

# OCCASIONAL POLICY PAPER

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## ALBANIAN DEVELOPMENT POLICY AND CSO ROLE IN THE EU ACCESSION PERSPECTIVES

*Building Regional Networks of CSOs for Development*

By Dorian Jano, Jean Monnet Chairholder and EU Policy Hub Coordinator

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The Jean Monnet Chair at University Marin Barleti is committed to teaching and research as well as promotion of a constructive debate among academics, policy makers, practitioners and civil society experts on issues related to European integration of the Western Balkans. The aim is to re-vitalize academic research and policy debate on the new EU enlargement policy towards the remaining countries of the Western Balkans (WB) through a multidisciplinary approach and through dissemination and communication activities.

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*Building Regional Networks of CSOs for International  
Development*

**Author:** Dr. Dorian Jano,  
Jean Monnet ChairHolder at Marin Barleti University,  
Coordinator of EU Policy Hub

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## Albanian International Development Policy & CSO Role in the EU Accession Perspectives

### 1. Introduction

In the context of opening EU accession negotiations, Albania need to be prepared to adopt and implement development cooperation and humanitarian aid policies as part of chapter 30 on External Relations. Development cooperation and humanitarian aid policy, is one of the core policies of EU external action, alongside of the foreign, security and trade policies. Since the Lisbon Treaty, the development policy is separated from humanitarian aid, and now they are recognized as EU external policies on their own right with distinct respective EU commissioners. The primary objective of European development policy is to eradicating poverty, ensuring sustainable development and promoting democracy and peace worldwide, though nine priority intervention area: trade and regional integration, environment and natural resources, infrastructure, energy, rural development, governance, democracy and human rights, peace and security, human development, social cohesion and employment.<sup>1</sup>The main instrument for the provision of development aid, is the European Development Fund which is funded by the Member States and does not fall under the EU general budget.<sup>2</sup> Whereas, the European humanitarian aid policy is outline in the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid and follows the fundamental principles of neutrality, humanity, independence, impartiality and respect of international humanitarian law when acting in response to humanitarian crises and disasters.<sup>3</sup> The main instrument is the EU Civil Protection Mechanism that coordinates assistance from the participating states to any country in the world that is affected by natural or man-made disasters.<sup>4</sup>

As with other EU policies, development cooperation and humanitarian aid are reflected in the *acquis*, thus requiring accession countries to comply with EU legislation and international commitments, to ensure the capacity to participate, to finance and to implement international development assistance. Yet, during the

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<sup>1</sup> EU Commission (2016) Assessing the 2005 European Consensus on Development and accompanying the initiative "Proposal for a new European Consensus on Development" Strasbourg, 22.11.2016 SWD(2016) 387 final. See also the official site of the Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO) [http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sectors/sectors\\_en](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sectors/sectors_en)

<sup>2</sup> For more see European Development Fund (EDF) [http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/funding/funding-instruments-programming/funding-instruments/european-development-fund\\_en](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/funding/funding-instruments-programming/funding-instruments/european-development-fund_en)

<sup>3</sup> For more see European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/who/humanitarian-aid-and-civil-protection/european-consensus\\_en](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/who/humanitarian-aid-and-civil-protection/european-consensus_en)

<sup>4</sup> For more see Civil Protection Mechanism [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/what/civil-protection/mechanism\\_en](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/what/civil-protection/mechanism_en)

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accession negotiation process as shown by previous enlargements, the development policy and humanitarian aid policy is a 'soft' *acquis* with few well defined rules and procedures, and it was not one of the main conditions of high priority for EU membership, making it a comparatively 'easy task' for both parties to come quickly to an agreement during the EU accession negotiation. The international development and humanitarian aid policy has relatively low salience, and the EU adaptational pressures could be classified as 'mild' and being of low intensity,<sup>5</sup> thus probably leading to fast agreement on 'papers' but with difficulties on how to implement it latter. Moreover, the previous experience of being only a recipient and not a donor country, with no organizational structures and strategies, have the risk that the adopted policies and the institutions set-up to not function properly or on the same understanding as in other EU countries. Thus, any social learning model<sup>6</sup> is relevant to be considered in the area of international development policy at the EU accession process, firstly because of the very little legally binding development *acquis* and consequently the very little possibilities for direct and strong EU conditionality, and secondly because of the normative stance of the policy, the dense interactions between member states and EU institutions, and the strong presence of potential norm entrepreneurs in the policy area.<sup>7</sup> The various 'social learning' exercises may include special meetings between the candidate countries and the EU's development partners and various training seminars for the candidate states' officials organized by some member states, or more systematic approach of knowledge transfer and partnership programs (such as Official Development Assistance in Central Europe - ODACE, Emerging Donors Initiative - EDI).<sup>8</sup>

