CIVICUS CIVIL SOCIETY INDEX

SLOVENIA

Draft Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The CIVICUS Civil Society Index (CSI) is a participatory action-research project that assesses the state of civil society in various countries. The project is headed by CIVICUS World Alliance for Citizen Participation, and in Slovenia it is carried out under the auspices of the Ministry of Public Administration. The main aims of the project are to promote and strengthen civil society through its assessment and develop political recommendations and measures.

The first stage of the project involved a quantitative survey of civil society organisations (CSOs) and external experts; the second involved qualitative methods, i.e. case studies for all the basic CSI dimensions; and the third involved the presentation of results at regional focus group meetings and the national workshop to obtain feedback on key findings, identify the strengths and weaknesses of civil society in Slovenia and formulate basic guidelines to improve its position.

The Civil Society Diamond summarises the values of the quantitative indicators which represent the four basic dimensions of civil society, while the circle around it represents the fifth dimension, the external environment of civil society.

Figure 1: Civil Society Diamond in Slovenia
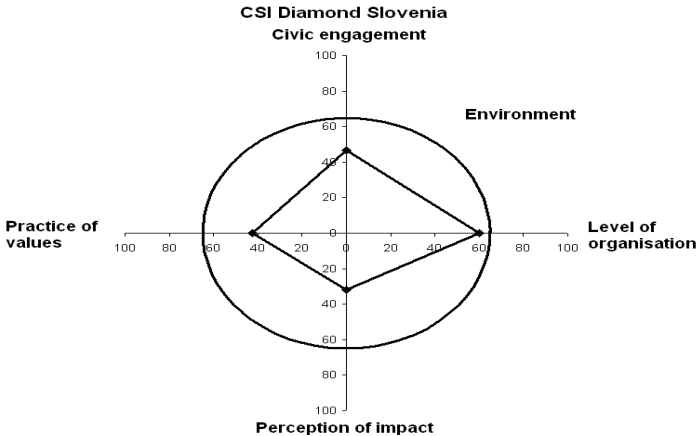
The report outlines the key findings of the project, identifies the strengths and weaknesses of civil society in Slovenia and presents proposals to improve the state of civil society. The analysis of the civil society sector in Slovenia shows that it has not yet reached the point at which it would begin to develop. Increasing the financial strength of CSOs and, consequently, their professionalisation, are the two criteria that define the point at which the growth of the sector gives way to development. Given the information available, it may be said that this has not yet occurred in Slovenia. In order to improve the state of the civil society sector, the government should not only increase public financing of the sector by introducing new measures, but also – by amending the relevant legislation – encourage funding from other non-public sources, mainly private donations from individuals and companies, which would increase its autonomy and independence. In order to facilitate the implementation of such changes, both the government and non-government side require clear-cut strategies detailing the development of the civil society sector, while they must also reach consensus. The absolute prerequisite for this, however, is to strengthen civil dialogue in Slovenia. The basic

findings and guidelines to improve the position of civil society in Slovenia are detailed in the enclosed Policy Action Brief. Both documents will be made available to the public and all interested parties.

INTRODUCTION

The CIVICUS Civil Society Index (CSI) is a participatory action-research project that assesses the state of civil society in various countries. The project is headed by CIVICUS World Alliance for Citizen Participation, and in Slovenia it is carried out under the auspices of the Ministry of Public Administration. The main aims of the project are to promote and strengthen civil society through assessment, and develop political recommendations and measures. CSI implementation actively involves and disseminates its findings to a broad range of stakeholders, including interest groups, the government, donors, academics and the general public.

In Slovenia, the project was carried out in three stages between November 2008 and the end of May 2010. The first involved a quantitative survey conducted among civil society organisations (CSOs) and external experts; the second involved qualitative methods, i.e. case studies for all the basic CSI dimensions; and the third involved the presentation of results at regional focus group meetings and the national workshop to obtain feedback on key findings, identify the strengths and weaknesses of civil society in Slovenia and formulate basic guidelines to improve its position. The project's main findings are summarised in the Final Report. Basic findings and guidelines to improve the position of civil society in Slovenia are detailed in the enclosed Policy Action Brief. Both documents will be made available to the public and all interested parties.

The text is structured in accordance with CIVICUS methodology. In addition to the Introduction, which comprises a definition, and outlines the history and state, of civil society in Slovenia, the Report includes an assessment of civil society in Slovenia based on its core dimensions (Civic Engagement, Level of Organisation, Practice of Values, Perceived Impact, and External Environment) and sub-dimensions which include an analysis of set indicators. The Conclusion comprises the key findings, outlining the strengths and weaknesses of civil society in Slovenia, and suggesting ways to improve its position.

I. CIVIL SOCIETY INDEX PROJECT AND APPROACH

Civil society is playing an increasingly important role in governance and development around the world. In most countries, however, knowledge about the state and shape of civil society is limited. Moreover, opportunities for civil society stakeholders to come together to collectively discuss, reflect and act on the strengths, weaknesses, challenges and opportunities also remain limited.

The Civil Society Index (CSI), a participatory action-research project assessing the state of civil society in countries around the world, contributes to redressing these limitations. It aims at creating a knowledge base and momentum for civil society strengthening. The CSI is initiated and implemented by, and for, civil society organisations at the country level, in partnership with CIVICUS *World Alliance for Citizen Participation* (CIVICUS). The CSI implementation actively involves and disseminates its findings to a broad range of stakeholders including civil society, government, the media, donors, academics, and the public at large.

The following key steps in CSI implementation take place at the country level:

1. **Assessment**: CSI uses an innovative mix of participatory research methods, data sources, and case studies to comprehensively assess the state of civil society using five dimensions: Civic Engagement, Level of Organization, Practice of Values, Perception of Impact and the Environmental Context.
2. **Collective Reflection**: implementation involves structured dialogue among diverse civil society stakeholders that enables the identification of civil society's specific strengths and weaknesses.
3. **Joint Action**: the actors involved use a participatory and consultative process to develop and implement a concrete action agenda to strengthen civil society in a country.

The following four sections provide a background of the CSI, its key principles and approaches, a snapshot of the methodology used in the generation of this report in Slovenia and its limitations.

1 Project background

The CSI first emerged as a concept over a decade ago as a follow-up to the 1997 *New Civic Atlas* publication by CIVICUS, which contained profiles of civil society in 60 countries around the world (Heinrich and Naidoo (2001)). The first version of the CSI methodology, developed by CIVICUS with the help of Helmut Anheier, was unveiled in 1999. An initial pilot of the tool was carried out in 2000 in 13 countries.[1] The pilot implementation process and results were evaluated. This evaluation informed a revision of the methodology. Subsequently, CIVICUS successfully implemented the first complete phase of the CSI between 2003 and 2006 in 53 countries worldwide. This implementation directly involved

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[1] The pilot countries were Belarus, Canada, Croatia, Estonia, Indonesia, Mexico, New Zealand, Pakistan, Romania, South Africa, Ukraine, Uruguay, and Wales.

more than 7,000 civil society stakeholders (Heinrich 2008). In years 2004–2005 Slovenia was also involved into research.

Intent on continuing to improve the research-action orientation of the tool, CIVICUS collaborated with the Centre for Social Investment at the University of Heidelberg, as well as with partners and other stakeholders, to rigorously evaluate and revise the CSI methodology for a second time before the start of this current phase of CSI. With this new and streamlined methodology in place, CIVICUS launched the new phase of the CSI in 2008 and selected its country partners, including both previous and new implementers, from all over the globe to participate in the project. Table 1 below includes a list of implementing countries in the current phase of the CSI.

Table I.1: List of CSI implementing countries 2008–2009[2]

1. Albania	14. Ghana	28. Niger
2. Argentina	15. Italy	29. Philippines
3. Armenia	16. Japan	30. Russia
4. Bahrain	17. Jordan	31. Serbia
5. Belarus	18. Kazakhstan	32. Slovenia
6. Bulgaria	19. Kosovo	33. South Korea
7. Burkina Faso	20. Lebanon	34. Sudan
8. Chile	21. Liberia	35. Togo
9. Croatia	22. Macedonia	36. Turkey
10. Cyprus	23. Madagascar	37. Uganda
11. Djibouti	24. Mali	38. Ukraine
12. Democratic Republic of Congo	25. Malta	39. Uruguay
	26. Mexico	40. Venezuela
13. Georgia	27. Nicaragua	41. Zambia

2 Project approach

The current CSI project approach continues to marry assessment and evidence with reflections and action. This approach provides an important reference point for all work carried out within the framework of the CSI. As such, CSI does not produce knowledge for its own sake but instead seeks to directly apply the knowledge generated to stimulate strategies that enhance the effectiveness and role of civil society. With this in mind, the CSI's fundamental methodological bedrocks, which have greatly influenced the implementation that this report is based on, include the following:[3]

Inclusiveness: The CSI framework strives to incorporate a variety of theoretical viewpoints, as well as being inclusive in terms of civil society indicators, actors and processes included in the project.

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[2] Note that this list was accurate as of the publication of this Analytical Country Report, but may have changed slightly since the publication due to countries being added or dropped during the implementation cycle.
[3] For in-depth explanations of these principles, please see Mati, Silva and Anderson (2010), Assessing and Strengthening Civil Society Worldwide: An updated programme description of the CIVICUS Civil Society Index Phase 2008-2010. CIVICUS, Johannesburg.

Universality: Since the CSI is a global project its methodology seeks to accommodate national variations in context and concepts within its framework.

*Comparability***:** The CSI aims not to rank, but instead to comparatively measure different aspects of civil society worldwide. The possibility for comparisons exists both between different countries or regions within one phase of CSI implementation and between phases.

*Versatility***:** The CSI is specifically designed to achieve an appropriate balance between international comparability and national flexibility in the implementation of the project.

*Dialogue***:** One of the key elements of the CSI is its participatory approach, involving a wide range of stakeholders who collectively own and run the project in their respective countries.

*Capacity Development***:** Country partners are first trained on the CSI methodology during a three-day regional workshop. After the training, partners are supported through the implementation cycle by the CSI team at CIVICUS. Partners participating in the project also gain substantial skills in research, training and facilitation in implementing the CSI in-country.

Networking: The participatory and inclusive nature of the different CSI tools (e.g. focus groups, the Advisory Committee, the national workshops) should create new spaces where very diverse actors can discover synergies and forge new alliances, including at a cross-sectoral level. Some countries in the last phase have also participated in regional conferences to discuss the CSI findings as well as cross-national civil society issues.

*Change***:** The principal aim of the CSI is to generate information that is of practical use to civil society practitioners and other primary stakeholders. Therefore, the CSI framework seeks to identify aspects of civil society that can be changed and to generate information and knowledge relevant to action-oriented goals.

With the abovementioned foundations, the CSI methodology uses a combination of participatory and scientific research methods to generate an assessment of the state of civil society at the national level. The CSI measures the following core dimensions:

(1) Civic Engagement

(2) Level of Organisation

(3) Practice of Values

(4) Perceived Impact

(5) External Environment

These dimensions are illustrated visually through the Civil Society Diamond (see Figure 1 below), which is one of the most essential and well-known components of the CSI project. To form the Civil Society Diamond, 67 quantitative indicators are aggregated into 28 sub-dimensions which are then assembled into the five final dimensions along a 0-100 percentage scale. The Diamond's size seeks to portray an empirical picture of the state of civil society, the conditions that support or inhibit civil society's development, as well as the consequences of civil society's activities for society at large. The context or environment is represented visually by a circle around the axes of the Civil Society Diamond, and is not regarded as part of the state of civil society but rather as something external that nevertheless remains a crucial element for its wellbeing.

