prevention as well as assistance, the role of CSOs has been crucial and necessary. Such case has been witnessed in Western Balkans as well during floods in Serbia, Macedonia and Albania.</p> <p><b>Criteria/advantages/challenges:</b> CSOs in Kosovo need to become part of relevant national mechanisms in terms of disaster prevention and assistance. Regional cooperation here is most relevant and of primary role. The cooperation with EU –based relevant CSOs and their network is also welcomed, however as a secondary in terms of relevance.</p> <p>Co-financing is usually funded through government funds that are allocated for emergency and natural disaster issues. Donor funding is also another usual source of co-financing.</p>
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11.	<p>Interoperability solutions for European public administrations, businesses and citizens [ISA2]</p> <p>131 mln euro</p>	<p>The ISA<sup>2</sup> programme supports the development of digital solutions that enable public administrations, businesses and citizens in Europe to benefit from interoperable cross-border and cross-sector public services.</p>	<p>Only public administration</p>	<p>No regional experience since is the new programme running from January 2016</p>	<p>NO</p>	<p>NO (see comments on indirect involvement)</p>	<p>The main aim of the programme is increased efficiency and transparency of public administration. This increases the watch-dog role of CSOs.</p> <p><b>Criteria/advantages/challenges:</b> The public administration in Kosovo has already started applying the main principles and actions foreseen for MS in this programme: e-procurement, e-government portal, e-civil registry at municipal level, etc. CSOs in Kosovo are also already monitoring these services. Therefore, further engagement in this area both by the public administration and CSOs should be foreseen.</p>
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12.	Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI)	<p>Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Strengthen ownership of EU objectives and coordination of action at EU and national level in the areas of employment, social affairs and inclusion.</li> <li>-Support the development of adequate social protection systems and labour market policies.</li> <li>-Modernise EU legislation and ensure its effective application.</li> <li>-Promote geographical mobility and boost employment opportunities by developing an open labour market.</li> <li>-Increase the availability and accessibility of microfinance for vulnerable groups and micro-enterprises, and increase access to finance for social enterprises.</li> </ul> <p><b>In pursuing these objectives, EaSI will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-pay particular attention to vulnerable groups, such as young people,</li> <li>-promote equality between women and men,</li> <li>-combat discriminations,</li> <li>-promote a high level of quality and sustainable employment,</li> <li>-guarantee adequate and decent social protection,</li> <li>-combat long-term unemployment,</li> <li>-fight against poverty and social exclusion</li> </ul>	<p>The Member States;</p> <p>The EFTA and EEA member countries,</p> <p>The candidate countries and potential candidates,</p> <p>Programme shall be open to public and/or private bodies, actors and institutions, and in particular:</p> <p>(a) National, regional and local authorities;</p> <p>(b) Employment services;</p> <p>(c) Specialist bodies provided for under Union law;</p> <p>(d) The social partners;</p> <p>(e) Non-governmental organizations, and in particular those organized at Union level;</p> <p>(f) Higher education institutions and research institutes;</p> <p>(g) Experts in evaluation and in impact assessment;</p> <p>(h) National statistical offices;</p> <p>(i) The media.</p>	Montenegro, Macedonia, Serbia and Albania are participating in the Programme.	YES	Weaker interest for Kosovo CSOs (see comments on indirect interest)	<p>Article 19 of the regulation states that <i>social partners and civil society organisations play a key role in promoting quality employment and combating social exclusion and poverty, as well as in fighting unemployment. Therefore, the social partners and civil society organisations should, where appropriate, be involved in mutual learning and in the development, implementation and dissemination of new policies. The Commission should inform and exchange views with Union social partners and the civil society organisations on the results concerning the implementation of the Programme.</i></p> <p><b>Criteria/advantages/ challenges:</b></p> <p>this programme aims at close cooperation with relevant UN agencies, Council of Europe and OECD. Kosovo not being member of these international organisations presents real barrier towards its participation to the programme. Nevertheless, the same organisations have strong presence in Kosovo and this can facilitate greatly this challenge.</p> <p>This is also one of the most attractive programmes for CSOs for Kosovo. Social enterprises can be also promoted through this programmes, which is one of the new areas for Kosovo strongly supported by CSOs.</p>
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13	<p>Horizon 2020</p> <p>80 billion euro</p>	<p>The Horizon 2020 programme consists of the following parts: “Excellent science”; “Industrial leadership”; “Societal challenges” (all implemented by Commission). The goal is to ensure Europe produces world-class science, removes barriers to innovation and makes it easier for the public and private sectors to work together in delivering innovation.</p>	<p>EU member states; candidate and potential candidate countries; Research centres, public administration at local and Regional level, Corporations, SMEs, Universities, Non-profit organizations, International Organization.</p> <p>Selected <b>third countries</b> that fulfil all of the following criteria:</p> <p>(i) have a good capacity in science, technology and innovation;</p> <p>(ii) Have a good track record of participation in Union research and innovation programmes;</p> <p>(iii) Have close economic and geographical links to the Union;</p>	<p>All countries in the region (except Kosovo) are participating in the Programme.</p> <p>Kosovo participate in programme as associated country</p>	YES	<p>Substantial interest for Kosovo CSOs which are more of a think-tank character</p>	<p>Article 22 of Regulation states that <i>with the aim of deepening the relationship between science and society and reinforcing public confidence in science, Horizon 2020 should foster the informed engagement of citizens and civil society in research and innovation matters by promoting science education, by making scientific knowledge more accessible, by developing responsible research and innovation agendas that meet citizens’ and civil society’s concerns and expectations and by facilitating their participation in Horizon 2020 activities. The engagement of citizens and civil society should be coupled with public outreach activities to generate and sustain public support for Horizon 2020</i></p> <p>CSOs have been and will continue to play a key role in environment protection, finding innovative solutions and raising awareness.</p> <p><b>Criteria/advantages/challenges:</b></p> <p>Link with European networks, organisations, research institutes or think tanks is a must. Strengthened capacities are needed in the field of innovation in order to participate actively in the program. KCSS has already participated in the programme through research activities and both through individual contributions and activities implemented by the organization.</p> <p>Kosovo Innovation Lab and its activities can be used as an example of possible interest-area under this programme.</p> <p>Cooperation with universities (public or private), other think tanks is necessary for this programme.</p> <p>Kosovo CSOs can participate as associate partners or individuals.</p>