With regards to international development and humanitarian assistance, Albania above all needs to switch from an aid-recipient country to an effective active participant in providing development and humanitarian assistance to less developed countries. Today, Albania as most Western Balkan countries, do not have experience of providing aid to other developing countries, except for limited *ad hoc* actions and

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<sup>5</sup>Henriksson, P. T. (2015) "Europeanization of Foreign-Aid Policy in Central and East Europe: The Role of EU, External Incentives and Identification in Foreign-Aid Policy Adoption in Latvia and Slovenia 1998–2010", *Journal of European Integration*, 37: 4, p. 434.

<sup>6</sup> For a more theoretical argument on social learning model and its application on development policy in the Western Balkan countries see Jano, D. (2016) "Challenges of Western Balkans to Implement EU Policies of Development Cooperation" in *International Conference Booklet Development and Democracy: Sustainable World with No One Left Behind*, Pontis Foundation, Bratislava.

<sup>7</sup> Lightfoot, S. & Szent-Iványi, B. (2014) "Reluctant donors? The Europeanization of international development policies in the new member states", *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 52(6), p. 1258.

<sup>8</sup>Henriksson, P. T. (2015), *op. cit.*, p. 438; Szent-Iványi, B. & Lightfoot, S. (2015) *New Europe's New Development Aid*, New York, Routledge, p.86-89.

interventions in response to natural disasters. Albania needs to prepare for establishing its international development cooperation and humanitarian aid strategies as there is no unique model on the cooperation with developing countries. Moreover, the involvement of civil society in this process is crucial in addressing global justice, solidarity and international development. Additionally, trade unions or faith organizations should also give attention to development issues.<sup>9</sup> Acknowledging the weakness of the civic sector in Albania it would be wisely to build on regional networks of civil society organizations (CSOs) for international development, especially with those countries that recently went through similar processes and have been contributing to Albania. Regional networks of CSOs are the first and best mechanisms for advocacy activities with public institutions as well as for the implementation of the country's international development policy latter.

In this context, the overall aim of this policy paper is to present the current Albanian situation on international development and humanitarian aid and compare it with the best practices from other countries of the region. An emphasis will be put at the critical role that civil society had to play in international development policy at the European context,<sup>10</sup> as well as trying to identify the possibilities and challenges of integrating Albanian CSO into the regional civil society cooperation and networks for international development.

## **2. Albania's preparation on International Development Policy and Humanitarian Aid in the context of EU Accession Negotiation**

Albania is a recipient of foreign aid and has neither a policy framework nor administrative structures for development and humanitarian aid policies. Yet, some positive steps have been taken towards starting the preparation on development policy and humanitarian aid in the context of EU Accession.

Albania is a signatory of the Millennium Declaration and supports the Monterrey Consensus on development financing.<sup>11</sup> It has provided limited *ad hoc* aid to non-EU countries in response to natural disasters. There is no dedicated budget for humanitarian aid or agency administering humanitarian aid. Law Nr. 9900, dated 10.04.2008 "On the State Material Reserves" envisions the provisions in the field of

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<sup>9</sup> The involvement of faith organizations is relevant given they have their international networks and focus on the today SDGs in global justice and solidarity. In this aspect, Albania could contribute on Religious Tolerance or as it has been said by Pope Francis during his visit in Albania, the Religious Brotherhood.

<sup>10</sup> For the general theoretical argument see: Lister, M. and Carbone, M. (2006) "Integrating Gender and Civil Society into EU Development Policy", in *New Pathways in International Development: Gender and civil Society in EU Policy*, Lister, M. & Carbone M. (eds), Aldershot: Ashgate, pp. 1-16.

<sup>11</sup> COM (2010) 680, Analytical Report accompanying the Commission Opinion on Albania's application for membership of the European Union, Brussels, 9/11/2010, p. 115-116.

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humanitarian aid. The Council of Ministers takes *ad-hoc*, case-by-case decisions to make contributions in cases of international natural disasters and civil emergencies.