Figure I.1: The Civil Society Index Diamond
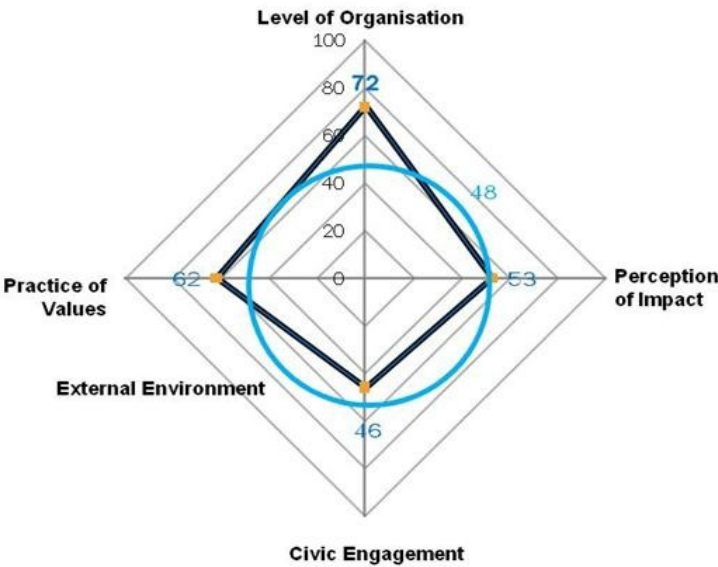
3 CSI implementation

There are several key CSI programme implementation activities as well as several structures involved, as summarised by the figure below:[4]

Figure I.2: CSI implementation activities
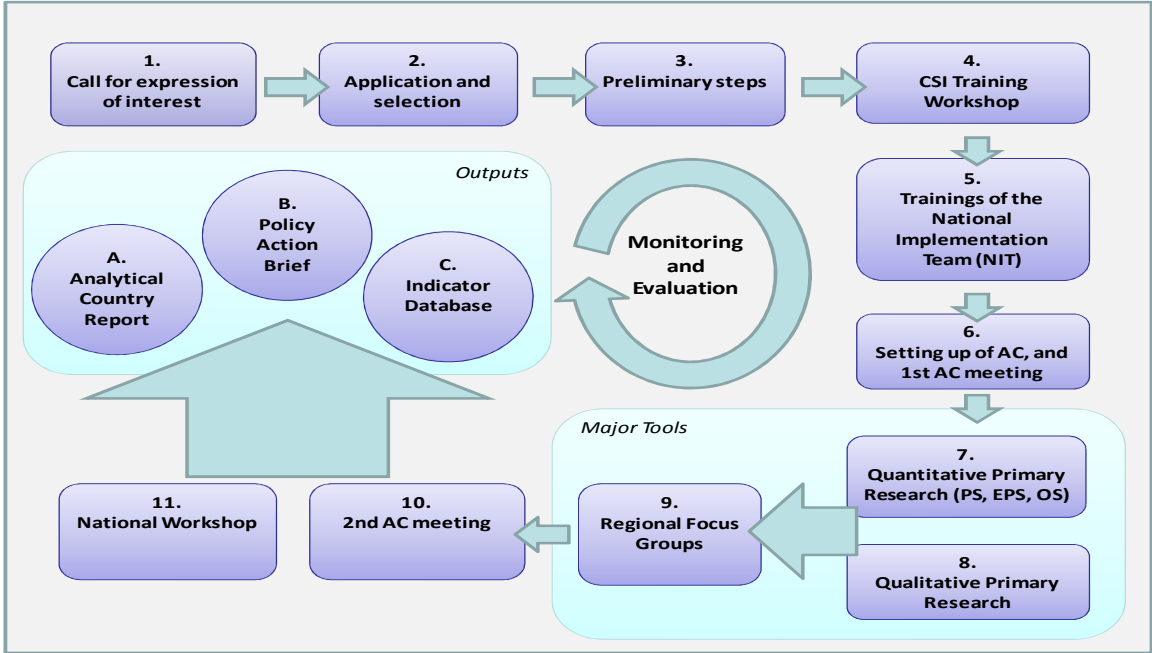
The major tools and elements of the CSI implementation at the national level include:

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[4] For a detailed discussion on each of these steps in the process, please see Mati et al (cited in footnote 3).

- Multiple surveys, including: (i) a **Population Survey**, gathering the views of citizens on civil society and gauging their involvement in groups and associations; (ii) an **Organisational Survey** measuring the meso-level of civil society and defining characteristics of CSOs; and (iii) an **External Perceptions Survey** which aims to measure the perception that stakeholders, experts and policy makers in key sectors have of civil society's impact.
- Tailored **case studies**, which focus on issues of importance to the specific civil society country context.
- Advisory Committee (AC) meetings made up of civil society experts to advise on the project and its implementation at the country level.
- Regional and thematic focus groups where civil society stakeholders reflect and share views on civil society's role in society .

Following this in-depth research and the extensive collection of information, the findings are presented and debated at the national workshop, which brings together a large group of civil society and non-civil society stakeholders and allows interested parties to discuss and develop strategies for addressing identified priority issues.

This Analytical Country Report is one of the major outputs of the CSI implementation process in Slovenia, and presents highlights from the research conducted, including summaries of civil society's strengths and weaknesses as well as recommendations for strengthening civil society in the country.

4 Limitations of CSI study

Although the instructions for implementation of the project were very clear, there were some specifics in Slovenia that influenced the implementation process. There were some difficulties regarding the definition of civil society and civil society organisations. Also, the dimension *External Environment* was hard to discuss and the NIT had difficulties to explain its role in the diamond. Furthermore, the major problem through all phases of research was the absence of a will to participate. While nonparticipation from the government, private sector and academia in CSO events is a standard in Slovenia, it is also very difficult to motivate CSO representatives to participate in events like those planned in the research. This is one of the characteristics of the state of civil society in Slovenia, which has its own causes and could not be overcome simply by more intensive promotion.

II. CIVIL SOCIETY IN SLOVENIA

1 Concept of Civil Society

In Slovenia, the term 'civil society' is often used in the public sphere, although there is no real consensus as to its general meaning or understanding. Civil society is most readily understood as a negation, i.e. it denotes that which is neither the state nor the economy. This negative definition was also proposed by members of the Advisory Committee (AC) and participants in focus groups and the national workshop. The consensus was that the concept of 'civil society' is difficult to define. Most connotations of the term concerned the characteristics of civil society, such as apolitical engagement, volunteering, focus on individuals and the sense of belonging: 'We are civil society'.

Participants in the AC, focus groups and the national workshop also discussed the CIVICUS definition of civil society as "*the arena, outside of the family, the state, and the market, which is created by individual and collective actions, organisations and institutions to advance shared interests.*"

Comments on this definition included: the definition of civil society should more precisely detail whether the *interests* are the common interests of all – in which case, this is a public interest – or merely the interests of those who are connected; the term 'arena' was substituted by the term 'space'.

There is also no uniform term or definition to cover the part of civil society that refers to CSOs. In general, this is a broad spectrum of organisations that are neither market-oriented nor state-owned, but variously labelled in the public, such as nonprofit, voluntary, humanitarian, independent, civil society and non-governmental organisations. The term 'non-governmental sector' is most commonly used in Slovenia to emphasise independence from the government, although it has not yet found general acceptance and, as such, is often not understood. The reason for this and the lack of public awareness about the term 'non-governmental organisation' may lie in the general disinterest of the media in CSOs. As one of our respondents said, "If you mention an 'association', people will generally recall their local fire fighters' association, but when you bring up the term 'NGO', everyone will associate it with the constant need to raise funds and pointless pursuits."

In government documents, the term 'non-governmental sector' is more widely used than the term 'civil society organisations'[5], while the concept of civil society has a broader meaning and emphasises the civil culture of civic responsibility, voluntary engagement and political participation.

Slovenian legislation specifically details, defines, and through individual laws, regulates the following types of CSOs: associations, private institutes, foundations, cooperatives, and religious communities/organisations. The CIVICUS definition of civil society, on the other hand, also includes chambers, trade unions and political parties, each subject to a specific set of regulations.

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[5] Given the more frequent use of the term 'non-governmental organisation', the term is used in this Report in addition to the term 'civil society organisations'. For the purposes of the Report, there are no differences in meaning between the two terms.

Associations represent 75% of all CSOs, while the share of private institutes is 6%, religions organisations 4%, cooperatives 1.5% and foundations 0.7% (Figure II.1.1).

Figure II.1.1: Proportions of different types of CSOs (in %)
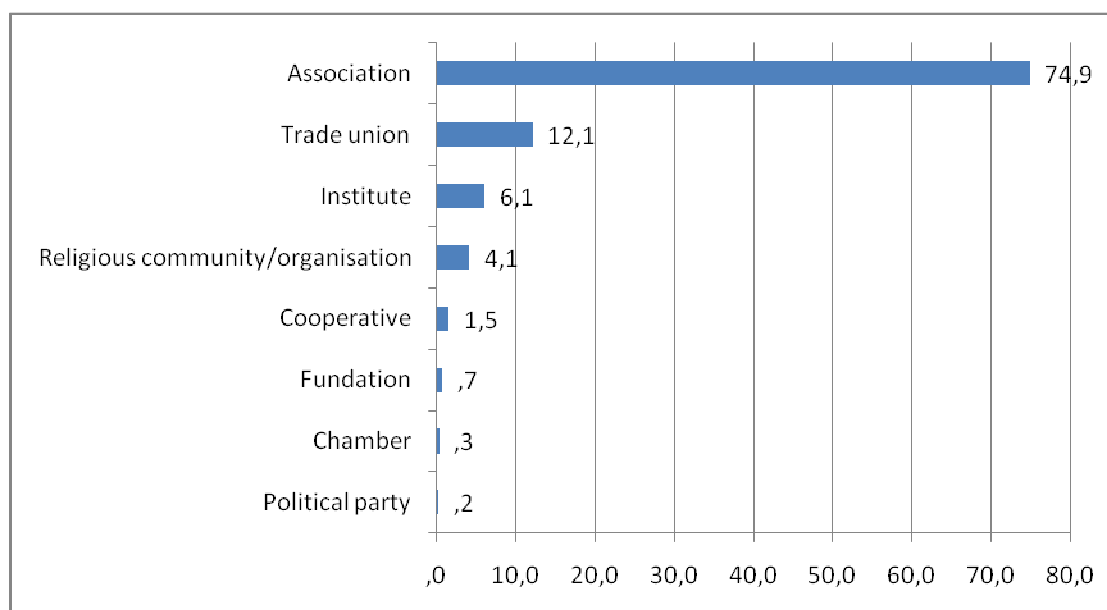
Source: AJPES

While the share of associations has been falling gradually (in 1996, associations accounted for nearly 95% of all CSOs), they still largely determine the character of the civil society sector. By their character, associations are expressive organisations in which individuals seek membership in order to realise their potential. Associations are thus organisations that primarily work for the shared benefit of their members and less for the common good. On the one hand, this is a hangover from when associations were legal and legitimate forms of self-organisation. But on the other, the number of associations is still growing rapidly, although there have been no formal obstacles to establishing other types of CSOs for almost twenty years.

The Slovenian civil society sector has largely retained its past structure – that is to say, sports and recreation, culture and arts, and professional and expert organisations still predominate over organisations providing services in social protection, education, research and healthcare. Figure II.1.2 presents the classification of CSOs per area.

Figure II.1.2: Classification of CSOs in Slovenia per area of work as reported by the organisations (in %)

Area of work	%
SPORTS AND RECREATION	27,7
CULTURE AND ARTS	13,3
TRADE UNIONS	12,2
BUSS./PROFESS./INTEREST/HOUSING	9,5
SOCIAL PROTECTION	8,9
FIRE SAFETY, RESCUE SERVICE	5,3
TOURISM AND LOCAL COMMUNITY…	4,1
OTHER	4,1
RELIGION	3,8
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION	2,6
EDUCATION	2,4
ANIMAL/PLANT PROTECTION	1,4
RESEARCH	1,4
LAW AND ADVOCACY	1,1
HEALTHCARE	,8
HOUSING	,5
INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION	,5
POLITICAL ORGANISATIONS AND PARTIES	,3
EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING	,1

Source: AJPES

The present structure of the civil society sector in terms of organisational type and area of work reflects Slovenia's welfare system (Kolarič et al., 2002; 2006; Črnak-Meglič and Rakar, 2009).

Given the structure of the civil society sector and recommendations by the AC, the CIVICUS typology of CSOs was adapted to better suit the situation in Slovenia. Sports associations, senior citizens organisations (pensioners associations), fire-fighters associations and animal and plant welfare organisations were added to the list. The AC discussed the issue of whether or not political parties can be considered part of civil society; the compromise was to include among CSOs only non-parliamentary parties. Appendix C contains the list of all CSO types included in the research.

2 History of Civil Society

Historical analyses show (Kolarič et al., 2002) that Slovenia has a long and extensive tradition of people's interest associations and self-organisation. In the period of an undeveloped welfare state (until the end of the Second World War) civil society organisations held, besides the informal sector, the primary role in the provision of public goods and services. Before the Second World War there were 8,000 civil society organisations in Slovenia (1938 – 6,014 associations and 1,677 co-operatives).

In the post-war period we can distinguish four periods:
1. The period of state socialism – the socialist revolution put a stop to the tradition of many civil society organisations' activities. In the period of state socialism the public sector took over practically all functions of civil society organisations. The tradition of a strong and developed civil society sector was interrupted and only a small share of civil society organisations could continue their work but on a new basis, which only allowed one type of civil society organisations: associations. The characteristic of this period was a much smaller number of civil society organisations than in the period between the two wars. In 1965 there were 6,919 associations and in 1975 just 6,761 (Kolarič et al. 2002).
2. The period of self-governing socialism in the 1970s – decentralisation (delegation of responsibilities for providing and financing public goods and services to municipalities) and the weakening of state control over associations' activities, which was brought about by the Act on Associations (1974), enforced the establishment of new organisations. A new space for the bottom-up founding of civil society organisations was formed, meaning they were on the initiative of citizens and not only on the state's initiative. Consequently, civil society organisations, especially the newly established ones, became more autonomous, but communication with the state stayed quite limited. Further, the state did not equally include them in the production of public goods and services, nor in the process of enforcing interests.
3. The period of new social movements in the 1980s – the 1980s in Slovenia were a period of the development of civil society organisations. Different new social movements (peace, ecological, feminist, spiritual, subculture movements etc.) began to spread which, besides political activities, also began to create an alternative network for the production of goods and services. They operated in the form of working groups within different organisations (like, for example, of a youth political organisation). Gradually, they started to become independent and as such part of civil society. The characteristic of these new social movements in Slovenia was that they were not bottom-up movements since they did not have a mass basis. In this period civil society was established as an alternative to the official political structure. However, already by the end of the 1980s the autonomous activity of new social movements became limited to political activities. In the 1990s a significant number of protagonists from the new social movements integrated into the political party and, later, state establishment. Only small remains of the new social movements stayed in the framework of civil society. They organised themselves in associations and other organisational forms in fields such as alternative approaches in social work and psychiatry, different activities of psychosocial help for population groups in need, alternative culture production etc. The figures show that in the 1975 to 1985 period the number of associations rose by almost 50%.
4. The period of transition after 1990 – the process of deregulation which started in the 1970s was only finished by the mid-1990s, when new laws were adopted that

regulated the basis for activities of all types of civil society organisations (foundations, private institutes), the same legislation also abolished the state monopoly over the production of social and other services. The Act on Foundations (1994) re-enabled the setting up of foundations, The Act on Institutes (1991) enabled the establishment of private institutes and the political changes supported the renewed establishment of church organisations, which had until then been active illegally. The number of organisations in this period almost doubled.