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14.	<p>Health for Growth Programme</p> <p>449.4 mln euro</p>	<p>Promote health, prevent diseases and foster supportive environments for healthy lifestyles taking into account the 'health in all policies' principle,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect Union citizens from serious cross-border health threats,</li> <li>• Contribute to innovative, efficient and sustainable health systems,</li> <li>• Facilitate access to better and safer healthcare for Union citizens.</li> </ul>	<p>Member States</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EFTA/EEA countries (except for Switzerland)</li> <li>• Candidate Countries and potential Candidate Countries on a cost basis,</li> <li>• Other countries based on bilateral or multilateral agreement,</li> </ul> <p>Public and private entities dealing with Health</p>	<p>Bosnia and Hercegovina, Macedonia and Serbia are participating in Health Programme.</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>Strong interest for Kosovo CSOs conditioned with signature of IA</p>	<p>Awareness raising, prevention and protection are the areas where CSOs can have an active role in this programme.</p> <p><b>Criteria/advantages/challenges:</b></p> <p>There are number of CSOs in Kosovo that deal with health issues, mainly focusing on prevention and awareness rising. Furthermore, advocacy role of CSOs in terms of developing relevant policies and promoting their implementation is also relevant and can be considered under this programme. Formal partnerships with EU-based CSOs or networks are a must.</p> <p>Kosovo CSOs currently can apply as collaborating stakeholders or affiliated entities</p>
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15.	<p>Consumer Programme</p> <p>197 mln euro</p>	<p>The Programme will contribute to protect the health, safety and economic interests of consumers, as well as to promoting their right to information, education and to organize themselves in order to safeguard their interests.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Member States</li> <li>• EEA countries</li> <li>• Candidate Countries</li> <li>• Western Balkan countries</li> <li>• Third countries covered by the European Neighbourhood Policy</li> </ul> <p>The following organizations are eligible for funding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public bodies</li> <li>• Non-profit organizations</li> <li>• Non-governmental, non-profit and independent European consumer organizations</li> <li>• Consumer protection officials</li> </ul> <p>The EU contribution can be up to 50% or 70%, depending on the action.</p>	No experience at regional level	YES	Solid interest for Kosovo CSOs – conditioned with signature of IA.	<p>Article 19 of the EU Regulation for Consumer Programme states that <i>“In the context of the implementation of the Programme, and given the globalisation of the production chain and the increasing interdependence of markets, cooperation with third countries not participating in the Programme should be encouraged, taking into account any relevant agreements between those countries and the Union”</i>.</p> <p>As this programme targets specifically organisations that promote consumer protection, it is very relevant to CSOs.</p> <p><b>Criteria/advantages/challenges:</b></p> <p>partnerships with EU based consumer protection networks (like Consumer Protection Cooperation Network) is the first step towards possible accessibility of this program funds. Kosovo as a country and Kosovo CSOs in particular have limited experience in this area. Therefore, the partnership with European networks or organisations is a necessary first step.</p>
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16.	LIFE  3.1 billion euro	<p>The LIFE programme is the EU's funding instrument for the environment and climate action.</p> <p><i>The 'Environment' strand</i> of the new programme covers three priority areas: environment and resource efficiency; nature and biodiversity; and environmental governance and information. <i>The 'Climate Action' strand</i> covers climate change mitigation; climate change adaptation; and climate governance and information.</p> <p>The programme also consists of a new category of projects, jointly funded integrated projects, which will operate on a large territorial scale. These projects will aim to implement environmental and climate policy.</p>	<p>The LIFE Programme may fund public and private bodies.</p> <p>The LIFE Programme shall be open to the participation of the following countries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• European Free Trade Association (EFTA) countries which are parties to the Agreement on the</li> </ul> <p>European Economic Area (EEA);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Candidate countries, potential candidates and acceding countries to the Union;</li> <li>• Countries to which the European Neighbourhood Policy applies;</li> <li>• Countries which have become members of the European Environmental Agency</li> </ul>	No regional experience	YES	Weak current interest for Kosovo CSOs	<p>One of the main objectives of this programme is to support better environmental and climate governance at all levels, including better involvement of civil society, NGOs and local actors, and to support the implementation of the 7th Environment Action Programme.</p> <p>Article 29 of Regulation states that <i>the success of integrated projects is dependent on close cooperation between national, regional and local authorities and the non-state actors concerned by the LIFE Programme's objectives.</i></p> <p><b>Criteria/advantages/challenges:</b> As in innovation field, the capacities of Kosovo CSOs need to be further strengthened in order to actively participate in this program.</p>
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17.	Copernicus  3.8 mln euro	<p>The programme</p> <p>Aims at providing a continuous, independent and reliable access to earth observation information.</p> <p>It is structured in six different services: marine, atmosphere, land and climate change monitoring</p> <p>as well as support to emergency and security services. Copernicus uses data from satellites and in-situ sensors such as buoys or air sensors to provide timely and reliable information and forecasting to support (for example) agriculture and fisheries, land use and urban planning, the fight against forest fires, disaster response, maritime transport or air pollution monitoring</p>	<p>(a) EFTA countries which are Contracting Parties to the EEA Agreement;</p> <p>(b) the candidate countries, as well as potential candidate countries</p> <p>(c) Switzerland, other third countries and international organizations, in accordance with</p> <p>Agreements concluded by the Union with such countries or international organizations d rules for their involvement.</p> <p>The main users are policymakers and public authorities who need the information to develop</p> <p>Environmental legislation and policies or to take critical decisions in the event of an emergency.</p>	No regional experiences	NO	NO	<p>Science and innovation based institutions and organisations can benefit from this programme. Necessary capacity is the key condition. Scientific institutes and bodies can be an active participant of this programme.</p> <p><b>Criteria/advantages/challenges:</b></p> <p>As in innovation field, the capacities of Kosovo CSOs need to be further strengthened in order to actively participate in this program.</p>
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## 2.2 General information on application procedure and criteria