### Box 1: Ad-hoc Decisions of the Council of Ministers for international natural disasters and civil emergencies 2013 -2016

- *Decision of Council of Ministers No. 43 of 23.01.2013 "On extra budget for 2013 to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs", providing humanitarian aid (\$ 100.000) to Turkey for the accommodation of Syrian refugees. Official Journal No. 6*
- *Decision of Council of Ministers of 19.03.2014 "Granting Financial Assistance to Municipality of Presevo for its Maternity" (EUR 50,000)*
- *Decision of Council of Ministers No. 295 of 22.5.2014 "Participation of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Albania on a humanitarian mission to deal with the situation created by floods in Bosnia-Herzegovina"*
- *Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 631 of 10.01.2014 "On Granting Financial Aid by the Albanian Government for the Governments of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia to Relief the Effects of Damage Caused by Floods in May 2014", Official Journal no 156*
- *Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 697 of 08.06.2015 "On Granting Financial Aid by the Albanian Government for the Governments of the Republic of Macedonia, to Relief the Effects of Damage Caused by Floods in August 2015, in Tetovo", Official Journal No. 144*
- *Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 600 of 31.08.2016 "On Granting Financial Aid by the Albanian Government for the Governments of the Republic of Macedonia, to Relief the Effects of Damage Caused by Floods in August 2016", Official Journal 166*

**Table 1: The Albanian Humanitarian Aid (2013 - 2016)**

| Year | Amount          | County                           | Reason  |
|------|-----------------|----------------------------------|---|
| 2016 | EUR 100,000     | Macedonia                        | Relief for the flood affected areas               |
| 2015 | EUR 50,000      | Macedonia                        | Relief for the flood affected areas in Tetovo     |
| 2014 | EUR 100,000 x 2 | Serbia<br>Bosnia and Herzegovina | Relief to cope with the aftermath of the flooding |
| 2014 | EUR 50,000      | Serbia                           | Maternity Hospital of Presevo                     |
| 2013 | USD 100.000     | Turkey                           | Accommodation of Syrian refugees                  |

Source: Data from the Decisions of the Council of Ministers. See Box 1

Albania will have to adopt a legal and material framework to cover humanitarian aid to non-EU countries and civil protection aid to Member States and non-EU countries in accordance with the principles already adopted by the Union, notably Regulation 1257/96. The country needs to join the EU Civil Protection Mechanism.<sup>12</sup>

In 2012, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs assigned one person to follow issues related to EU development policy and humanitarian aid (COM 2012). According to the National Plan for European Integration, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in cooperation with the Ministry of Economic Development, Tourism, Trade and Entrepreneurship, have planned for 2018 to draft the strategic document on “Aid for development policy and humanitarian aid”.<sup>13</sup> The draft should be part of Albania’s foreign policy, clearly formulating the country’s specific interests and preferences in the field of development cooperation considering the quantity and quality of aid, the thematic and geographical focus and the scope of aid based on the EU development’s objectives, common values and principles.<sup>14</sup> Moreover given the critical role that civil society plays in development policy in other countries from Central Eastern Europe, the draft should have any type of recognized framework for national non-governmental organizations aiming to provide assistance in third countries, as well as mechanisms for a positive awareness-raising effect among the population.

On 6<sup>th</sup> of December 2016, consultative meeting has been organized by the Ministry of Integration with representatives of other ministries (mostly heads of the Interinstitutional Working Group on European Integration) on the draft of National Plan for European Integration 2017-2020 regarding Chapter 30, yet it has neither shown interest by Albanian CSO and interest groups nor has its focus been on development policy and humanitarian aid.<sup>15</sup> Some workshops and trainings on issues related to compliance with the EU approach for chapter 30 has been organized with the

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<sup>12</sup> COM(2016) Albania 2016 Report Accompanying the document Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions 2016 Communication on EU Enlargement Policy, Brussels, 9.11.2016 SWD(2016) 364 final COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT {COM(2016) 715 final}, p.84

<sup>13</sup> This is the first time the National Plan for European Integration envisions such a strategic document. See: National Plan for European Integration 2017–2020, January 2017, available at [http://www.integrimi.gov.al/files/documents\\_files/FZ\\_Nr12-Viti2017\\_VKM42\\_date25.1.2017.pdf](http://www.integrimi.gov.al/files/documents_files/FZ_Nr12-Viti2017_VKM42_date25.1.2017.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> For example Croatia defined its strategic thematic and geographic goals related to development cooperation in 2013. Geographically, Croatia wants to be present primarily in South-East Europe (with a focus on Bosnia and Herzegovina), the Southern Mediterranean (Morocco, Tunisia and Syria) and Afghanistan. Thematically, Croatia wants to focus on education, public health, tourism and the development of civil society. See: Bosanac, Gordan (2013) “Development Cooperation in the Youngest EU Member State: About Challenges and Chances in Croatia”, *Dialog: A Bulletin on EU Enlargement and NGOs* N° 10.