Figure II.2.1: The development of CSOs in Slovenia between 1965 and 2008
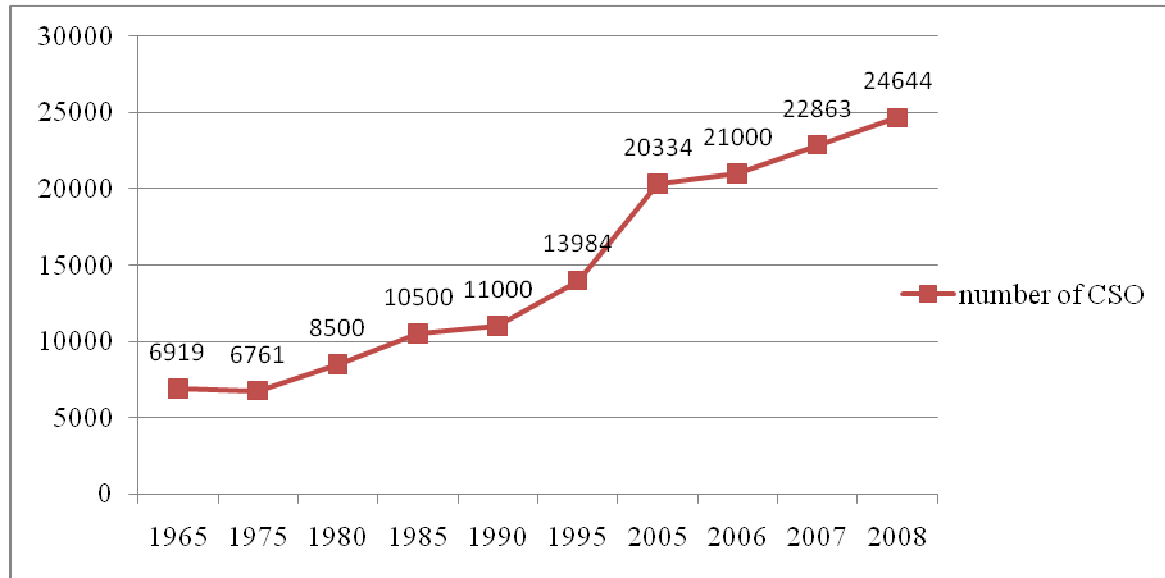
Sources: 1965–2005 (Kolarič et al. 2002, 2006), 2006–2008 (AJPES)

Today there are over 24,000 civil society organisations in Slovenia; apart from associations there are also all other types of civil society organisations: foundations, private institutes, religious organisations and co-operatives. If we add, in accordance with the CIVICUS methodology, 95 chambers, 60 political parties and 3,479 trade unions, we can see that in 2008/2009 there were altogether 28,647 civil society organisations active in Slovenia. With regard to the number of inhabitants, Slovenia ranks among the countries with the highest share of civil society organisations per capita.

3 Mapping Civil Society

To present the make-up of civil society in Slovenia, the National Implementation Team (NIT) conducted an impact analysis of individual actors, which included identifying key actors and their impact on society (Figure II.3.1), and identifying major actors within civil society (Figure II.3.2). The analysis was assessed and amended by the AC. The NIT and the AC identified key social actors and ranked them in terms of their social impact (the largest circle represents the greatest social impact, while the smallest represents the least social impact. The actors were then classified according to sector (grey: government officials; grid: private sector; white: civil society). Thus indicated, the actors were distributed on the field to reflect

the relationships between them, so the vicinity or overlapping of circles designates the impact of one group on another, or the inter-connections between them, while distance represents weak or even antagonistic relationships.

Figure II.3.1: Map of society
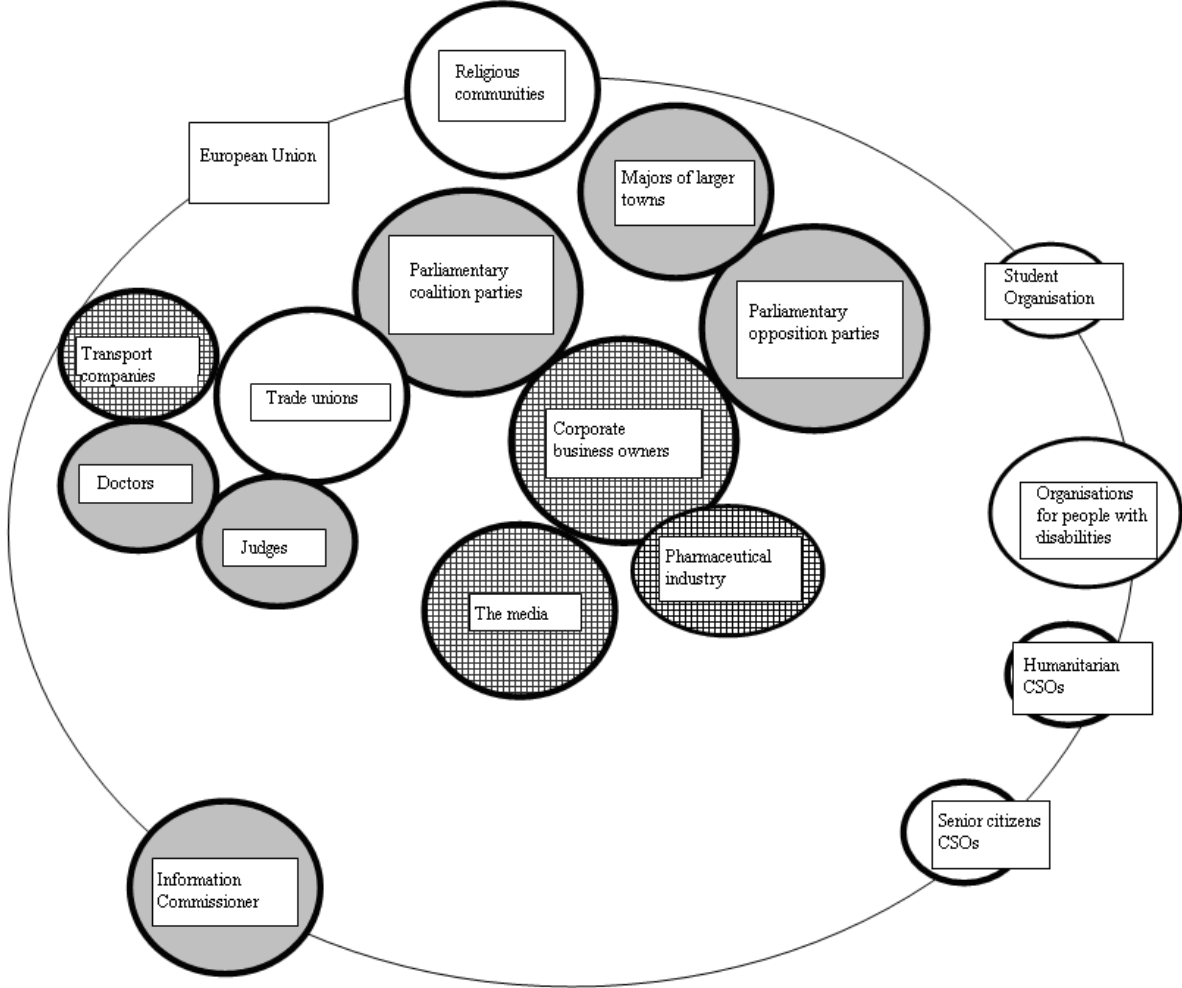
The coalition and opposition political parties, which shape Slovenian politics as decision-makers, stand out as the most influential actors in Slovenia. Their influence is matched only by that of business owners who have the power to lobby for their interests and manipulate public opinion through the media. CSOs occupy far less space in this figure, indicating their scope of influence. The most influential among them are religious communities (i.e. the Roman Catholic Church) and trade unions. Organisations around the edge of the diagram (of which the largest are those for persons with disabilities, followed by humanitarian organisations and the Student Organisation of Slovenia) have little or no impact on policy-making.

Similarly, a map of civil society was made, i.e. by first identifying the most influential actors in civil society and then distributing them according to their influence (a bigger circle means greater influence). Actors thus marked were distributed on the field to reflect relations between them, so that the proximity or overlapping of circles designates the impact of one group on another, or the connection between them, while distance represents weak or even antagonistic relations.

Figure II.3.2: Map of civil society

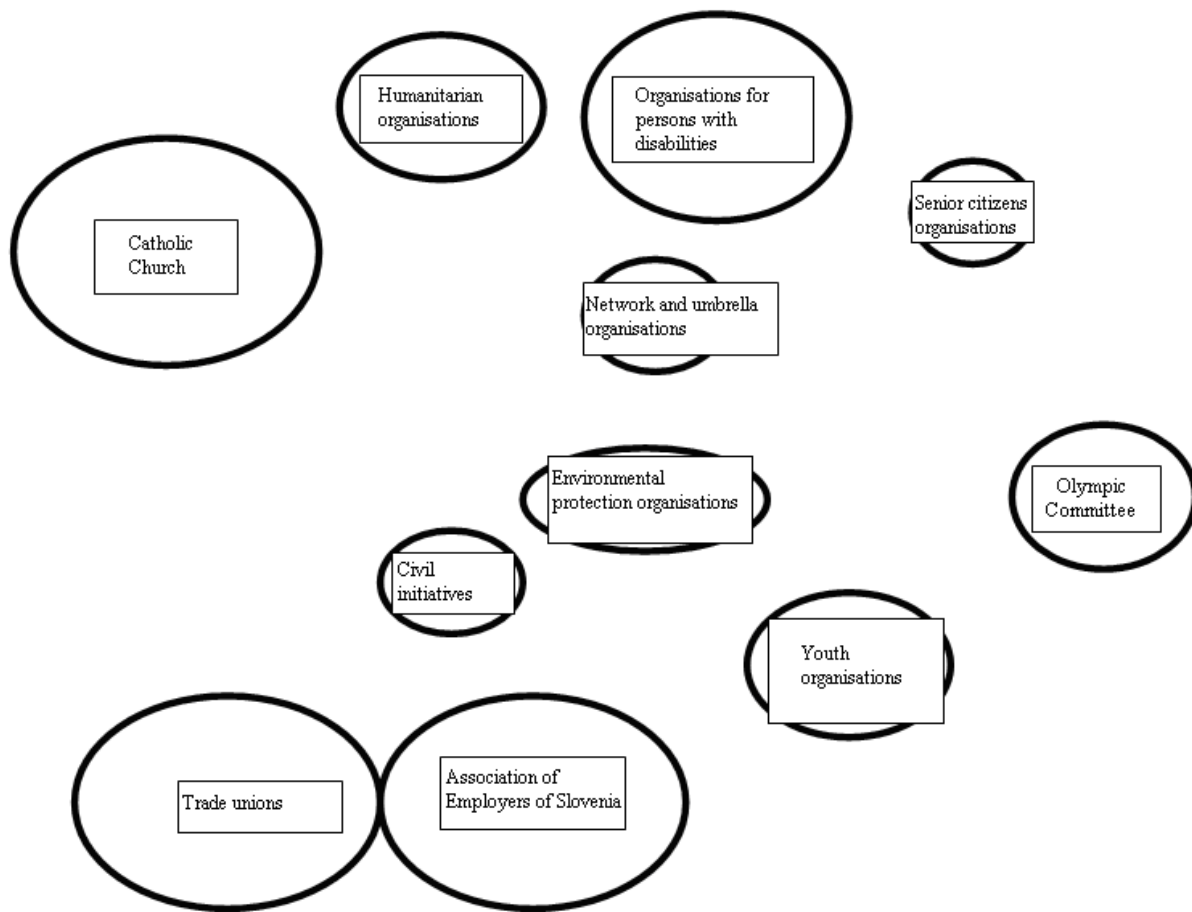The figure shows that the most influential actors in civil society are those that appear already on the map of society: the Roman Catholic Church, trade unions and organisations for people with disabilities. While the nature of the latter may differ considerably from the first two, their power rests in the financing they receive from the Foundation for Financing Organisations for People with Disabilities and Humanitarian Organisations (FIHO). Trade unions, on the other hand, are influential because of their status as the government's social partners, while the power of the Roman Catholic Church stems from both its historical dominance over other religions in this region and its political engagement. Although humanitarian organisations are eligible for FIHO funds, they wield much less influence, since this type of financing was made available to them only in 2003 with the passage of the Humanitarian Agencies Act. Next to the trade unions on the map is the Association of Employers of Slovenia, a very influential actor owing to the capital it indirectly represents. Next are youth organisations and the Olympic Committee, whose influence is relatively strong as a result of reliable sources of financing (youth organisations are financed through student work, while the Committee is financed by the Foundation for Financing Sport Organisations). The organisations having a relatively limited impact are environmental protection organisations which find it the most difficult to secure stable funding, followed by senior citizens organisations (pensioners associations) which are numerous and cater to a number of social needs of seniors, but lack broader social influence. The least influential organisations – although their influence has been growing lately – are network and umbrella bodies, and civil initiatives. The growing influence of network organisations is seen through new ways of liaising with other CSOs – horizontally and vertically – and especially through establishing regional ties with a view to strengthening civil society and increasing its impact on promoting its interests. Such

networking structures have been largely facilitated by EU policies and the financing provided by EU structural funds. More and more people have been joining civil initiatives – most notably for environmental protection – which constitute an efficient vehicle for achieving civil dialogue regarding the placement of built objects in local environments.