For the EU programmes, which are identified as programmes of specific interest to CSOs, such as Europe for Citizens, Creative Europe or ERASMUS + and other similar programmes (for more details see the mapping table) there is an application process foreseen, in different stages and procedures. If the programme includes open call for proposals for CSOs, there are set of criteria that are common as in all EU call for proposals for CSOs. Such criteria can be as follows:

- Applicants have to be public bodies or non-profit organisations with a legal personality
- The programmes are open to the 28 EU Member States - and provided they have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Commission – to accession countries, candidate countries and potential candidates
- Usually, a project must involve organisations from at least one EU member state
- Preference is usually given to transnational projects.

In terms of capacity and eligibility or exclusion criteria, the following are taken into account during application assessment.

Applicants must have:

- Sufficient sources of funding to maintain their activity for the duration of the proposed action
- The professional competences and motivation to carry out the proposed project.

Proposals are then evaluated on the basis of:

- Consistency with the objectives of the programme and programme strand
- Quality of the activity plan of the project
- Dissemination
- Impact and citizen involvement (if this one of the main programme objectives)

The weight of the above mentioned criteria is valid equally for the main applicant and partner organisations. This means that if the lead applicant is an EU organisation that is partnering with Kosovo CSOs, the Kosovo CSOs will be required to meet above-mentioned criteria as well. Indeed, the programmes and their call for proposals may usually allow for the lead organisation to have an associate or to sub-grant the project activities to other organisations. In this case, the weight of the eligibility criteria differs among different entities participating in the project.

In more practical terms, every applicant must have an EU Login (European Commission Authentication Service) account. Each organisation involved in the project (applicant and partners) must register in Participation portal and receive a Participant Identification Code (PIC). All relevant documents, like legal entity form, registry certificate and similar are uploaded to this portal.

There are detailed guidelines for applicants available for each of the EU programmes. The programmes have their websites, like <https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/europe-for-citizens> or <https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/creative-europe> which should be consulted regularly for updated information on funding opportunities, projects under implementation to be used as good practises as well as to obtain useful information on possible partnerships with other sister organisations. Aside of common criteria as mentioned above, each programme and each call for proposal has specific objective and specific requirements related to the activities in accordance with programme objectives. The applications will be evaluated against set of criteria which are available as part of the guidelines for each call for proposal.

For participating in the EU programmes and their call for proposals, Desk Offices are in close contact with European Commission and its delegations in specific countries (in Kosovo it is the EU Office in Kosovo), therefore have updated information on the newest calls and funding opportunities. Such desks are established

in Kosovo and they are located in the Ministry of European Integration, Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, Ministry of Trade and Industry and in the University/Kosovo Erasmus + Office. Detailed contact information for these desk offices is provided in the below table as part of the mapping exercise.

The experience in Western Balkans region in regards to the EU programmes shows that relevant desk offices and government institutions that they are part of, were able to allocate funds that have served as co-financing for CSOs and cultural organisations with the aim of facilitating their participation in the EU programmes. In addition, capacity building programmes as well as information sessions have been organised to share the information and increase awareness on the EU programmes and their funds and opportunities. This has been initiated in Kosovo as well, both by relevant government institutions (Ministry of European Integration, Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, etc.) and by CSOs (KCSF, Dokufest, etc.). Information sessions are organised by desk offices or by responsible ministries. Round tables or workshops are organised by CSOs where participants from Western Balkans have been invited to share their concrete experience with participating in EU programmes. These actions should continue and intensify and should be seen as initial steps of active participation to these programmes.

## 2.3 Kosovo in Union Programmes

As mentioned previously, Kosovo has signed IAs for four of the below listed programmes. The following is short description of these programmes:

	<p style="text-align: center;">Programme for Competitiveness of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><a href="https://ec.europa.eu/easme/en/cosme">https://ec.europa.eu/easme/en/cosme</a></p>
<p>2014-2020 EU Budget: € 2.3 billion</p>	<p>National Coordinator/Beneficiary: Ministry of Trade and Industry / KIESA (Kosovo Investment and Enterprise Support Agency). Agreement with EC signed on 19<sup>th</sup> December 2017</p>
<p>Objectives:</p>	<p>The Programme is established by the Regulation (EU) No 1288/2013 of the European Parliament and the Council of 11 December 2013 with the aim to promote <b>competitiveness and sustainability of SMEs, tourism sector, encourage an entrepreneurial culture, and promote the creation and growth of SMEs</b>. Main areas of intervention are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Facilitate access to finance;</li> <li>▪ Support the internationalization and access to markets;</li> <li>▪ Create an environment favourable to competitiveness;</li> <li>▪ Encourage entrepreneurial culture</li> </ul>
<p>Type of Actions:</p>	<p><b>i. Better access to finance for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs)</b></p> <p>Aim is to provide enhanced access to finance for SMEs in different phases of their lifecycle: creation, expansion or business transfer. COSME mobilises loans and equity investments for SMEs, through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the Loan Guarantee Facility, providing guarantees and counter-guarantees to financial institutions (e.g. guarantee societies, banks, leasing companies) so they can provide more loan and lease finance to SMEs.</li> <li>- the Equity Facility for Growth provides risk capital to equity funds investing in SMEs mainly in the expansion and growth-stage phases.</li> </ul> <p><b>ii. Access to markets</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- COSME provides support to European enterprises so that they can benefit from the EU's single market and make the most of opportunities offered by markets outside the EU.</li> <li>- COSME funds the Enterprise Europe Network (EEN) consisting of over 600 offices in more than 50 countries helping SMEs find business and technology partners on access to markets.</li> </ul> <p><b>iii. Encouraging entrepreneurship</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- COSME backs the implementation of the Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan through a wide range of activities. These include mobility exchanges, research, best practices diffusion and pilot projects in areas such as entrepreneurship education, mentoring or the development of guidance and support services for new and potential entrepreneurs, including young, women and senior entrepreneurs.</li> <li>- Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs is a cross-border exchange scheme which helps new entrepreneurs acquire relevant skills to run and grow a business by working with an experienced entrepreneur in another country for one to six months.</li> <li>- COSME especially focuses on digital entrepreneurship to help European businesses drive their digital transformation and fully benefit from the unprecedented new opportunities created in the digital era, which are crucial for their competitiveness and growth.</li> </ul> <p><b>iv. Creating better framework conditions for competitiveness - favourable conditions for business creation and growth</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- COSME supports actions to improve the framework conditions in which enterprises operate, in particular SMEs, by reducing unnecessary administrative and regulatory burdens.</li> <li>- COSME supports the emergence of competitive industries with market potential, by helping SMEs to take-up new business models and integrate into new value chains.</li> <li>- COSME promotes the development of world-class clusters in the EU, fostering cluster excellence and internationalisation with an emphasis on cross-sectoral cooperation, notably in support of emerging industries. The programme also aims at accelerating the digitalisation of the business community and promoting e-skills and e-leadership.</li> </ul>
<p>Kosovo CSOs participation:</p>	<p>This programme is not directly targeting CSOs. SMEs and young entrepreneurs are the focus of this programme.</p>