<sup>15</sup> Report on the Public Consultation on the National Plan for European Integration 2017 - 2020, Ministry of European Integration, available at [http://www.integrimi.gov.al/files/documents\\_files/17-02-17-02-43-47Raport\\_per\\_takimet\\_konsultative\\_te\\_PKIE\\_2017-2020.pdf](http://www.integrimi.gov.al/files/documents_files/17-02-17-02-43-47Raport_per_takimet_konsultative_te_PKIE_2017-2020.pdf)

support of GiZ or SMEI project, yet the focus has been the EU common commercial policy not the development policy and humanitarian aid.<sup>16</sup>

Today, Albania remains at an early stage of EU preparation, with no legislative changes, policy framework, administrative structures and capacities in development policy or humanitarian aid. In addition to state preparations, the change from recipient to donor of external assistance will require also the active support of a more informed civil society.<sup>17</sup>

### **3. The Case of other Western Balkan countries dealing with International Development Policy and Humanitarian Aid in the context of EU Accession Negotiation**

In the case of Albania, it is relevant and useful for the upcoming years to examine and draw lessons from the previous experience of other Western Balkan countries dealing with development policy and humanitarian aid in the context of EU Accession Negotiation.

With the exception of Croatia which is an EU member state, the other Western Balkan countries are yet aid recipient and they have limited legislation and relevant administrative structures on development policy.<sup>18</sup> So far, they have only provided limited *ad hoc* humanitarian aid on a case-by-case basis, notably in response to natural disasters. There is a need for the accession countries from the Western Balkans to set-up a governmental unit in charge and competent for development cooperation and humanitarian aid, often within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, that is equipped technically and with personnel to monitor, plan and coordinate development cooperation and humanitarian aid. Even in the case of Croatia, alignment with EU development policy was completed only on 2011, the date when it was decided that Croatia will become an EU member state; the National Strategy of Development

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<sup>16</sup> For example 1) Workshop for IIWGs on Chapter 30, Training Dates: 24 May 2011, Number of participants 11; 2) Workshop on Chapter 30: External Relation, organised by Albanian School on Public Administration and SMEI3 project, Training date 25 November 2014; 3) Training of the preparatory work for the drafting of the Task Plan for Chapter 30 organised on 7.07.2016 with the support of German *Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit* (GiZ). See respectively: Support to the Albanian Ministry of European Integration – SMEI II, Delegation Agreement No: 2009/212-033 (IPA 2008) Final Report – Draft, 1 September 2009 – 30 September 2011, p.82; Annual Progress Report 2014, Albanian Contribution – Input II, May – September 2014, p.7; Albanian Contribution - Input II to Annual Report of European Commission 2016, May - September 2016, p. 483.

<sup>17</sup> COM (2010) 680, Analytical Report accompanying the Commission Opinion on Albania's application for membership of the European Union, Brussels, 9/11/2010, p. 115-116.

<sup>18</sup> For a detail analysis on the Western Balkans readiness to EU Development Cooperation Policy see: Jano, D. (2016), *op. cit.*, p. 80 – 82.

Assistance was adopted and the Department for International Development Cooperation increased to 5 experts which were being trained regularly, yet Croatia had to continue strengthening its financial and administrative capacity in the area of development policy and humanitarian aid.<sup>19</sup> In 2014, the Directorate for Global Development Policy, Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid Abroad was established within the Directorate-General for Multilateral Affairs and Global Issues of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs having a division for planning and another one for implementation of development policy and humanitarian aid.<sup>20</sup> From November 2012, Croatia has established an Interagency Working Group for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid with members from state administration bodies, representatives of the public sector, civil society, private sector and the academic community, with the aim to establish the framework of development policy in line with international policies, to ensure coherence of development policy at national level and to propose guidelines to strengthen the effectiveness of development cooperation project.<sup>21</sup> Montenegro has established a Directorate General for Economic and Cultural Cooperation (DGECC), within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration, which is acquiring the administrative capacities and responsibilities for implementing development and humanitarian aid policy, and more specifically collecting data on provided aid, preparing the methodology of calculating its value and will aim at establishing the legal framework for operations.<sup>22</sup> In June 2015, Montenegro became a participating state to the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (Law Ratifying the Agreement between Montenegro and the European Union on the participation of Montenegro in the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, Official Gazette of Montenegro – International Agreements 3/15), with 10 employees in the Section for Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid, which is in charge of affairs related to humanitarian aid. In 2010, as part of the Ministry of External Affairs a Unit for humanitarian and development aid was established in Macedonia with two state officials responsible for its activities. Yet, as interviews with Macedonian civil society representative witness, the unit has not been functional, with no adequate trained staff