III. ANALYSIS OF CIVIL SOCIETY

This section presents the key findings of the project produced by quantitative and qualitative research methods in accordance with CIVICUS methodology. Quantitative indicators include an analysis of two surveys: an organisational survey (with 94 CSOs) and an external perceptions survey (with 30 experts, including academics, national and local government officials, journalists, donors and others). Quantitative indicators also include an analysis of secondary data from various international research projects and databases such as the World Values Survey (2000 and 2005) and the Freedom House survey (2008). Qualitative indicators include data from five case studies based on an analysis of existing information on civil society, secondary data from various previous surveys, legislation, documents, and interviews with key actors for individual areas. Also presented are the key findings of regional focus groups meetings and the national workshop.

The analysis of civil society comprises five sections which correspond to the five dimensions of the Civil Society Diamond: Civic Engagement, Level of Organisation, Practice of Values, Perceived Impact and External Environment. Each dimension is further divided into sub-dimensions and individual indicators. Each sub-dimension begins with a graphic data representation (an index value on a scale from 0 to 100) for each dimension and its sub-dimensions.

1 Civic Engagement

This section presents the key findings on civic engagement in terms of its extent, depth and the diversity of social and political engagement. The questions that we attempt to answer are: How active are citizens as members in organisations and volunteers, and how meaningful and diverse is their engagement both socially-based and political?

Figure III.1.1 presents the values for each dimension and sub-dimensions. A case study on volunteering was conducted which examined the role and place of volunteering in Slovenia both in terms of its actual contribution to welfare and its social valuation i.e. acknowledgement of its contribution.

Figure III.1.1: Civic engagement
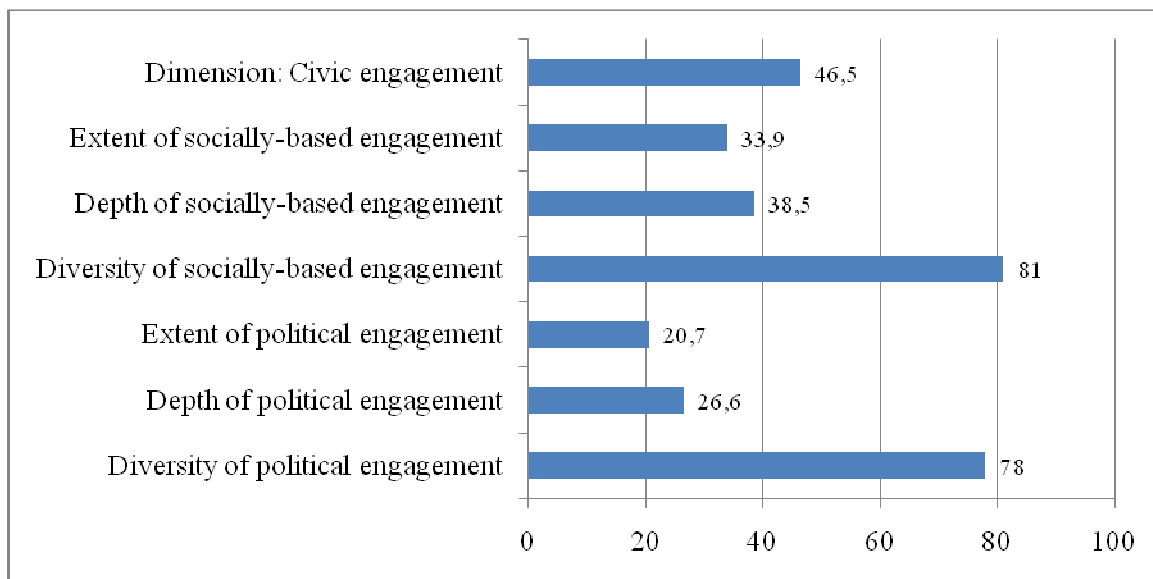
1.1 Extent of socially-based engagement

The World Values Survey (WVS, 2005) showed that 33% of Slovenian citizens are active members of organisations such as churches or other religious organisations, sports and recreation, arts, music and educational organisations. Sports and recreation organisations are the most popular, followed by religious and church organisations, music, arts and educational organisations, trade unions, humanitarian organisations and charities, professional associations, environmental organisations, political parties and, lastly, consumer organisations (WVS, 2005).

A slightly older World Values Survey (WVS, 2000), which includes data on volunteering, shows that 20.1% of citizens performed voluntary and unpaid work in at least one of the religious organisations, senior citizens organisations, educational, music, culture, sport and recreation, healthcare or youth organisations. Given that this information is ten years old, the AC questioned its credibility. In fact, information about the extent of volunteering in Slovenia is problematic, as there has been no effort to collect information systematically, so the ten-year-old survey is the most reliable source. As the case study showed, this is one of the weakest points of volunteering in Slovenia, which has not yet been suitably evaluated for lack of a comprehensive record of voluntary work performed. Since employment in CSOs is very low (cf. 2.4), most of the work is done by volunteers. The case study showed that volunteering is on the rise, mainly as a result of intensive and systematic promotion and development efforts that have recently been supported by government grants. The systematic cataloguing and valuation of voluntary work is one of the goals of the statutory regulation of volunteering which is currently underway. However, there is some information that indicates the extent of volunteering in Slovenia:

1. The organisation survey showed that as much as 86% of all organisations include volunteers in their work. The average value is 189 volunteers, with a standard deviation of 663 volunteers. This means that the number of volunteers varies considerably from one organisation to another, from two (min) to 5,000 (max). The median (25) shows that half

of all organisations had 25 or fewer volunteers, and the other half had more. The most common number of volunteers was 20.

2. According to *Size, Scope and Role of the Private Nonprofit Sector in Slovenia* (Kolarič et al., 2006), volunteers put in 64,693 hours of work in surveyed CSOs in 2004. If this data were generalised to all CSOs, the number of work invested by volunteers in 2004 would have been 1,239,756 hours. Given the average hourly wage for student work, the work of volunteers equals the work of 7,125 full-time employees.

3. Within the case study, a survey on volunteer engagement – carried out by the Slovene Philanthropy in 2008 as the central voluntary organisation in Slovenia – was presented. Although the Slovenian volunteer network includes some 560 voluntary organisations, only 54 CSOs responded to the survey. In 2008, these enlisted the help of 183,025 volunteers, who put in 14,694,588 hours of work. Few CSOs keep a precise record of volunteers and their work.

Also important in terms of the extent of social engagement is the perception of the less formalised engagement of the public in social activities or voluntary organisations. The World Values Survey (WVS, 2000) showed that 48.7% of the population takes part in social activities of sports clubs or voluntary organisations more than once a year. This indicates relatively high sporadic public participation; however, as this information is dated, the AC questioned its reliability, but chose not to highlight this in this survey.

As already mentioned, voluntary engagement is growing, which was confirmed by the organisations surveyed. With regard to the changing numbers of volunteers in the past five years, the majority of organisations (60.7%) state that their number has increased, while almost a third (30.3%) say that the number has remained the same, and only 9% claim that the number of volunteers has fallen. The fact is, however, that this is a result of the more systematic approach of organisations to voluntary work. The majority of organisations (73%) still acquire new volunteers by word of mouth; 38.2% through their website; while 27% organise promotional events. On several occasions, regional focus groups stressed that low standard of living, which threatens their social security, prevents people from becoming more actively involved in volunteering. On the other hand, financially weaker CSOs cannot develop volunteering for lack of organisation and implementation funds.

1.2 Depth of socially-based engagement

The World Values Survey showed that 21.3% of the population is engaged in more than one social organisation (WVS, 2005), 28.7% in one organisation, and that 65.4% of the population takes part at least once a month in the social activities of sports clubs or voluntary organisations (WVS, 2000). This information reflects the relatively extensive engagement of people, i.e. in more than one organisation or more frequent engagement. The frequency and depth of engagement show how significant the engagement of people is in organisations and as volunteers. The AC, however, cautioned that this information did not fully correspond to that presented above. Additional information is therefore provided by the case study on volunteering, which examined its significance in Slovenia.

The organisations surveyed were also polled on the extent of monthly voluntary engagement. The most frequent answer was that their volunteers do 10 hours of work per month. The value

of the median shows that in half of all organisations all volunteers combined contribute 95 hours per month or fewer, and more in the other half. If we consider the data from Slovene Philanthropy in 2008 (Item 1.1, Item 3), the average monthly engagement of a volunteer would amount to 6.7 hours. Seven voluntary organisations included in the case study on volunteering gave very different accounts of the work done by their respective volunteers in one month (2–16 hours).

The case study on volunteering showed that Slovenian society sees volunteers as an integral part of civil society that addresses a variety of social needs and challenges (more quickly and with greater effect than the government) and thus contributes to welfare, but whose contribution is not justly valued. Given the lack of systemic support to assess and evaluate voluntary work, voluntary organisations have the additional administrative burden of keeping records and producing reports. There is an evident shortage of fundamental systemic regulation that would recognise free labour as volunteering, and as a value enjoying social protection and acknowledgement. As a result of this, voluntary organisations are experiencing a number of problems, for which some corrective measures are presented in the conclusion. As participants at the national workshop discussed the strengths and weaknesses of socially-based engagement, several other views were presented that shed further light on the role and value of voluntary work in the Slovenian society. Compared to companies, CSOs are at a disadvantage when it comes to their public image, while the general perception of not-for-profit civil society organisations is that all work must be voluntary (which reflects the fact that work in the civil society sector is undervalued).

1.3 Diversity of socially-based engagement

The World Values Survey showed that as many as 81% of members of organisations belong to various social groups, such as women, people of other ethnic background or rural population (WVS, 2005). The high percentage lends itself to the conclusion that a relatively high proportion of the population from different social groups participates in civil society. According to *Size, Scope and Role of the Private Nonprofit Sector in Slovenia* (Kolarič et al., 2006), the majority of volunteers (58.7%) are men. The share of men as volunteers is the largest in associations (60.2%) and foundations (57.3%), while women volunteers lead the way in religious organisations (74.3%). In institutes, both sexes are relatively equally represented. The predominance of men among volunteers can be explained by the structure of the civil society sector, in which sports and recreation, and fire-fighting organisations have the largest share. Women, on the other hand, are more engaged in social protection and education (Caritas Slovenia has 85% of women volunteers, while the Social Gerontology and Gerontogogics Association of Slovenia estimates that their share of women volunteers is 80%). Although no other statistical data on members of organisations or volunteers from specific social groups are available, the situation can be deduced from target groups of individual organisations and through the geographical and content-related structure of CSOs. With regard to this, the national workshop drew attention to the stigmatisation of people engaged in organisations that deal with marginalised groups (e.g. people with addiction problems, Roma, etc.).

1.4 Extent of political engagement

The World Values Survey showed that 21.1% of the population are active members of political organisations, such as trade unions, political parties, environmental organisations, professional associations, consumer organisations, humanitarian or charity organisations (WVS, 2005). Some 12.5% of the population works voluntarily in at least one political organisation, such as trade unions, political parties, local political initiatives, organisations for the protection of human rights, the environment and wildlife, ecological organisations, professional associations, women's groups and peace movements (WVS, 2000)[6]. In the last five years, 28.9% of the population (WVS, 2005) engaged in various forms of political activism, such as signing petitions, participating in a boycott or peace demonstrations. This type of engagement also depends on people's expectations about whether or not the desired results will be achieved, which reflects their level of trust in individual institutions. People are most distrustful of political parties (WVS, 2005). The Slovenian Public Opinion Survey 2000 showed that only 3.7% of all respondents were members of political parties, while 26.25% were members of trade unions (Toš et al., 2004).