ERASMUS Plus - Programme for Education, Training, Youth and Sport

[https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus\\_en](https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus_en)

2014-2020 EU Budget: € 14.7 billion

National Coordinator/Beneficiary: Ministry of Education, Science and Technology  
Agreement with EC signed on 5th June 2018

Objectives:

Erasmus+ is the EU Programme in the fields of education, training, youth and sport with the aim to contribute to the Europe 2020 strategy for growth, jobs, social equity and inclusion. Erasmus+ also aims to promote the sustainable development of its partners in the field of higher education, and contribute to achieving the objectives of the EU Youth Strategy

Type of Actions:

**i. Key Action 1: Learning Mobility of individuals**

- Mobility of individuals in the field of education, training and youth; Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degree<sup>4</sup>

**ii. Key Action 2: Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices**

- Strategic partnerships in the field of education, training and youth; Knowledge Alliances; Sector Skills Alliances; Capacity building in the field of higher education; Capacity building in the field of youth<sup>5</sup>.

**iii. Key Action 3: Support for policy reform**

- Structured Dialogue: Meetings between young people and decision-makers in the field of youth

**Jean Monnet Initiative**

- The Jean Monnet activities aim is to promote teaching and research on European integration world-wide among specialist academics, learners and citizens, notably through the creation of Jean Monnet Chairs and other academic activities, as well as by providing aid for other knowledge-building activities at higher education institutions; to support the activities of academic institutions or associations active in the field of European integration studies and support a Jean Monnet label for excellence. In the light of its specific efforts to promote excellence in education and research on EU integration, the Jean Monnet Initiative will continue as a separate activity within the Programme and will share its delivery mechanisms.

**Sport Action**

- transnational collaborative projects; non-for-profit European sporting events of major importance; strengthening of the evidence base for policy making in the field of sport; capacity building in sport; dialogue with relevant European stakeholders.

Kosovo CSOs participation:

Key Action 2 & 3 target mainly CSOs with actions that include youth, exchanging good practises and promoting the role of youth in decision and policy making. Furthermore, sport action is also one priority of this programme that is attractive for CSOs.

Kosovo CSOs have already participated in this programme through partnerships with regional and EU based organisations and network. By signing the IA for this programme, Kosovo has enabled its CSOs to have more prominent role in the application process – they can be a lead applicant or co-applicant, depending on the proposed action and specific call. Kosovo CSOs should prepare for the calls that will be launched in 2019.

Contact with the Erasmus+ desk office should be made immediately in order to obtain more detailed information on upcoming call for proposals and different requirements. The ERASMUS + website in Kosovo <http://erasmuspluskosovo.org> includes relevant information on all ERASMUS + Actions, their open calls and relevant time tables. Most of calls are open until end of October 2018 (or earlier). Link to relevant sites for registering, applying and obtaining detailed information on call for prop0sals are available on this website.

<sup>4</sup> Kosovo has been actively participating in this type of action. The program is known to students as well as organisations that facilitate student exchanges

<sup>5</sup> There is some experience among Kosovo CSOs on this particular Action. The CSO 7 Arte from Mitrovica has participated and contributed to such an action in partnership with EU and regional organisations and networks



Europe for Citizens Programme

[https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/europe-for-citizens\\_en](https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/europe-for-citizens_en)

2014-2020 EU  
Budget:  
€ 185 468 000  
million

National Coordinator/Beneficiary: Ministry of European Integration  
Agreement with EC signed on 26th June 2018

Objectives:

Europe for Citizens aims to encourage cooperation between citizens and organisations from different countries and facilitate the development of a sense of belonging to common European ideals and to promote the process of European integration.

Type of Actions:

**i. European Remembrance**

- Projects reflecting on European cultural diversity and common values with a clear European dimension; Projects addressing causes of totalitarian regimes in Europe's modern history (specially but not exclusively Nazism, Fascism, Stalinism and totalitarian communist regimes) and to commemorate the victims of their crimes; Projects concerning action which encourage tolerance, mutual understanding, intercultural dialogues and reconciliation, in particular aiming to reach the younger generation

**ii. Democratic engagement and civic participation**

- Town Twinning

Projects bringing together citizens from twinned towns to debate issues from the European political agenda. They will develop opportunities for societal engagement and volunteering at EU level.

- Network of Towns

Towns are encouraged to cooperate with other towns on a longterm basis to share resources or interests, gain influence or face common challenges

- Civil Society Projects

Promotion of societal engagement and solidarity: promote debate campaigns on the themes of common interest, making the link to the European political agenda; Volunteering: promoting solidarity among Union citizens and beyond; advocating on EU policy, and making links to EU policy agenda and policy making process; Debate campaigns on rights and responsibilities of Union citizens; Gathering opinion on different topics of EU policies; Promoting of voluntarism, promotion of solidarity among Union Citizens and beyond initiatives that develop opportunities for mutual understanding, intercultural learning solidarity, societal engagement and volunteering at Union level.

Kosovo CSOs participation

The agreement for this programme has been signed and ratified. Programme's website [https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/europe-for-citizens\\_en](https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/europe-for-citizens_en) provides updated information on the ongoing and upcoming call for proposals. Currently, calls for 2019 are yet to be opened. Results of selections for 2018 calls are available. Depending on the action and specific call, the Kosovo CSOs should register to the Participation Portal and apply according to the Guidelines for specific call. Partnerships with EU based organisation should be sought for application under 'Civil Society projects'. Desk office within the MEI should be contacted regularly for obtaining more detailed information on the programme and its call for proposals.



Creative Europe

[https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/creative-europe\\_en](https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/creative-europe_en)

**2014-2020 EU Budget:** € 1.46 billion

National Coordinator/Beneficiary: **Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports**  
Agreement with EC signed on 5th June 2018

**Objectives:** Creative Europe programme gives support to **safeguard and promote the European cultural and linguistic diversity** and support the culture and audio-visual sector initiatives. The aims of the programme are:

- To help the cultural and creative sectors seize the opportunities of the digital age and globalisation; To enable the sectors to reach their economic potential, contributing to sustainable growth, jobs and social cohesion; To give Europe's culture and media sector access to new international opportunities, markets and audiences.