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<sup>19</sup> Commission Staff Working Paper, CROATIA 2011 PROGRESS REPORT, SEC(2011) 1200 final, Brussels, 12.10.2011, p.62-63

<sup>20</sup> See: Croatia: Policy Framework, available at [http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/hr-dp-july-2016\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/hr-dp-july-2016_en.pdf)

<sup>21</sup> See: Questionnaire for EU-PCD report 2015: Contributions from member states – Croatia, available at [https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/reply-croatia\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/reply-croatia_en.pdf); and also Croatia: Policy Framework, *op. cit.*

<sup>22</sup> European Commission (2014) Screening report. Montenegro: Chapter 30 – External relations, WP enlargement + countries negotiating accession to EU, MD 1/14. 16.01.14, available at [http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/montenegro/screening\\_reports/screening\\_report\\_montenegro\\_ch30.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/montenegro/screening_reports/screening_report_montenegro_ch30.pdf)

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who have knowledge and willingness to cooperate with civil society.<sup>23</sup> Serbia had plan but is postponing the creation of a unit in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs dealing with development and humanitarian aid, as well as the appointment of a National Coordinator for coordination development and humanitarian assistance that would consolidate and fully coordinate the work of all competent state authorities and institutions.<sup>24</sup>

With regards to the policy framework or sectorial regulation, Croatia adopted in 2008 the law on Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid Abroad (Official Gazette No. 146/2008) and in February 2009 the first National Strategy for International Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid 2009-2014 (Official Gazette No. 24/2009), which has been updated in September 2015 for the period 2015-2020 and is key component in Croatian foreign policy.<sup>25</sup> Montenegro on 30 July 2016 amended the Law on Protection and Rescuing, to ensure more comprehensive alignment with the *acquis* in the area of civil protection, including better management and coordination in protection and rescue, system financing, and so on; it has also plans to adopt the Law on Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid by the end of 2017, which will ensure alignment with the EU *acquis*.<sup>26</sup> Serbia is planning on the adoption of new or amending the existing law on foreign affairs, which should define the competence of development policy at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; It has also envision the establishment of an inter-ministerial working group that would prepare draft a law on development policy and humanitarian aid, as well as to develop a strategy and action plans. Yet, these documents have been postponed and the current draft of the new Law on Foreign Affairs contains a single reference to development and humanitarian aid in its preamble thus it is more probable that further practical arrangements related to the provision of development and humanitarian aid to developing countries will be specified in by-laws and regulations.<sup>27</sup> In Macedonia, the provisional deadline for

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<sup>23</sup>Written Communication – Questionnaire with Macedonian civil society representative, 13 March 2017.

<sup>24</sup> See the revised National Plan for the adoption of the *Acquis*, p.1337 available at [http://seio.gov.rs/upload/documents/nacionalna\\_dokumenta/npaa/NPAA\\_2016\\_revizija\\_srp.pdf](http://seio.gov.rs/upload/documents/nacionalna_dokumenta/npaa/NPAA_2016_revizija_srp.pdf)

<sup>25</sup> Available at the central public counselling web portal “e-Counselling” <https://esavjetovanja.gov.hr/ECon/MainScreen?entityId=1147>

<sup>26</sup> See: Action Plan on the remaining preparations in relation to legislation alignment, as well as alignment of international treaties with the *acquis* and improvement of administrative and control capacities to ensure full implementation and enforcement of the *acquis* from the day of accession: Chapter 30 – External Relations, Government of Montenegro, 20 October 2016, p.7

<sup>27</sup> Badan, Oana R. (2014) TRIALOG Country Paper SERBIA, October 2014, Vienna, p.11

adoption of the Law on the Implementation of the Development Policy has been postponed for 2017.<sup>28</sup>