1.5 Depth of political engagement

The World Values Survey showed that 26.5% of the population is active in more than one politically-oriented organisation (WVS, 2005); 29.3% of the population performed voluntary work in more than one political organisations (trade unions, political parties, local political initiatives, organisations for the protection of human rights, the environment and wildlife, ecological organisations, professional associations, women's groups and peace movements) (WVS, 2000); while 24% were active as politically-oriented activists (WVS, 2005). In the last five years, 24.8% of respondents have signed a petition, 4.5% have participated in a boycott, and 8.4% have attended peaceful demonstrations (WVS, 2005).

1.6 Diversity of political engagement

The World Values Survey showed that 78% of the population are members of various social groups, such as women, people of other ethnic background, the elderly or rural people (WVS, 2005).

Conclusion

The Civic Engagement dimension has a relatively high value in the Civil Society Diamond. The data show that people quite readily engage as members of CSOs and volunteers. Volunteering, particularly, is on the rise as a result of efforts invested by voluntary organisations in establishing a regulatory framework that would provide systemic support for the development and implementation of voluntary work at national and local levels. In addition to the lack of systemic support, the increasing poverty of the population is another reason for the reduction of energy for civic engagement. While the contribution of

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[6] Political organisations according to CIVICUS methodology.

volunteering to social welfare through fast and efficient responses to social needs is readily recognised, voluntary work still lacks the social support it deserves as the main social backup for addressing growing social needs. A law on voluntary work, which was to address the rights of volunteers and provide systemic support for volunteering, and which CSOs drafted in 2004, has still not been submitted to the legislative procedure.

With regard to political engagement, it is quite clear – as shown on the map of society – that political parties wield the greatest influence; however, as a result of low trust, a very small proportion of the population is actively involved in them.

2 Level of Organisation

This section presents the key findings concerning the organisational development of civil society and its functioning from the point of view of internal governance, support infrastructure, sectoral communication, human, financial and technological resources, and international linkages. The questions we attempt to answer are: How well organised is civil society, what kind of infrastructure exists for CSOs, and under what conditions does it operate?

Figure III.2.1 presents the values for each dimension and sub-dimensions.

Figure III.2.1: Organisational development of civil society
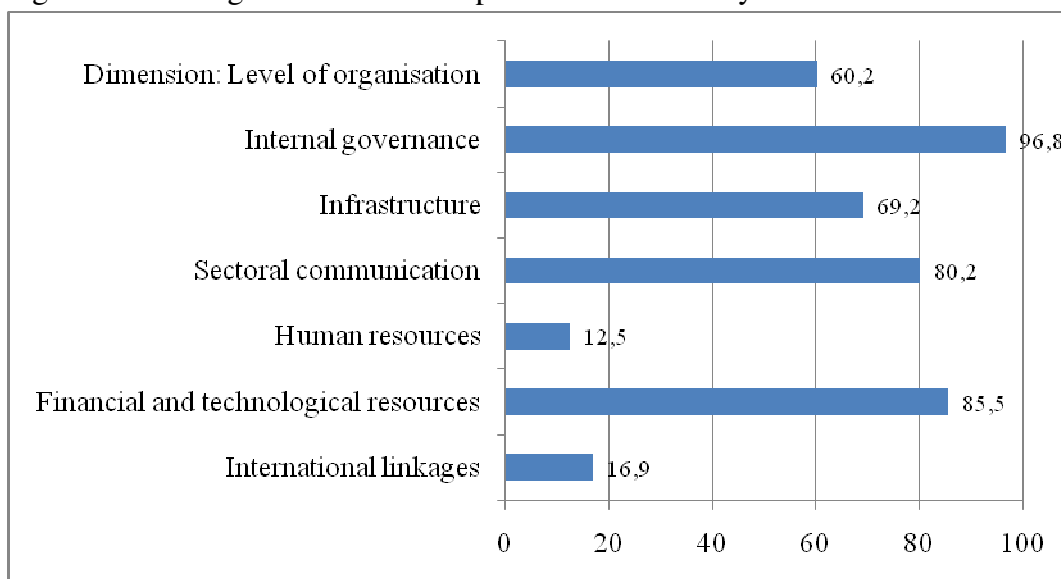
2.1 Internal governance

Organisations were asked whether they had a governance body, such as a management board or a council of the institute, and almost all have such a body (96.8%). In Slovenia, the type of internal governance and competent bodies are determined by law, which stipulates different bodies for different types of organisation (association, institute, foundation, etc.).

2.2 Support Infrastructure

Here we looked at how organisations formed unions, associations, umbrella bodies and support networks. The majority of polled organisations (69.2%) are formally members of such structures. Recently, there has been growing support for horizontal and vertical networks financed through EU structural funds. This creates network organisations and regional hubs as support structures for organisations in a given region.

A problem alleged by interviewees who participated in case studies was that such networks and support structures first cater to their needs and only then to the needs of the sector. The respondents also pointed out the issue of representation of CSOs, i.e. the lack of consensus as to who is a legitimate representative of the sector. This is in part a result of poor communication channels and insufficiently clear relations between associations, network organisations and grass roots organisations. Some see the solution to better connections within the civil society sector in regional hubs that are closest to stakeholders in the local environment, while other organisations endorse the establishment of a government office for NGOs that is expected to set aside individual interests and address the needs of the whole sector.

2.3 Sectoral communication

Establishing connections and effective communication channels between CSOs is vital to the strength of civil society. We therefore inquired to what extent related organisations connect with each other.

The majority of organisations (83%) had met with other organisations working in a related field in the preceding three months. Likewise, the majority of organisations (77.4%) in the same period exchanged information (documents, reports, data, etc.) with other related organisations. Those who had either held a meeting or exchanged information with another organisation were asked to provide the number of organisations they had contacted. On average, in a three-month period, each organisation shared information with 11 another organisations and held meetings with 10, although the most common value was 3 for both categories.

Connections and linkages among CSOs were analysed in greater detail in a representative sample in a 2005 survey (Kolarič et al., 2006). The main finding was that CSOs mainly liaised in unions, associations and communities. Connections among CSOs are also more frequent then external connections. The reasons for CSOs coming together mainly include pursuing common interests and exchanging information. However, since CSOs, particularly those working in related fields, often compete for the same funds, they see this as a major obstacle to their establishing closer ties.

Interviewees in a case study of the relationship between the state and CSOs cited internal differences and lack of ties within the civil society sector as one of the reasons for limited civil dialogue. This problem was also raised in focus groups.

2.4 Human resources

A characteristic feature of the Slovenian civil society sector is that it relies heavily on the work of volunteers, while its number of employees is very small. Only 12.5% of all organisations have a permanent workforce, i.e. in which volunteers represent less than 25% of the average number of employees.

This information can be coupled with data about the professionalisation of Slovenian CSOs collected in a 1996 survey from a representative sample showing that the professionalisation rate was 0.73%. This means that CSO employees put in the same number of working hours as 0.73% of all full-time employees in Slovenia. Put differently, out of all full-time employees, only 0.73% worked in CSOs. Internationally, this is one of the lowest rates of professionalisation in the sector (Kolarič et al., 2002). More than ten years later, in 2008, the rate of professionalisation for Slovenian associations, private institutes and foundations was 0.66% (Črnak-Meglič, 2009: 23), which means that the number of hours of work of CSO employees corresponds to the number of working hours of 5,796 full-time employees. Relative to Slovenia's entire working population (879,257 in 2008), this is 0.66%. While the data for 2008 is not wholly comparable with that from 1996, it lends itself to the conclusion that – given the fact that the three types of CSOs mentioned above account for almost 82% of all CSOs – the rate of professionalisation in Slovenian CSOs has remained largely the same over a decade.

Poor full-time employment figures and a shortage of human resources were also raised at focus group meetings and the national workshop. Among the main reasons for employees leaving the civil society sector, participants stated poor financial situation, instable financing, unfair competition among sectors, and unfamiliarity with the career opportunities offered by CSOs.

2.5 Financial and technological resources

Financial and technological resources are vital to the functioning of CSOs, so a detailed analysis was conducted of the amount and structure of CSOs' funds. We sought to learn more about the structure of CSOs' income, and whether the balance of income and expenditure had changed over the previous year.

We found that some 80% of all organisations have a stable financial basis, which we calculated on the basis of the income/expenditure figures they reported. Compared to the previous year, expenditure in these organisations remained the same or fell, while income either grew or fell.

The information on the financial strength of the sector and its growth does not paint a favourable financial situation for CSOs in Slovenia. Between 1996 and 2008, the number of CSOs in Slovenia grew 2.3-fold, while their income (expressed in GDP) grew from 1.92% in 1996 to only 1.99% in 2008 (Kolarič et al., 2002, Črnak-Meglič, 2009). This minute growth, of course, does little to increase the strength of these organisations in society or provide a solid basis for their professionalisation.

The reason for this is that the structure of income of CSOs has not changed significantly in the period. Data for 1996 shows that membership fees were the chief source of income, followed

by revenues collected by municipalities, and sponsorship funds donated by companies. When we grouped these and other sources in accordance with the methodology designed and used in an international survey by the Johns Hopkins University (Salamon et al., 1999; 2003; 2004), we found that the income generated by the sale of services or products (commercial revenues) accounted for 44% of all income, while public revenues (municipalities, government) accounted for 27%, and donations by individuals, businesses and foundations for 29% (Kolarič et al., 2002:124). Re-examining this data in 2005 and 2009 showed that the structure of income remained unchanged (Kolarič et al., 2006; Črnak-Meglič, 2009) despite a smaller share of public revenues. Table III.2.1 shows the income of CSOs over time.

Table III.2.1: Structure of income in Slovenian CSOs

	1996	2004	2007	2008
Market sources	44%	30 %	47%	47%
Public sources	27%	36%	24%	24%
Private donations	29%	21%	20%	19%
Other		13%	10%	10%

Source: 1996 and 2004 (Kolarič et al., 2002, 2006); 2007 and 2008 (Črnak-Meglič, 2008, 2009).

The poor financial standing of CSOs is also reflected in the analysis of income of associations and foundations from 2004 onwards (Črnak-Meglič, 2009). Between 2007 and 2008, revenues increased by 9%, while between 2004 and 2008 the increase was 19%. Considering inflation, the real value of total revenues in both types of organisations fell by 21%. Lower revenues in the civil society sector are also evident when expressed as a proportion of GDP, which fell by 0.24 of a percentage point between 2004 and 2008. Likewise, real growth in income per organisation fell by as much as 22% from 2007 to 2008 (Črnak-Meglič, 2009).

The financial position of CSOs was examined in greater detail through additional questions in the organisation survey. The most notable questions were whether the amount of work in organisations in the last five years has increased, and whether their funds followed. Almost all the organisations polled (93.6%) feel that their workload has increased. Also, the majority of organisations (83%) state that the scope of their work has also broadened (e.g. they have introduced new programmes or activities). Despite this, the amount of public funds increased in only 40.7% of all organisations. More than that (43.2%) said that the share of public funds had remained the same, while in 16% of organisations it had decreased. The majority of organisations polled (62.5%) also believe that the increase in public funds is disproportionate to the increase in their work, while 37.5% of them say that this is not the case.

Given this structure of income, we may be tempted to say that the 1990s saw the beginnings of the commercialisation of the Slovenian civil society sector, i.e. that CSOs shifted their attention to the sale of services/products in quasi markets. This, of course, is not true, and we need only consider the fact that membership fees account for almost half of all commercial revenue. The conclusion that *can* be drawn from the presented – and unchanged – structure of income for the entire sector is that neither the process of commercialisation nor the etatisation[7] of Slovenian CSOs has really taken off. These processes constitute the foundation

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[7] Etatisation is a process when, to a certain extent, organisations become producers of services for the government (Kolarič et al., 2002, 2003).

for the professionalisation and development of CSOs in other societies and also determine their social role.

Unstable financing, constant adaptation to public tender criteria, discouraging tax legislation and a generally poor financial position in the sector were also highlighted as the key weaknesses at focus group meetings and the national workshop. Another problem is that the funds which are made available are earmarked for content rather than infrastructure. Current financing policies thus inhibit the development of the civil society sector.

As far as the technological equipment of CSOs is concerned, we find that 92.3% of all CSOs have access to at least one of the four modern technologies: internet, computer, fax machine, telephone.

2.6 International linkages

CSOs account for 16.9%[8] of all international organisations in Slovenia. Since EU members increasingly connect with one another, we asked CSOs if they too are establishing ties within associations, umbrella bodies and similar organisations at the EU level. Somewhat less than a half (45.5%) are members of such organisations.

Information from a survey conducted in 2005 on a representative sample of CSOs shows that only a slightly over a quarter of Slovenian CSOs (26%) establish connections with their foreign counterparts (Kolarič et al., 2006).

A case study of youth organisations showed that the influence of international linkages is surprisingly insignificant. International cooperation is only important to youth organisations that are themselves contractors to acquire funds at tenders. Members of focus group meetings stressed that this can be generalised and applied to the whole sector.