**Action types:**

- The **Culture programme** has 4 call for proposals yearly; (i) Literary translation strand; (ii) Cooperation projects; (iii) European Networks; (iv) European Platforms<sup>6</sup>

**Kosovo CSOs participation**

It should be noted that Kosovo is not eligible for Media sub-programme within Creative Europe. This is due to the relevant media related law is not harmonised with relevant EU acquis.

This programme is very attractive for CSOs, especially cultural organisations. More specifically actions like cooperation projects, European networks and European platforms target CSOs specifically. The IA is signed and ratified in September 2018. This means that Kosovo CSOs are to participate in calls of 2019 only. Partnership with EU based organisations is one of the key criteria. Kosovo CSOs have an added value as they represent culturally diversified society and this should be utilised at its utmost when applying for this programme.

The Creative Europe website <https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/creative-europe> includes all relevant information for ongoing and upcoming calls for proposals. Depending on the action and specific call, the Kosovo CSOs should register to the Participation Portal and apply according the Guidelines for specific call. Eligibility criteria, as explained previously relate to the legality of the organisations, being an EU Member State and/or accession or pre-accession country – which is relevant for Kosovo and whether that country has signed the agreement with the European Commission. Furthermore, criteria will relate to the specific objective of the call. Currently, notices for the calls for 2019 are being published on Creative Europe website. Kosovo Desk Office within the MCYS should be contacted for further details.

<sup>6</sup> Dokufest, ODA Theater, 7 Arte have participated previously in this program through partnerships with EU organizations and networks

## 2.4 Case studies – with participation of Western Balkans, including Kosovo organisations

- **Europe for Citizens programme (Italy, Bulgaria, Germany, Greece, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain and Albania) – REMEDY project** <https://www.remedyproject.org/project-outputs>

### *The Voice from the Past - Recalling Memories in Diversity*

Due to the generation gap in understanding of the historical events concerning the totalitarian regimes, ostracism and their victims, it is important to draw attention of younger generation to these topics in order to eliminate the gap of understanding. The project “REMEDY”, attempted to create favourable conditions for revealing and remembering the painful moments in the history of EU nations. Regarding the general objectives, the aim of REMEDY was to promote the diversity of historical events, and in turn, foster understanding of every nation’s individuality. By understanding the perspective of each country, and by commemorating each other’s losses and tragedies, eventually the generation gap can be eliminated, but also the nation gap, in the light of the new “European” identity.

Regarding the specific objectives, “REMEDY” focused on the positive side of history, since the establishment of the EU brought peace and democracy. Although, the price for peace was too high, and right now it is a fragile thing to take for granted, EU society shall participate in reflection on the past in order to appreciate and develop the present. Therefore, by looking back on the wider national and EU historical context of the period, main goal of REMEDY was to promote positive dialogue between different target groups of the society, including older and younger generation. Understanding what older generation have experienced in a very different society, will enable youth to seek new paths to effectively protect the freedoms and civil rights in the modern EU community.

REMEDY supported the annual priority of the Europe for Citizens Programme titled, “Ostracism and loss of citizenship under totalitarian regimes”, since all partner countries have a shared history of totalitarian regimes and ostracism that brought great unrest in the society. The most affected people were minorities such as Roma people, Jewish communities, which went through displacement, severe exclusion and marginalization. The goal of “REMEDY” was to spread awareness about these issues above, hear out the stories about the past, educate wider public and youth about the consequences of these events and lessons we can draw from them. 4 international events and 10 national workshops were organised. REMEDY was relevant in the light of recent refugee situation, which brought huge resonance, in some cases even fear and prejudice in the EU. Through communication and reflection, it is possible to fight the hatred and prevent fatal consequences of the past history.

Main goal was to bring these countries together for reflection on causes, commemoration of victims, and reconciliation. The lessons of the past are relevant today for the reason of unity and forgiveness, moving to the brighter future of diversity and shared values. “REMEDY” reached to older and younger generation about the issue of ostracism, anti-Semitism, hostility towards immigrants using the necessary tools to combat these issues. Albania brought its experience of totalitarian regime as an added value to this project. Activities were implemented in Albania and different EU cities.

Similar experience sharing could be provided by Kosovo CSOs in partnership with regional and EU organisations. Taking something negative from the past and share it with other countries that have experienced similar negative phenomena and in parallel portraying how the society has learned and developed further is something that Kosovo CSOs can easily contribute to. However, partnerships with regional and EU based organisations should be sought beyond call for proposals. These partnerships will than result in project proposals that could be translated into applications for EU for Citizens programme.

- CREATIVE EUROPE - Project CORNERS

<http://www.cornersofeurope.org>

A number of cultural institutions from edges of Europe build a long-term partnership based on shared responsibility. CORNERS was initiated in 2010 by six cultural institutions: [Intercult](#) (Stockholm), [Exodos](#) (Ljubljana), [POGON](#) (Zagreb), [Drugo more](#) (Rijeka), [City Culture Institute](#) (Gdansk), and [Umeå 2014](#) – European Capital of Culture. The project was then further developed together with several institutions, new core partners and associates: [Donostia / San Sebastian 2016](#) – European Capital of Culture, [Arts Council of Northern Ireland](#) (Belfast), [ISIS Arts](#) (Newcastle), [REX](#) (Belgrade), [DokuFest](#) (Prizren) and [Teatro Pubblico Pugliese](#) (Bari).

*“To all of us CORNERS was a unique opportunity to bring international artistic projects to those places of Europe that are outside of cultural, social or economic centres, to test new model of artistic production, and to focus on many different audiences across Europe. Although CORNERS has come to an end of its journey, many parts of the project will continue its lives individually: through ideas that emerged from the process, collaborations between artists and partners, artwork itself...”*

CORNERS received support from European Commission twice: first for the year and a half long R&D phase, later for a 4 years’ production and presentation phase. EU granted half of the total amount for Corners which were matched by the same amount of money by partner’s organizations.

Different organisations brought to this project something unique, be it the city they operate in, be it a festival they organise, be it a target group or an art form that they apply. Kosovo CSO participated as an associate. This kind of experience should be shared with other CSOs. New ideas should be developed, partnerships established and preparations made for 2019 calls under this programme. There are also some good practises in relation to co-financing by special government funds and for this close contact and information sharing with the desk office within the Ministry of culture should be put in place.