With regards to administrative and operational capacity building some study visits and seminars with peers from EU member states have been organized. E.g. the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration in Montenegro, has convened two meetings on December 2015 of an informal inter-ministerial working group for humanitarian and development assistance, where representatives of Croatian and Slovenian government were invited to participate and, within two seminars, to share their knowledge and experience on the methodology and practices of EU member states in the area of development and humanitarian aid.<sup>29</sup> Macedonia, also send two diplomats from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to participate in a study visit to Slovenia and Croatia with the aim of introducing the Slovenian and Croatian political and institutional organization of the development cooperation and humanitarian aid, enabling exchange of experience for the process of negotiations for Chapter 30, as well as for the challenges in the course of the implementation of the development cooperation.<sup>30</sup>

With regards to civil society engagement in the context of EU accession negotiations on chapter 30, Studies giving an overview of the civil society situation and their involvement in the negotiation process of the development cooperation issues, have been undertaken by the *Trialog* project, for Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia (for Albania the country report is yet to come).<sup>31</sup> A best practice is the *briefing meetings* with CSOs organized by the Serbian Office for Cooperation with Civil Society in cooperation with the negotiation team for EU accession, with the aim of informing representatives of civil society on the main issues and details of the bilateral screening process for chapters 30 (24 CSOs representative were present in the

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<sup>28</sup> National Programme for Adoption of the Acquis (NPAAA) Revision 2016, Government of the Republic of Macedonia, Secretariat for European Affairs, p. 271

<sup>29</sup> See: Action Plan on the remaining preparations in relation to legislation alignment, as well as alignment of international treaties with the acquis and improvement of administrative and control capacities to ensure full implementation and enforcement of the acquis from the day of accession: Chapter 30 – External Relations, Government of Montenegro, 20 October 2016, p.7

<sup>30</sup> National Programme for Adoption of the Acquis (NPAAA) Revision 2016, Government of the Republic of Macedonia, Secretariat for European Affairs, p. 271

<sup>31</sup> See TRIALOG country papers series available at <http://www.trialog.or.at/country-papers-3>. Access on 30 March 2017

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briefing).<sup>32</sup> The use of ICT is also an efficient way of informing in real time about the status of the negotiations. For example Serbia used public web streaming posted on the ministry official website for the explanatory screening on Chapter 30 on External Relations which was attended by nine CSO representatives, (out of more than 500 CSO representatives attending web streaming of explanatory screening for all negotiation chapters – less than 2%) from seven different organizations (European Policy Centre, United Trade Unions Independence, Native Land/Rodnagrada, Confederation of autonomous trade union of Serbia, Modern youth, Balkan Security Agenda, Club of students of the Faculty of Security).<sup>33</sup> Inclusion of civil society representatives as fully fledged members of the negotiating working groups, alongside other members from the public administration, represents another alternative of active involvement in the process of drafting regulation and designing public policies. In Montenegro, the working group on chapter 30 comprises 24 members out of which 2 come from the civil society.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, there has been incentives and dialogue between the government and civil society in Montenegro encouraging the development of civil society to collaborate with international NGOs and active engagement in humanitarian aid abroad.<sup>35</sup> Another effective platform for wide participation and monitoring EU negotiation process has been the National Conventions on the European Union (NCEU) gathering many CSOs into working groups which operates as a permanent body for thematically structured debate among all stakeholders and for the formulation of opinions and recommendations. In Serbia, the working group on external relations (and Foreign, security and defence policy) gathered 23 members from 19 organization (0.3%)<sup>36</sup> coming from civil society, academia, business and the

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<sup>32</sup> See: Annual report on the participation of CSOs in the negotiation process for the accession of the Republic of Serbia to the European Union in 2014, Office for Cooperation with Civil Society, The Republic of Serbia Government, p.3

<sup>33</sup> See: Badan, Oana R. (2014) TRIALOG Country Paper SERBIA, October 2014, Vienna, p.16. Office for Cooperation with Civil Society (2014) Annual Report on the participation of CSOs in the negotiation process for the accession of the Republic of Serbia to the European Union, The Republic of Serbia Government, available at: <http://civilnodrustvo.gov.rs/media/2014/06/Report-on-CSOsparticipation-in-negotiating-process-in-Serbia.pdf>

<sup>34</sup> See: Chapter 30 - Working Group, <http://www.eu.me/en/30/item/337-chapter-30-working-group>

<sup>35</sup> In September 2016, the first event on international development and humanitarian aid organised by Montenegrin NGO included representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration to share information on the Government's progress in establishing the system for humanitarian aid and development cooperation. See: Action Plan on the remaining preparations in relation to legislation alignment, as well as alignment of international treaties with the acquis and improvement of administrative and control capacities to ensure full implementation and enforcement of the acquis from the day of accession: Chapter 30 – External Relations, Government of Montenegro, 20 October 2016, p.7