Conclusion

Given the findings described above, the scope and sources of financing CSOs have at their disposal, and information from other sources, we can conclude that there have been no significant shifts in the financing of the civil society sector. This is largely due to inadequate government incentives and grants. International surveys detect the same problem, so Slovenia now ranks as one of the countries with the least funding from public sources (Salamon et al. 2003; Črnak-Meglič and Rakar 2009). Thus, even though CSOs may be relatively independent of the state for lack of substantial government funding, the modest funds they acquire from other sources, mainly donations, coupled with the constant struggle for grants awarded at public tenders and the need to meet all the eligibility criteria greatly reduces their autonomy. To improve the situation of CSOs, the government should not only provide for the better funding of CSOs, but by introducing new measures and amending legislation encourage financing from other non-public sources, i.e. mainly private donations by individuals and companies. Reducing dependence on public funds would increase the autonomy of CSOs.

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[8] Source: Union of International Associations Database. Data provided by CIVICUS.

The analysis of the level of organisation points to the conclusion that the growth of Slovenian CSOs has not yet reached the point where they begin to develop. Increasing the financial strength of CSOs and, consequently, their professionalisation, are the two criteria that define the point at which the growth of the sector gives way to development. Given the information available, this has not yet happened in Slovenia.

3 Practice of Values

This section presents the key findings on the values practiced and promoted by CSOs. The questions attempted are: How are decisions made within CSOs, how well informed are employees about their employment rights, do organisations have codes of conduct and transparency, to what extent do they adhere to environment protection standards, and how do they perceive and promote values in civil society as a whole?

Figure III.3.1 presents the values for the dimension and sub-dimensions. A case study of the carbon footprint of Slovenian CSOs was conducted to discover how familiar Slovenian CSOs are with the notion of the carbon footprint and measures for its reduction, and whether they implement them.

Figure III.3.1: Practice and perception of values in civil society
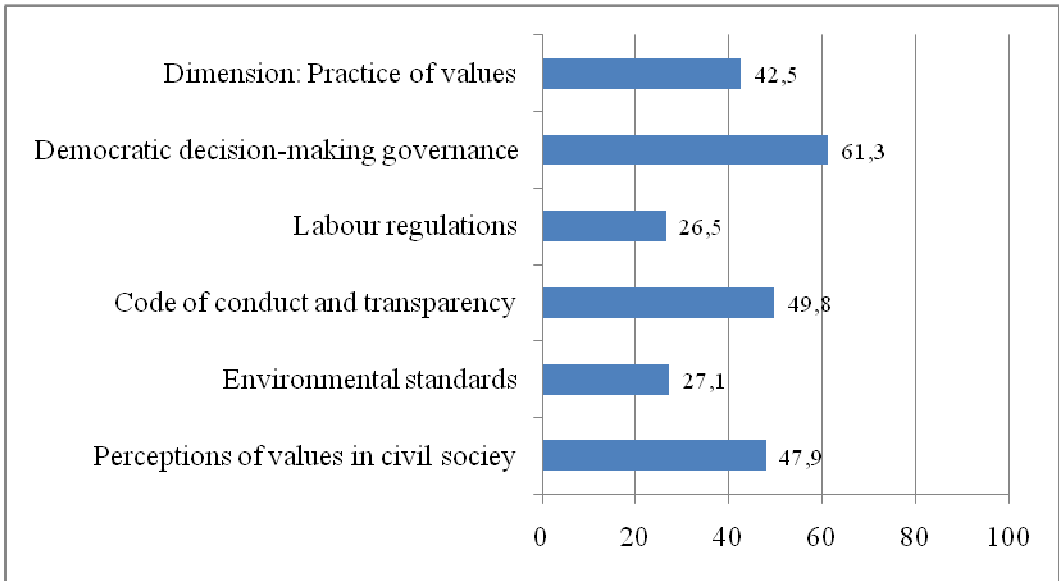
3.1 Democratic decision-making governance

To learn about the democracy of decision-making in CSOs (83.6% of all polled were membership organisations), we first inquired whether they had a governance body (e.g. a management board or a council of the institute). Almost all CSOs in Slovenia (96.8%) have such a body. Then we sought to know who makes key decisions in the organisation. Respondents were required to select a single answer. The majority (44.1%) of organisations stated that key decisions are made by an elected board/council; 23.7% say that the governing

body is an appointed board/council; 15.1% state that decision-making is the domain of an appointed head; in 7.5%, an elected head makes key decisions; and in the last 7.5%, members themselves. Only 2.2% of all organisations said that key decisions were adopted by the staff. Thus, 61.5% of organisations can be said to have relatively democratic internal governance, as key decisions are made by an elected head, elected board/council, and staff or members. Despite this, participants at regional focus group meetings cautioned that organisations often behave irresponsibly in this respect (there have been instances of cronyism involving local authorities, and nepotism). Furthermore, focus groups pointed to a problem concerning membership organisations (associations), of which the law requires that an assembly of members (composed of all the members) reach decisions on vital matters. Namely, as a result of passivity of civil society, members of associations rarely participate in democratic decision-making, so associations often face difficulties establishing a decision-making quorum. Given the shortage of new professionals, organisations are often dominated by a small circle of ambitious individuals. We therefore find that, to a large extent, CSOs in Slovenia have established systems of democratic decision-making governance which sometimes fail to meet all the criteria in practice.

3.2 Labour regulations

The majority of CSOs (60.9%) have no established written rules or policies regarding equal opportunities and/or equal pay of women; the remainder (39.1%) do have such a system in place. It should be noted that gender equality has a firm basis in the Employment Relations Act and the Implementation of the Principle of Equal Treatment Act, which is why CSOs probably feel little or no need to specifically address the issue.

We also asked CSOs about what proportion of paid employees are members of trade unions. Only over a fifth of CSOs (21 organisations, i.e. 22% of all polled) report that their staff include trade union members. On average, the latter account for 15.9% of all paid employees. Low employment figures in CSOs should be considered here.

We also sought to know whether CSOs organise special training for newly recruited staff on labour rights. Only 16.9% of organisations hold such training. When asked about publicly available policies/regulations on labour standards, only 34.1% of CSOs said they had these. A point should be made here that employment relations are subject to publicly available laws and collective agreements, while CSOs with one or two employees often decide not to implement any internal rules regarding employment relations. The low percentage in this category could be a result of modest employment figures on the one hand, and clear and the precise regulatory framework for employment and labour rights on the other.

Participants at the national workshop cautioned that labour rights in CSOs are comparatively lower, which is often the result of an agreement between employer and employee. The main reasons for this are financing difficulties and the ensuing low employment figures in this sector, which makes it more difficult for employers to adhere to all legal obligations regarding employees. In 2008, an NGO trade union was established in 2008 to address the need to improve labour rights throughout the civil society sector, but this has made only limited progress to date.

3.3 Code of conduct and transparency

This sub-dimension analyses how many CSOs have developed publicly available codes of conduct and financial transparency through publicly available financial reports. The results show that 38.2% of surveyed CSOs have publicly accessible rules/code of conduct, while 61.3% of CSOs have made their financial reports publicly accessible. Given that CSOs are required under law to submit their annual reports to the Agency of the Republic of Slovenia for Public Legal Records and Related Services (AJPES), which makes this information publicly accessible, we inquired with CSOs which had stated that they kept their financial reports public as to where these can be accessed. The most common answer was that financial information was available at AJPES, while one fifth of CSOs also makes such information available on their web sites. Few CSOs thus provide access to their financial information other than as required by law (we assume that even CSOs which stated that they did not keep annual financial reports public submit these to AJPES – which immediately renders such reports public).

The introduction in 2008 of a quality assurance standard designed specifically for CSOs has greatly improved transparency in the sector. Participants at regional focus group meetings also acknowledged its contribution. However, the standard has hitherto seen slow implementation due to relatively high costs. Participants at the national workshop agreed that the quality assurance system continue to be implemented in the future, with public availability of the financial reports of CSOs one of its key components.

3.4 Environmental standards

Environmental protection standards represent an important set of values. A case study was conducted to find to what extent CSOs adhere to these standards by inquiring whether they had a publicly available policy/regulations about environmental standards. Some 21.1% of CSOs stated they had a publicly available policy/regulations about environmental standards which must be followed. The AC rated this information as not very reliable, and case studies, too, show a different situation than reported. Since the question in the survey related to the public accessibility of environmental standards, it is likely that respondents answered affirmatively because environmental standards laid down in regulations are in fact publicly available.

As part of the case study Carbon Footprint of Slovenian CSOs, we attempted to discover how aware CSOs are of their carbon footprint and the activities to reduce it; to what extent they encourage their employees to reduce carbon footprints at work and at home; and how they promote carbon footprint awareness among the public. A carbon footprint is a measure of how much our activities affect the environment and climate change, and depends on the amount of greenhouse gases we generate daily through our dependence on fossil fuels. As part of the case study, we interviewed three major CSOs, one dealing with human rights, one environmental and one generic. Neither had previously calculated its carbon footprint, as this is a relatively new concept, introduced to Slovenia in 2008/2009 through awareness campaigns by Umanotera – The Slovenian Foundation for Sustainable Development, one of Slovenia's leading CSOs in the field of sustainability. The results show that all three surveyed CSOs try to implement measures which also reduce carbon footprint (saving water, paper, using energy saving lights, recycling, etc.) and, at least indirectly, encourage their employees

to implement these measures at work (e.g. a company bicycle). As far as travel abroad is concerned, the chief criteria are still price and time efficiency, so flying is the preferred method of transport. However, there is increasing use of online communication tools, such as teleconferences. While neither of the three CSOs has a set of formalised rules, the environmental CSO stated that in their view there was no need for that as they adhere strictly to, and implement everything they promote. Neither organisation has a chapter dedicated to internal environmental standards in their respective annual reports.

3.5 Perception of values in civil society as a whole

This sub-dimension looks at how CSOs perceive civil society as a whole at practicing the values they advocate (non-violence, tolerance, democracy, transparency and trustworthiness).

We asked CSO representatives if they thought that there were forces/groups within civil society that use violence (aggression, hostility, brutality or fighting) to express their interests. Just over a half (51.6%) believe that such forces exist, while just under a half (48.4%) believe that they do not. Those who answered affirmatively were asked to describe such forces/groups. Nearly a half (46.9%) state that these are isolated groups that occasionally resort to violence; just under a third believe that such use of violence by groups within civil society is extremely rare, while 4.1% believe that these are significant, mass-based groups.

We also asked CSOs to assess civil society's current role in promoting democratic decision-making in their organisations and groups. The majority (47.2%) opted for the answer that the role of civil society here is limited; 29.2% believe that it is moderate; 19.1% see it as significant, and only 4.5% of respondents believe that civil society's role in promoting democratic decision-making in their organisations and groups is insignificant.

With regard to instances of corruption within civil society, opinions of CSOs differed considerably, as 39.2% of them believe that such instances are occasional, 34.2% that they are frequent, 24.1% that they are very rare, and only 2.5% that they are very frequent.

A relatively high percentage of respondents (41.2%) know of examples of explicitly racist, discriminatory or intolerant forces within civil society; 28.2% know none, and 11.8% know many.

We then asked CSO representatives for their opinion on the relation of these forces/groups to civil society at large. They gave diverse answers. The largest number (37.8%) believe that such negative forces are only a marginal actor within civil society; but surprisingly, as many as 29.7% believe that such forces are significant. A third (32.4%) believe that such negative forces are completely isolated and strongly denounced by civil society at large. No-one believes that such forces dominate civil society.

CSO representatives were also asked to assess civil society's current role in promoting non-violence and peace in Slovenia. The majority (36.7%) believe that this role is significant; somewhat fewer that the role is moderate; 26.7% that the role is limited, and only 4.4% see the role as insignificant.

Conclusion

As far as the dimension Practice of Values is concerned, we can conclude that CSOs generally adhere to the regulations regarding democratic decision-making governance, labour regulations, codes of conduct and transparency and environmental standards as required by law; however, they do not feel an explicit need to emphasise and promote these values and standards of their own accord. Moreover, although certain values and regulations do exist in a written form, they are often neglected in practice. The reason for this is the general shortage of labour and finance in the sector, and applies to both violations of democratic decision-making and the breach of employees' rights, sometimes even by mutual consent. The participants in the focus group meetings and the national workshop cautioned that CSOs' poor financial situation often compels them to breach certain values. The national workshop thus proposed that CSOs include values in their strategic planning and their annual reports.

4 Perception of Impact

The purpose of this section is to describe and analyse the extent to which civil society is active and successful in fulfilling several essential functions. On the whole, this dimension received the lowest score in the CIVICUS Civil Society Diamond. Peaking at 31.8, the score is twice as low compared to the dimensions Level of Organisation and External Environment. Also worrying are the scores of sub-dimensions. While 'social impact' achieved a relatively high score, 'responsiveness' and 'change in attitudes' are a cause for concern. The section then presents conclusions for the seven sub-dimensions, which are based on two aspects: the internal perception of CSOs of the impact of civil society, which was assessed through polling CSOs, and external perception, which was assessed by interviewing external experts. These results are combined with the findings of the World Value Survey (WVS, 2005), a case study conducted among youth organisations, and feedback received from focus groups and the national workshop. Sub-dimensions are listed in a logical order, with each internal perception category followed by an external perception category.