- HORIZON 2020 – Project Peace Training

<https://project.peacetraining.eu/>

Political conflicts have long since gone beyond national borders and peace building has become central to the self-conception of the European Union as a foreign policy actor. Current challenges in Conflict Prevention and Peace Building (CPPB) trainings are that many programmes on offer are both too general/narrow, they are not applicable enough, weak on concrete skills enlargement and moreover training alone is not sufficient. Overcoming these challenges requires novel CPPB training curricula and linked activities.

PeaceTraining.eu aims to analyse these issues with strong involvement of all relevant stakeholders to take into account current practices and provide new training methods for CPPB personnel. In order to meet these challenges and to investigate this complex field of research a multidimensional modelling approach is used.

The resulting, proprietary PeaceTraining.eu Cube Model describes curricula structures including stakeholders, new methods, course structures, techniques as well as further aspects, e-approaches, tools and entities.

The PeaceTraining.eu Web Platform ([www.peacetraining.eu](http://www.peacetraining.eu)) features a knowledge base, stakeholder maps, expert navigators, infographics, best practice libraries, and digital guidebooks to strengthen the information transfer among all project developments and future implementations. Additional Training Curricula Setup Utilities and Search Tools for training centres and trainers are provided through the project. Thus, PeaceTraining.eu increases awareness on the topic and also attracts secondary target groups including training course provider, educational institutions and trainers because of its sustainable strategy with long-term mobilisation and engagement activities including an International PeaceTraining.eu Symposium.

On a European scale, PeaceTraining.eu will deliver new CPPB training methods and curricula and serve as a one-stop resource to increase efficiency and reduce costs.

Kosovo Centre for Security Studies participated in this project as a partner organisation, together with other ten project partners from EU and the region. It is also a collaboration between private sector and civil society which is characteristic of HORIZON 2020 programme. This type of approach should be sought further by Kosovo CSOs, although this particular programme is not prioritised by Kosovo government. Advocacy actions should be planned by the CSOs in relation to 2019 prioritisation exercise regarding the EU programmes.

## 3. Field Research Findings

A total of 8 Kosovo NGOs were interviewed during this research. In addition, interviews were conducted with other relevant stakeholders such as EU Office in Kosovo and current on-going EU funded technical assistance project “Support to Kosovo Participation in EU Programmes”.

The following were the topics discussed during the interviews:

- Level of knowledge about EU programmes in general and those accessible to Western Balkans in particular
- Level of awareness about 17 EU programmes for which Kosovo is eligible as of 2017
- Contacts with EU based organization with the aim to participate to these programmes
- Level of awareness of the procedure necessary to apply to these programmes
- Support needed in order to be able to absorb the funds of these programmes

The interviews were of an open-question; therefore, the findings may elaborate beyond the above-mentioned topics.

### 3.1 Level of knowledge about EU programmes in general and those accessible to Western Balkans in particular

Out of 8 interviewed organisations, three of them were aware of the EU programmes and Kosovo’s eligibility to participate in these programmes. The organisations that were aware about the programmes either participated in these programmes previously through consortia with EU-based and regional organisations or they heard about programmes through news articles. None of the interviewed organisations participated in any of the information sessions organised by the Ministry of European Integration or EU Office in Kosovo. Few organisations confirmed to receive the invitation by MEI for the information workshop in regards to these programmes, however they did not attend the workshop.

Interviewed organisations were aware of EU IPA (Civil Society Facility) and EIDHR programmes that are designed for CSOs and call for proposals that are regularly published under these programmes and within Kosovo annual EU envelopes. Link between these and other EU programmes were sought by interviewed NGOs.

### 3.2 Level of awareness about 17 EU Programmes for which Kosovo is eligible as of 2017

Those NGOs that knew about EU programmes, were also aware about Kosovo’s recent eligibility through the FA with the EU. Nevertheless, none of the NGOs could list all 17 programmes. Creative Europe, EU for Citizens and Horizon 2020 were the programmes mostly knowledgeable to the interviewed NGOs. Erasmus + as well – as a continuation of previous Erasmus.

### 3.3 Contacts with EU based organization with the aim to participate to these programmes

The research results show that there are two different types of partnerships between Kosovo and EU-based CSOs.

*Supply-based partnership:* Kosovo NGOs are contacted by EU-based organisations to participate in certain call for proposals. The contribution of Kosovo NGOs in these consortiums/short-term partnerships is usually of administrative, logistic and organisational nature.

Kosovo NGOs rarely or never are required to contribute with their expertise in certain area covered by specific call for proposals. This is usually covered by the EU-based organisations.

These partnerships are usually short-term and driven by certain call for proposals.

*Long-term partnerships:* These are fewer in number (two cases from all interviewed organisations) have had longer-term partnerships with EU based organisations that have begun and have lasted beyond specific call for proposals. These are partnerships based on specific sector in which CSOs are active. One example is 7 Arte – Mitrovica based CSO, promoting youth activism and culture. This organisation is part of both regional and EU based networks. It has participated previously in ERASMUS and Creative Europe programs – through these partnerships and network memberships.

A horizontal issue in accessing and implementing the EU programmes' funds that was identified during research is the freedom of movement/challenges related to obtaining travel visas. As these programmes involve intensive networking with EU based organisations, visa issue is a serious obstacle towards establishing and maintaining contact and relationship with CSOs outside Kosovo and the WB region.

### 3.4 Level of awareness of the procedure necessary to apply to these programmes

Kosovo NGOs are aware of EU funded call for proposals procedures. Nevertheless, they are not aware of more specific requirements related to EU programmes and their call for proposals.

Most of interviewed organisations prefer to have internally the skill of writing project proposals and apply for EU calls. Engaging external consultancy for writing project proposals is seen as an artificial exercise that does not usually result in successful application. Moreover, organisations' vision and objectives are not portrayed or expressed in the application as it is not written by the organisation staff itself. However, in one case, the organisation preferred to engage external consultancy for this purpose. This is skill was seen as lacking within the organisation and a skill that the organisation did not see as necessary to obtain.

In terms of operational maturity, including sound financial management and other operational and administrative tools for which organisations are screened during the application process but also by the possible EU-based partner organisations, the findings of the research vary from organisation to organisation. Larger and centrally based organisations have the required managerial (operational and administrative) tools that are needed for the organisational functioning according to required standards. Some of the locally based CSOs have also reached this level of capacity – mainly through institutional grants funded by various donors that have provided support in this regard. Some of the interviewed organisations find this challenging still as they depend fully on donor funded projects to implement their activities, therefore the internal operational and administrative structure is accommodated to the needs of different projects. A sustainable, stable and efficient internal operational and administrative structure, processes and tools are lacking. As a concrete example, several organisations mentioned the challenge of funding the annual audit for the organisation-aside of the projects' fund audits. Organisations lack funding for this exercise and therefore few are lacking behind with their audit exercises.