<sup>36</sup> Organizations of the subgroup for the Chapter 30: ISAC Fund, BIRN, European Movement in Serbia, Serbian Association of Managers, Academy of National Development, Beta, Public Policy Research Centre, Center for Applied European Studies, Serbian Business Club Privrednik, Center for Euro-Atlantic Studies

negotiating team dealing particularly with Chapter 30.<sup>37</sup> Whereas the homologous National Convention on the European Union in Albania, is in its very initial phase with only 4 working groups (Judiciary and Fundamental Rights; Justice, Freedom and Security; Agriculture and Food Safety; and Environment), not addressing Chapter 30 as the most challenging negotiation chapters with the EU.<sup>38</sup>

#### 4. Regional Networks of CSOs for International Development

Most reports recognise the importance of CSO networking and other forms of intra-sector cooperation, yet cooperation on international projects of Albanian civil society with CSOs from the region is more limited, in some form of informal *ad hoc* networks.<sup>39</sup> It is difficult to assess the percentage, the quality, and sustainability of Albanian CSOs involved in some international cooperation partnership and networks as this is a new issue for Albania, yet there have been some good practices to be recorded.

On a regional level, the Western Balkan CSOs for Global Development project has initiated a network of civil society from western Balkan countries (Albania included) with the aim to raise public awareness, enhance capacities, engage in political dialogue and integrate them into the European civil society for development cooperation.<sup>40</sup> The project is a good practice to start a platform building process and coordinate Albanian CSOs active in development education and global development issues and integrate them within regional existing development networks. For western Balkan CSOs to be partners in development assistance, the only solution at the moment is via partnerships with other countries such as V4.<sup>41</sup> It is important that Western Balkan CSOs for development interconnect with organizations in EU countries which recently went through similar process (such as V4) for exchanging experiences in setting up development cooperation structures and mechanisms for

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(CEAS), Bambi, Belgrade Center for Security Policy, Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Serbia, FoNet, European Policy Center, Business Info Group, MK Group, Open Society Foundation, and the Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications.

<sup>37</sup> See: <http://eukonvent.org/eng/external-relations-foreign-security-and-defence-policy/>

<sup>38</sup> See: <http://em-al.org/en/national-convention-on-eu-integration-assessment-and-recommendations-2015-2016/>

<sup>39</sup> For example Albanian CSOs cooperation is more limited with Serbian organisations. See: Badan, Oana R. (2014) TRIALOG Country Paper SERBIA, October 2014, Vienna, p.17

<sup>40</sup> See: Western Balkan CSOs for Global Development available at [http://www.horizont3000.at/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/TRIALOG\\_Westbalkan.pdf](http://www.horizont3000.at/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/TRIALOG_Westbalkan.pdf); and <http://www.balkancsd.net/novo/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/globalen-razvoj.pdf>

<sup>41</sup> Iina Nesikj, Programme Manager, Balkan Civil Society Network, Macedonia, at “The International Visegrad Fund Roundtable: Visegrad Partners and Western Balkan CSOs for Development”, in *International Conference Booklet Development and Democracy: Sustainable World with No One Left Behind*, Pontis Foundation, Bratislava, p.61.

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advocacy with national governments. Focusing on proactive networking with a wide range of CSOs including academics, church, development organizations, and anybody who can have an international reach, is essential for building platforms, regional networking, and meeting other peers.<sup>42</sup> Regional cooperation and the implementation of joint projects with CSOs in the neighbouring countries and with more experience on development issues is important in building capacities and raising awareness of the Albanian CSO on international development matters and in preparing Albanian civil society for the process. Despite the Albanian CSOs involvement in regional initiatives for capacity building on development issues, to our knowledge, today there are no Albanian civic organization working or that have been active in the implementation of development cooperation projects in other developing countries. Regional workshops on development education with participants from Balkan countries civil society members have been organized in cooperation with organizations in EU which have recently gone through similar processes (e.g. Croatian CROSOL platform, Pontis Foundation Slovakia, Horizont 3000 Austria). Organizations that previously have experience with development aid and programs could easily adopt when the country becomes an EU member state and aid donor. E.g. AidWatch Serbia is a coalition of 14 CSOs currently acting as a watchdog for the monitoring of the spending of the international assistance received by Serbia with a view of using this experience once Serbia becomes a donor of development and humanitarian aid; AidWatch Serbia is also liaising with European development cooperation CSO platforms to learn about their ways of working and exchange experiences.<sup>43</sup> Regional networks interconnects CSOs in the Western Balkans with organizations in the EU which have recently gone through similar processes to share their know-how, prepare them for the implementation of development projects and advocacy with national governments and the EU. Regional networks of CSOs seem to be the best mechanism to mainstream and advocate the development agenda in the countries of the Western Balkans, especially Albania.