Figure III.4.1: Perception of impact
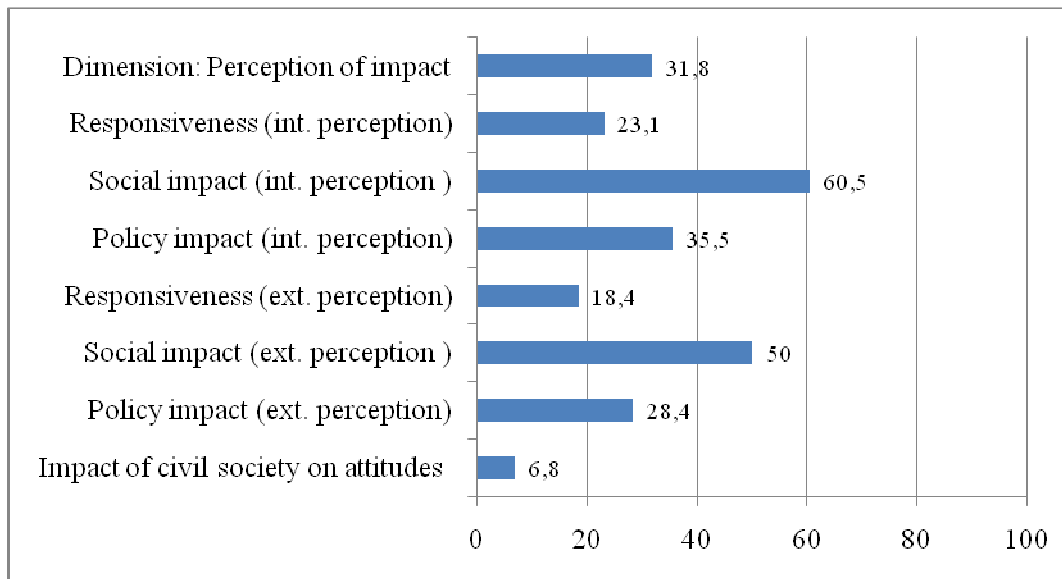
4.1 Responsiveness (internal perception)

The first sub-dimension addresses the responsiveness of civil society to some of the most important social concerns within the country. This of course begs the legitimate question – one with a value and methodological connotation – of how to identify the most burning issues. In accordance with CIVICUS guidelines, the World Values Survey (WVS, 2005) was used, which showed that the issues of most concern in Slovenia are economic stability, growth, fighting crime, and maintaining order in the country. CSO representatives were asked to assess the impact of civil society to two selected social issues on a four-point scale[9], while the index of the 'responsiveness' sub-dimension ranged from 0 (completely unresponsive) to 100 (completely responsive). The index representing the internally perceived responsiveness of civil society is only 23.1, which is almost a third less than the global index of the dimension – which, in turn, is already the lowest among the dimensions. Interestingly, the perception of responsiveness is better in the case of fighting crime (25.6) than in the case of the most commonly cited issue – a stable economy (20.5). This was confirmed by the respondents, almost a third (30.1%) of whom believe that civil society has no impact on the stability of the economy, while only 11% believe that this is the case with fighting crime. Somewhat more respondents (25.7%) maintain that civil society has a moderate or considerable impact on fighting crime, while 20.5% believe that this is the case with economic stability; however, none argue that civil society exerts a great impact on economic stability.

Other sources also reflect the relatively low responsiveness of civil society to the two selected fields. This was confirmed by the AC, which assessed the information regarding the internal perception of responsiveness as predominantly reliable and useful for selected international comparisons and assessments of civil society. But here emerges the problem of selecting two of the most burning issues. Case studies and focus groups indicate that the fields of economic

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[9] 0 = No impact, 1 = Limited impact, 2 = Some tangible impact, 3 = High level of impact.

stability and fighting crime are issues of no great concern to CSOs. This applies all the more in Slovenia, where the majority of CSOs are sports and recreation organisations (27.7%). On the other hand, CSO involvement in delinquency (not juvenile or drug-related) prevention is still very limited. This is even more the case with social society and the (stable) economy, as there have been issues with so-called social entrepreneurship, while trade unions occupy a special place (which often differ from the conventional views of a CSO) in the political and economic development of Slovenian society. The frequent opinions voiced in focus groups about civil society's potential in environmental protection (e.g. the *Let's Clean Slovenia in a Day* campaign) or sports/recreation for youth (e.g. the *Believe in Your Basket* campaign) support this claim. Thus, while civil society's responsiveness depends heavily on the issue studied/followed, it could generally be higher regardless of the issue concerned.

4.2 Responsiveness (external perception)

This sub-dimension assesses the impact of civil society on two selected social issues as perceived by external experts. The survey conducted among them to a large extent confirmed previously recorded low impact scores. This is particularly the case with the 'economic stability' category, since external experts see civil society as having little or no impact on a economic stability (the value of the index was only 10.0). The index is somewhat higher when it comes to crime fighting (26.7), with experts ascribing to civil society a more palpable role. On the whole, experts are more reserved in terms of assessing civil society's impact, so the score for the sub-dimension is 18.4, which is clearly lower then the internal perception score (23.1). The reason for this is mainly the low score in the 'economic stability' category. A closer study of external perception results reveals that external experts see civil society as having more impact on fighting crime than ensuring a stable economy. Some 26.7% of respondents believe that civil society has no impact whatsoever on economic stability, while only 13.3% of them believe this to be the case in fighting crime. Perhaps the most worrying finding in this sub-dimension is that almost a third of all experts polled maintain that civil society has a very limited impact on fighting crime (60%) and economic stability (63.3%).

4.3 Social impact (internal perception)

This sub-dimension measures the impact of civil society on society in general and takes a wider look at the effectiveness of civil society and CSOs in their respective fields of interest. The CSOs surveyed were asked to choose two of the following categories: 'supporting the poor and marginalised communities', 'education', 'housing', 'health', 'social development', 'humanitarian relief', 'food', 'employment', and 'other', on which they felt their organisation had exerted most impact. Some 27.3% of the CSOs picked 'education', which was followed by 'supporting the poor and marginalised communities' (15.6%) and 'social development' (14.3%). The CSOs surveyed perceive a comparatively greater impact on the selected categories than in the Responsiveness sub-dimension, which is reflected by the high internal perception index of 56.1. Given calculated averages, the majority of CSOs see the impact of civil society as a whole on the two identified fields as being limited or tangible, while none report the absence of civil society's impact on any of the selected fields. The aggregate average impact scores for civil society as a whole for all fields are 1.7[10], which is the same as

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[10] 0 = No impact, 1 = Limited impact, 2 = Some tangible impact, 3 = High level of impact.

the average for 'education', while the average for 'supporting the poor and marginalised communities' is 1.5. The highest impact was attributed to 'humanitarian relief' (2.3), which matches our previous clams about the varying impact levels of CSOs. This was also confirmed by the AC, which deems the data valid and reliable. The value of the index is somewhat higher (64.8) with regard to the internal perception of social impact by polled CSOs. This could be interpreted in the light of self-defence and justification of a CSO's mission. Consequently, the score of CSOs' impact per selected categories is higher (aggregate average of 1), but there is no significant change in the patterns. Two other notable features are a slight drop in the perceived impact on education, and a more pronounced score in perceived impact of CSO on supporting the poor and marginalised communities, which could be linked to the state's strong presence in the education sector, and the selection of categories that are of greater relevance to civil society. As a result of relatively high indicator values, the score for the sub-dimension is 60.5, which maintains the level of impact perception on the Diamond within sustainable limits.

4.4 Social impact (external perception)

With regard to the external perception of the social impact of civil society, experts identified the categories 'humanitarian relief' (40.4%) and 'supporting the poor and marginalised communities' (33.3%) as the two in which civil society exerts the greatest impact. While results are similar to CSOs' perception of the greatest impact in individual categories, they agree somewhat less with the more abstract image of the two primary impact categories as selected by CSOs ('education' and 'social margin'). In the fields selected by external experts, the perception of impact is very high (76.7), which does not contradict internal perception results, since experts would probably have perceived less impact had they opted for the 'education' and 'social margin' categories. On the other hand, however, there is the alarming fact that experts perceive the impact of civil society as a whole as very weak. As many as 76.7% of them believe that civil society's impact is limited (tangible: 20%, high: 3.3%), which distorts the previous picture and clearly shows how neglected civil society is in the wider social context. The latter is apparently determined by features in which civil society plays no discernible role. As a result, the total score for the sub-dimension is somewhat lower (50.0).

4.5 Policy impact (internal perception)

This sub-dimension concerns the general impact of civil society on public policies and activities, and consequently, the impact CSOs exert on selected policy issues. Survey results show a clear discrepancy between the perception of civil society's impact on policies and the effectiveness of CSOs in the one hand, and the efforts CSOs invest in pursuing their objectives. The value of the index of policy impact in general is only 24.4, which means that CSOs do not believe civil society has a very tangible impact on public policies. As many as 69.2% of CSOs polled believe that civil society's impact is limited, while 6.6% claim that there is none. Results are similar when it comes to CSOs perception of their success in pushing selected policies, with the index measuring the success of CSOs in advocating selected policies standing at a mere 19.1. Respondents were required to give their opinion on

the outcome of these activities[11] for each one of the three selected policies. Only a fifth (19.6%) felt that at least one policy had been selected. But civil society could not be blamed for the lack of success, since the index of activities invested by CSOs in pushing selected policies is quite high (63.3). The same share of CSOs pushed for the adoption of a minimum of one policy at least two years before the survey was conducted. A case study of youth policies shows that CSOs are not the main culprit for this and that they are well aware of their limitations (lack of staff and connections, strong localisation, lack of expertise). The case study also shows that the government is engaged in an ostensible dialogue and includes civil society in policy making and implementation only formally, while establishing arms-length privileged ties between some CSOs (e.g. youth or disability policies). Thus the overall score of the sub-dimension is much lower and reflects the actual effect of civil society on policies, which is often nothing more than part of a ritual of ostensible legitimisation (index value is 35.5).

4.6 Policy impact (external perception)

The perception of civil society's impact on policy by external experts highlights the influence of CSO activism on selected policy issues. The index values for external perception point to a dynamic that is similar to the internal perception index, but within a lower value range. Experts estimate that the impact of civil society in general on policy making and implementation is negligible, with only 13.8% perceiving some tangible impact. As a result, the score for the sub-dimension is very low (13.8). On the other hand, the index of perception of the results of civil society's activity in policy-related fields (experts pointed out environmental, social and cultural policies) is higher. With regard to fields in which civil society has the greatest impact, 42.9% of experts stated that in civil society's activity had been successful in at least one, which still shows the relatively low impact of civil society, even in fields with which it is most concerned. The low value for the external perception dimension (28.4) is thus a result of low scores in both sub-dimensions. Here, too, the chief responsibility for such perception lies with the government, which has been effectively ignoring the efforts of civil society.

4.7 Impact of civil society on attitudes

The final sub-dimension of the perception of impact refers to the promotion of certain universal social and political norms by civil society and the reflection of such promotion in society. Identifying civil society's contribution to more ethical behaviour in society as a whole is crucial, as it is civil society that is expected to be a role model in this respect. Unfortunately, the World Values Survey (WVS, 2005) shows that the positive impact of civil society on society as a whole is almost imperceptible, and the sub-dimension has by far the lowest score (6.8). A negligible difference between members and non-members of CSOs is shown with regard to interpersonal trust, with CSO members being only slightly more trustful to others (index value 3.3) than non-members. The same applies to tolerance (index value 4.0) and public spiritedness, where no there are differences between members and non-members. This points to the surprising conclusion that Slovenian civil society neither generates nor

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[11] There were four possible answers: (0) Politicians did not even listen. (1) Policy rejected. (2) Policy under discussion. (3) Policy approved.

promotes generally accepted civic values, which could be connected to the frequent criticism of civil society on grounds of corruption, nepotism and cronyism, as suggested by several focus groups. Trust in civil society is the only exception in this sub-dimension, which makes sense from a defensive point of view of, but nevertheless indicates the perception of more moral behaviour within civil society.

Conclusion

The low value for the dimension Perception of Impact is a perfectly legitimate result, since it can also be obtained by triangulating various research procedures. The results for the dimension and all sub-dimensions respectively were also confirmed by the AC, which also labelled them as representative. With regard to methodology, we could question the validity of respondents selecting two out of several social concerns according to the World Values Survey (WVS, 2005), as the list is not exhaustive and changes with time. In 2005, the most burning social concerns were economic stability and crime, which inevitably reduced the responsiveness index of Slovenian civil society, which, like any other, has its specifically national features. Thus the overall score for the dimension is lower than expected. Nevertheless, there is no denying that in Slovenia there is a clear discrepancy between civil society's activity (which is decidedly too weak) and its impact in the society and on the government. This could be related, as owing to its minor – particularly in terms of values – impact on the wider social context, the government fails to (or will not) recognise civil society as a relevant actor and partner. There are many reasons for this, from the traditionally administrative role to the merely formative inclusion, which is mainly justified through meeting the criteria for the legitimisation of policies and civil society's lack of useful contribution. The government's distorted motivation, the apathetic population and questionable practices on the part of civil society often result in the latter's neutralisation, although there are at least a few positive exceptions The solution should be based primarily on eliminating bad examples on the part of civil society, fostering expertise and establishing more effective communication channels. Only in this way will the government be compelled to take notice of civil society, and to interact with it, and only a civil society of this sort has the potential to activate the otherwise apathetic population.