During interviews, it was mentioned that donor-funded institutional grants have assisted enormously NGOs in their restructuring and also in their strategic development. Some of the interviewed organisations that have received an institutional grant have developed their strategies, have developed their human resource structure, procedures and regulations. This is seen as step forward in regards to further development and increase of competitiveness of Kosovo CSOs in regional and EU level.

### 3.5 Information sharing/promotion of EU programmes by the EU and Ministry of European Integration

The EU Office in Kosovo and the Ministry of European Integration (MEI) have organised initial information sessions on the eligibility of Kosovo for EU programmes. They have published key information on the relevant EU programmes upon the signature of the Framework Agreement. Up to August 2018 – when the research was conducted, bilateral agreements between EU and Kosovo for four (4) EU programmes were not finalised, including the internal approval/ratification procedures by Kosovo institutions. Due to prolongation of the approval process in the Kosovo assembly, the EU and MEI have not started with further information provision on specific programmes and the application procedures.

Interviewed NGOs showed limited knowledge on EU programmes. It was acknowledged during the interviews that NGOs also showed little interest for these programmes in seeking information from the above-mentioned institutions.

There are, however, recent initiatives undertaken by civil society in order to increase the awareness on EU programmes, with specific focus on those that are attractive to CSOs. Such initiative is undertaken by Dokufest and is called Creative Kosovo. Creative Kosovo is an initiative of DokuFest that aims to develop European and Regional Cultural Partnership Network and capacity building of cultural and creative Sector in Kosovo in preparation for accession to Creative Europe programme applications<sup>7</sup>. Its objective is to build the capacities of the organisations and individuals from cultural and creative sector to respond qualitatively in addressing the priorities and the actions outlined in the annual work Programme of Creative Europe.

<sup>7</sup> <http://dokufest.com/creative-kosova-industry-events-dokufest/>

## 4. Conclusions and recommendations

### 4.1 Lack of knowledge for EU programmes

#### 4.1.1 Conclusions

The research has found that there is generally lack of knowledge among CSOs for EU programmes. Indeed, there was some awareness identified on specific programmes, however deeper knowledge about priorities of these programmes is lacking.

Furthermore, information sharing on these programmes both by the EU and by responsible government institutions is insufficient. Platforms like CIVIKOS or networks of Kosovo CSOs were not utilised for this purpose. Although some attempts for information sharing were identified (received invitations for meeting/workshop/information session), the research has found that there was no further attempt to raise awareness on the EU programmes among CSOs. Similarly, lack of proactive approach towards acquiring information on EU programmes is lacking from the side of CSOs. Limited number of CSOs is aware of the programmes, almost none of CSOs can list all EU programmes and only few are aware of those programmes where CSOs are eligible to apply.

#### 4.1.2 Recommendations

##### a) Information sharing by the EU and government institutions

The EU Office in Kosovo currently manages an on-going technical assistance project “Support to Kosovo Participation in EU Programmes” that aims at supporting Kosovo on better accessing the EU programmes. This kind of support will continue in 2019 as well. This TA should foresee more intensive dialogue and consultations with CSOs in order to promote all-inclusive approach when discussing Kosovo priorities vis-à-vis the EU programmes.

Ministry of European Integration should develop an action plan related to EU programmes and information sharing in this regard. Desk offices in relevant institutions that will directly deal with these programmes need to become fully functional and communicate with CSOs on short and long-term priorities. Creative Europe desk office within the Ministry of Culture will benefit from Dokufest a database of cultural organisations in Kosovo and in the Western Balkans region. This database should be used for further information sharing about Creative Europe programme and for establishment of possible partnerships and initiatives. This approach can be used for other programmes as well as there is a desk office for each programme.

##### b) CSOs Advocacy role

CSOs should become more vocal when requesting information about the EU programmes. Up to date, there was a passive approach towards seeking and obtaining information on the EU programmes. Organisations that are active in the EU integration process can develop information sharing tools that can be distributed to interested CSOs. Pressure should be made on desk offices as well as the EU Office in Kosovo for more intensive information sharing. Same pressure should be made in order to actively include CSOs in consultation for prioritising next round of programmes in 2019.

Furthermore, as the media sub-programme of Creative Europe is not accessible for Kosovo CSOs and as the new legislation needs to be drafted, the advocacy role of CSOs, but also their expertise, can contribute to this process greatly.

Information sharing should start immediately and on four programmes for which Kosovo has signed IAs. There are call for proposals that will be launched towards the end of 2018 for which Kosovo CSOs could apply. Focus should be given to not only specific programmes but also specific priority areas within the programmes for which Kosovo CSOs would be interested. Some of the useful tools to be used could be:

- *Leaflets* - containing brief information on each programme, its main priority areas and objectives, web page where more detailed information can be found, if there is an IA between Kosovo and EU for such programme, the desk office contact details should be listed as well.
- *Information sessions*: these sessions can be organised in a workshop format. Aside of providing a presentation on EU programmes – with specific focus on 4 for which IAs are signed, these sessions should include examples from the NGOs that have already participated in these programmes (Dokufest, 7 Arte, KEC, etc.). These NGOs can explain the entire process from establishing partnerships with EU based organisations, application and implementation. Both advantages and challenges can be discussed in details. This way other NGOs can receive first-hand information on these programmes and processes that are involved in accessing their funds.
- *Information sharing on upcoming and ongoing call for proposals* within the EU programmes where Kosovo CSOs can apply: for this a hub-NGO needs to be identified that would be able to share this information. Furthermore, NGOs could advocate that desk offices for certain programmes share this information regularly. CIVIKOS platform can be efficiently used for these purposes as well.

## 4.2 Opportunities and challenges in accessing the EU programmes

### 4.2.1 Conclusions

Accessing the funds of EU programmes is seen as challenging by most of CSOs in Kosovo. The challenges have different dimensions depending whether the CSOs are centrally or locally based.

The main challenge for the centrally based CSOs is the lack of sectoral expertise and the added value of Kosovo CSOs to overall objectives of the EU programmes and their specific priorities. There is a tendency for Kosovo CSOs to be included by international partners for more logistical, administrative and small-scale activity, rather than for substantial contribution to the overall objective of the action. After almost two decades of civil society development in Kosovo, there is a need for having a larger role in international partnerships that would enable Kosovo CSOs bringing an added value with their experience and expertise. However, there are also cases that indeed bring an added value through their memberships to regional and European networks. This is mainly because the organisations have specific focus in their work and this has facilitated their partnerships with international organisations.