## **5. Conclusion**

In the area of development policy and humanitarian aid, Albania, as a candidate country waiting to open accession negotiations, needs to prepare for complying with

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<sup>42</sup> Marián Čaučík, Director of Dobra novina - Development Cooperation Programme of eRko, Slovakia, at “The International Visegrad Fund Roundtable: Visegrad Partners and Western Balkan CSOs for Development”, in *International Conference Booklet Development and Democracy: Sustainable World with No One Left Behind*, Pontis Foundation, Bratislava, p.58

<sup>43</sup> See: Steel-Jasińska, Rebecca (2014) ‘Foreword’ in Oana Raluca Badan TRIALOG Country Paper Serbia, Vienna, p.17

EU legislation and its international commitments and to ensure that it has the capacity to participate in EU development policies. The case of EU accession negotiations with previous new member states have underestimated the task of preparing a candidate country to becoming a donor since the development cooperation and humanitarian aid often has been treated simply as a box ticking exercises at the end of the EU accession negotiations.<sup>44</sup> The opening of EU accession with Albania will need to generate much momentum for clear and concrete measures on development policy and humanitarian aid in the country. All kinds of stakeholders, from state officials and policy-makers to civil society and the general public have to be engaged in this process in order to achieve legitimacy and support for the country's new role.<sup>45</sup> At the accession process, it is necessary for Albania not only to draft, adopt and implement a number of strategic documents but also to have a clear understanding of EU development policy and to institute the appropriate administrative infrastructure with adequate and well-trained staff to effectively contribute to the issues plaguing developing countries. While no detailed timeline for EU negotiations is available and that development policy is not a priority, it seems likely that preparations regarding development policy and humanitarian aid will come later in the EU negotiations process. Yet, experience from other countries shows that development policies and humanitarian aid need to be tackled in a timely manner to ensure that Albania is fully and effectively prepared for its new role of aid donor.

With regards to **institutional set-up**, the role of MFA should be mainly at a policy level, an alternative way to the direct engagement of the MFA would be a specialized agency with a National Coordinator under the Government office. This unit and authority in the government office would be in a better position to coordinate the work of all competent state authorities and institutions and remain out of the various diplomatic pressures and interest. With regards to **policy issues**, it is important that a mentoring EU member country help the government (e.g. Germany in the case of Rumania) in drafting the strategy "Aid for development policy and humanitarian aid" and that civil society be consulted from the beginning in the preparation. With regards to the budget allocation, it is suggested that the first budget be co-financed by another EU member-state donor thus to be decent amount, and make allocations also for the local stakeholders. With regards to **civil society** it is important to map the civil society organizations which would have a potential to do contribute in development projects, education and awareness raising. CSOs acting as watchdogs for monitoring of the spending of the international assistance could be used this experience once Albania

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<sup>44</sup> Steel-Jasińska, Rebecca (2014) 'Foreword' in Oana Raluca Badan *TRIALOG Country Paper Serbia*, Vienna, p.3.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

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becomes a donor of development and humanitarian aid. Certain support from other countries having experience on development cooperation and humanitarian aid is a must. The experience of V4 countries as it is already happening through TRIALOG, PontisFoundation could be expand beside one-time-projects and be accompanying Albanian CSOs in the processes. CSO involvement in the accession process is an important factor to progress in development policy. In the past 25 years, we are witnessing a growing role of civil society in Albania, despite the challenges. Thus, it is best to encourage the active involvement of Albanian CSOs into regional networks for development.

In general, a more systemic approach is needed in having long-term programs where the government officials and civil society representatives are invited to participate as observers at EU level development cooperation policy meetings and they are actively involved into development projects and in global education initiatives within the regional networks and meetings for international development.

*The occasional policy paper by Dorian Jano, a Jean Monnet professor at Marin Barleti University and Coordinator of EU Policy Hub, discuss the current Albanian situation and possible best practices on dealing with international development and humanitarian aid in the light of opening EU accession negotiations*

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EU Policy Hub is a Forum of young professionals, who aspires Albania's integration into the European Union. The diversity of values and dialogue are the bridges that connect us

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