For locally-based CSOs the biggest challenge is becoming visible beyond Kosovo borders, starting at regional level and continuing at European level. Currently, locally based CSOs face difficulties in expanding beyond their municipality. They compete with larger CSOs in Kosovo that are centrally based. There are cases of successful partnerships with larger CSOs in Kosovo that have opened access to larger funds from different donors and have contributed towards strengthening the smaller organisations. This approach is seen as suitable when accessing the EU programmes as well.

One joint challenge identified by all CSOs is the co-financing requested in the EU programmes' call for proposals.

## 4.2.2 Recommendations

Kosovo CSOs have developed substantially in past 18 years. There is a sectoral division now available where CSOs have proven to be an important stakeholder and contribute actively in overall Kosovo's development. This is a strength that many CSOs are not fully aware of. This is also their added value that can be brought in regional and international partnerships that can open the door towards EU programmes. CSOs should identify their particular strengths based on their experience and take them further towards increasing their specialisation for specific sector/topic/strategic priority. This would serve for developing and reaching partnerships with EU-based organisations. Sector-based networking among CSOs is also advisable.

There is donor-funded assistance available that could support the above mentioned processes. The on-going EU funded technical assistance as well as the one planned for 2019 could facilitate the contacts and possible partnerships between Kosovo and EU CSOs. Different donors have funded different initiatives through which Kosovo NGOs were sent in neighbouring countries or in EU Member States to meet with larger CSOs or networks. This was done with purpose of having a best-practise experience or for learning purposes or exchange of information. Having a new approach with similar goal can facilitate the accessibility of Kosovo CSOs to EU programmes. EU based CSOs and networks can be brought to Kosovo and meet with their counterparts. Meetings can be organised with sectoral division. Visits could be organised throughout Kosovo. Final aim would be establishing long-term contacts and partnerships that would result in joint programmes and actions. In terms of co-financing, FYROM initiative can be used as a good practise in this case. The Ministry of Culture has allocated a specific fund for co-financing initiatives that are funded under Creative Europe programme. As 90% of entry fee of Kosovo institutions for EU programmes is to be covered through IPA support, similar amount of funds can be used by desk offices for funding the co-financing for successful applications of Kosovo CSOs within relevant EU programmes. This issue should be discussed further with relevant desk offices.

## 4.3 Support/capacity building for CSOs to facilitate the accessibility to EU programmes

### 4.3.1 Conclusions

All interviewed CSOs requested support when EU programmes are concerned. This need for support is primarily because of lack of deeper knowledge for these programmes.

Although most of CSOs already are implementing innovative approaches and actions, when it comes to writing good project proposals, there is a lack of focus and necessary technique. Furthermore, there is often disconnection between organisation's vision and mission and new project proposals. In some cases, the application and procedure accompanying the application process is found very challenging. Therefore, in these cases often organisation opts for the choice of external consultant writing the project proposal.

The research results show that there is an evident fatigue from one-day information sessions or trainings where an expert teaches about project proposals, logical framework, objectives, results and activities. This being usually a one-day activity, it does not ensure any sustainability. Moreover, very often these workshops are not linked to any particular call and there is no follow up to these one-day sessions.

In all call for proposals of the EU programmes, applicants, co-applicants and other entities are required to have certain level of experience as well as financial and operational capacities. This is indeed a challenge for weaker CSOs, however even stronger CSOs seek support in establishing sound financial management systems within their organisation as well as sustainable organisational structure.

### 4.3.2 Recommendations

There is a clear need for developing targeted capacity building programmes that would support CSOs in accessing the EU programmes. These capacity building programmes should be integrated with previously mentioned awareness raising activities such as information sessions as well as facilitation of new partnerships. The following can be some of the types of capacity building programmes:

#### a) Topic related capacity building programme

Each EU programme has specific sub-programmes and priority areas. Capacity building programmes should be targeted based in these sectors and priority areas. As mentioned previously, these programmes should include case studies from actions where Kosovo NGOs have participated already. One good example of such initiative is organised by Dokufest during August 2018. There are series of workshops related to the EU programme Creative Europe. Workshops include different CSOs from the region, desk offices and best-practises are discussed as well as the way forward for Kosovo in becoming eligible for more priority areas of this programme<sup>8</sup>.

#### b) Coaching and good practise examples – learn from a real experience

Case studies are one of the best tools to share real experience that can be used by others. In Kosovo, there are several CSOs that have participated in EU programmes in different modalities and roles (Dokufest, ODA Theatre, 7 Arte, KCSS). These organisations and their representatives can be used as trainers/coaches providing detailed information on their experience in applying for and implementing the EU programmes.

In addition to case studies, coaching as a capacity building method is more preferred rather than classical classroom approach. As mentioned in previous sections, a one-day workshop fatigue is identified among CSOs. Longer-term coaching and support is preferred format and this should be taken into consideration when planning future support initiatives.

#### c) Process related capacity building programmes

These capacity building programmes can be combined with previous two programmes. Capacity building programmes should be linked with specific processes in order to have visible results. Such processes are call for proposals, signature of new international agreements between Kosovo and EU, any changes occurring in relevant programmes or their regulations and similar. This will strengthen the relevance of the capacity building programmes and make them more attractive for the CSOs. Most immediate capacity building programme can be envisaged for EU for Citizens as the IA has been ratified for this programme and there are call for proposals still open for CSOs participation.

It is crucial that capacity building programmes target CSOs throughout Kosovo and not only those that are based in Pristina. Moreover, joint efforts with government institutions, research institutes, universities and private sector should be sought. As shown throughout the research, civil society is a cross-cutting sector among EU programmes and this provides both an opportunity and a challenge for CSOs.

#### d) Making best use of resource centres

There are different resource centres available in Kosovo and in the Region, which could be listed as a good capacity building opportunity. Some of them are: EU Information Centre, KCSF Centre, ERASMUS regional platform and similar. Different CSO platforms (such as CIVIKOS and similar), once they are alerted about an event and meeting, they shall spread and disseminate the information. This includes different capacity building initiatives.

<sup>8</sup> <http://dokufest.com/creative-kosova-industry-events-dokufest/>

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