5 External Environment

This section assesses the key characteristics of the environment, which is central to the development and functioning of civil society. It presents the main conclusions regarding the social, economic, cultural and legal environments in which civil society exists. Figure III.5.1 presents the values for each dimension and sub-dimensions.

Figure III.5.1: Civil society's external environment
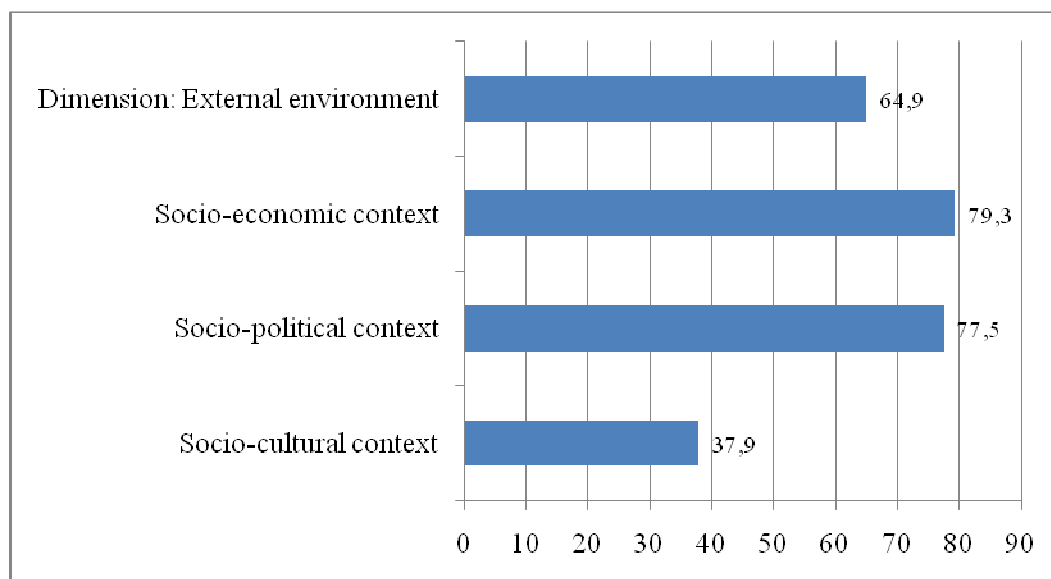
5.1 Socio-economic context

The table below presents the values of the key indicators that refer to civil society's social and economic context, and are available in international databases[12].

The basic capabilities index represents the average of three criteria covering health and basic educational provision. Its values range from 0 to 100, with higher values reflecting higher capabilities. The corruption index measures the amount of corruption in the pubic sector. Inequality is measured with the Gini coefficient (lower values reflect a more even distribution of income in a given country), and Slovenia, in comparison to other European countries, has achieved good results here. The World Bank Development Indicator, which gives the ratio of external debt to GNP, is not available for Slovenia. Looking at other data, we find that the socio-economic context in Slovenia is relatively conducive to the development and functioning of civil society. We should, however, keep in mind that a more thorough analysis of the economic context would point to the less favourable situation in which civil society has found itself in the wake of the current financial and economic downturn.

Table III.5.1: Civil society's socio-economic context

Dimension/sub-dimension	Value
Socio-economic context	79.3
Basic capabilities index	99.2
Corruption	67.0
Inequality	71.6

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[12] Source: Social Watch, Transparency International Corruption Perception Index, Word Bank National Statistics Bureau. Data provided by CIVICUS.

5.2 Socio-political context

This section analyses the socio-political context of the development of civil society regarding political rights and freedoms, civil liberties, associational and organisational rights, the legal framework and state effectiveness. In addition, a separate analysis of the relationship between the state and civil society was conducted.

Slovenia is a free country that does not restrict the political rights of its citizens. According to the Freedom House Political Freedom (2008)[13] survey, Slovenia's score for political rights is 1, which refers to free and fair elections and elected authorities. Slovenian citizens have a high level of autonomy; minorities have representatives in the national legislative body and are included in the decision-making processes. Slovenia also scored 1 in the civic rights category, which refers to freedom of expression, association, assembly and religion. The country is governed by the rule of law, and there are no major cases of negligence or corruption. The market is free, with equal opportunities for all. Based on all this, Slovenia was labelled as a free country. The FH political rights index is 95.

The civil liberties index (85.4), which covers the rule of law and personal freedoms in Slovenia, comprises three indicators: rule of law, personal autonomy and individual rights, freedom of expression and belief. The value of the indicator 'associational and organisational rights' is 100.

The value of the indicator 'state effectiveness', which refers to the question to what extent the state is able to fulfil its defined functions, is 71.6[14].

We also asked CSOs about their subjective experience with the legal framework. The majority (46.9%) of respondents believe that the legal environment of civil society is moderately enabling; just under a third state that the legislation is quite limiting; 18.5% would call it highly restrictive, and only 3.7% maintain that it is fully enabling. We also sought to know whether a particular CSO had ever faced any illegitimate restriction or attack by local or central government. The majority of CSOs (72.4%) reported that this had never been the case, while 27.6% answered affirmatively.

CSO representatives and external experts were also asked to evaluate in general the relationship between the state and civil society. The differences were notable, depending on whether we addressed CSO representatives or external experts, of whom a third were representatives of national or local authorities. The majority of respondents from CSOs believe that the state exerts a great influence on civil society, while a fifth even claim that the government controls civil society. Only 3% of them see civil society as having complete autonomy; on the contrary: more than a half of external experts say that the government has little effect on civil society, and just over 40% see this influence as strong. Only 10% of them stated that the government literally controlled civil society, while the others settled for a tangible impact.

A case study of the relationship between the state and CSOs attempted to classify this in terms of a predominant relationship model based on theoretical guidelines. The characteristic type of relationship in Slovenia is one of 'separate autonomy', which is defined by:

- modest government financing and moderate autonomy of CSOs;
- modest communication and contacts between CSOs and the government (see Appendix D).

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[13] Freedom House.
[14] Source: World Bank Governance Dataset (UNU World Governance Survey). Data provided by CIVICUS.

5.3 Socio-cultural context

The analysis of the socio-cultural context reveals to what extent socio-cultural norms and attitudes (including interpersonal trust, tolerance, public spiritedness) are conducive or detrimental to civil society. This information is contained in the World Values Survey (WVS, 2005). The score for this sub-dimension is 37.9, which makes it considerably lower than all other sub-dimensions regarding civil society's external environment.

In general, people in Slovenia are highly distrustful of others; only 18.1% of respondents believe that the majority of people can be trusted, while the remainder prefer utmost caution. With regard to tolerance, almost a quarter of respondents said they did not wish to live next to people of other races, ethnic background or religion, or HIV positive individuals, homosexuals, foreign workers and immigrants. We are the least tolerant of the Roma (39% of respondents would not want to have them for neighbours), homosexuals (35% of respondents would not want to have them for neighbours) and HIV positive people (31% of respondents would not want to have them for neighbours).

The sense of public spiritedness was assessed with the question, Can the following actions: claiming illegitimate government benefits, avoiding a fare on public transport, cheating on taxes, and accepting a bribe in the course of one's duties ever be justified? On average, 18% of respondents gave affirmative answers. This shows a relatively high level of public-spiritedness, which is also typical of other European countries; however, in comparison to Scandinavian and other West European countries, former socialist countries, including Slovenia, place considerably lower on the scale of public spiritedness (WVS 2005; Deželan, 2008).

Participants at focus group meetings and the national workshop identified the culture of silence and the Slovenian 'herd instinct' as a weakness and typical cultural feature of Slovenians, which stands in the way of improving civil society's position.

Conclusion

The External Environment dimension proved the most problematic of all five when it was discussed in focus groups and at the national workshop. The majority of participants emphasised the culture of silence and the Slovenian 'herd instinct' as two features that prevent the improvement of civil society's situation. In general, it would be safe to say that the external environment is moderately conducive to the functioning and development of civil society, with the main weaknesses being discouraging government policies and the poor integration of the civil society sector.

IV. STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN SLOVENIA

One of the final goals of the Civil Society Index research is to identify the strengths and weaknesses of Slovenian civil society. To accomplish this, meetings of regional focus groups and the national workshop were organised to discuss the state of civil society in Slovenia. After presenting the outline and conclusions of the survey, and the Civil Society Diamond, participants identified the strengths and weaknesses of civil society as they appeared in each dimension, and proposed measures to improve the situation. These are detailed in the enclosed Policy Action Brief.

The main strengths regarding **civic engagement** included: we have many associations and are active locally; CSOs know their areas of work very well; we are flexible; we have participatory and deliberative democracy; we respond quickly to violations of human rights and in natural disasters; civil society has a synergetic effect on the environment; social capital and inclusion are increasing as a result of civil society's activities. The main disadvantages included: a low standard of living prevents people from engaging more in civil society's activities; young people are not educated for democracy; conformism, fear of potential consequences of critical engagement, based on previous negative experience; lack of integration among CSOs; CSOs' image cannot compete with that of companies, the status of CSOs is not as highly regarded; 'bad' perception of CSOs' not-for-profit character (i.e. if it's not-for-profit, it has to be voluntary); working in the sector is not valued highly; CSOs are too unfamiliar with the concept of civil dialogue; organising voluntary work costs money and time; CSOs employees never change; some CSO leaders connect with local authorities (cronyism); some CSOs carry the stigma of their end users (i.e. marginalised groups such as the Roma and people suffering from addictions).

The main strengths regarding the **level of organisation** included: we are well organised, motivated and fully engaged; our structures in the region are well organised (regional CSO hubs are well accepted); procedures are flexible; establishing a CSO is simple and cheap; people are employed on the basis of values; there is a good working atmosphere. The main disadvantages included: there are no uniform criteria for the work of CSOs in the public interest; current financing schemes do not facilitate further development; in Slovenia there is no practice of donations; CSOs are forced to subject their work to financing opportunities; particularly in local communities CSOs have no autonomy because finance providers, i.e. local communities, direct their work; grants allocated through calls for funding are provided to cover the work of CSOs, but not to maintain or upgrade their infrastructure; various sectors engage in unfair competition when applying for funding (often entities from other sectors are free to apply to such public calls for proposals, which puts CSOs at a disadvantage); increasing red tape (disproportionate relationship between the funds allocated through a public contract and the amount of red tape needed for application and implementation of a project); unstable financing causes (expert) staff turnover and prevents long-term employee stability; nepotism; too few international connections (youth organisations being a notable exception).

The main strengths regarding the **practice of values** included: promoting positive values is intrinsic to the civil society sector; social welfare is a matter of daily engagement of civil society; we find it easier to exercise our values; we have an increased awareness (employees

are motivated), and we uphold CSO values; a quality assurance system in CSOs is a prudent measure. The main disadvantages included: financial survival often demands that values be sacrificed; members of associations rarely participate in democratic governance; the structures of some CSOs are often too rigid; lack of employees results in the dominance of a narrow circle of individuals; lower standard of employee rights (often with their agreement); apathy, passivity; lack of interest in including new energies; lack of self-criticism; lack of social responsibility (i.e. when the main reason for establishing a CSO is easy access to grants and other funds).

The main strengths regarding the **perception of impact** included: CSOs are familiar with social needs and are in close contact with the local environment; CSOs wish to participate in civil dialogue and have the necessary expertise to advance policies. The main disadvantages included: because CSOs are fighting for survival, they cannot engage on a wider scale; the government is unresponsive to initiatives and proposals from civil society – although civil society is actively engaged in putting forward proposals and initiatives, there is no real effect, since the government is not required by law to adopt them; the dependence on sources of financing weakens CSOs' involvement for fear of consequences if the financing were reduced or stopped altogether; lack of trust in the government; apprehensiveness toward EU directives; inability to present proposals effectively (the need for good marketing and lobbying); conflicting needs (CSOs recognise the needs of individuals, but the government does not follow); too few public functions are the domain of CSOs; CSOs should continuously develop activities instead of falling victim to the indiscriminate accumulation of funds (i.e. being at the mercy of funding opportunities).

With regard to the **external environment**, participants at regional focus groups and the national workshop found it difficult to identify potential strengths and weaknesses, which could be attributed to the fact that they live in this environment, which is difficult to compare with others. The culture of silence as a consequence of the Slovenian mentality was singled out ('herd instinct'). Additionally, participants stressed that EU mechanisms render the situation in institutions, among civil servants and in civil society, even less transparent.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the abovementioned strengths and weaknesses of civil society, recommendations were finalised at the national workshop to improve the state of civil society; these are detailed in the enclosed Policy Action Brief.

The following recommendations were made regarding **civic engagement** (recommendations 1–5 were identified as priorities):

1. To expand the concept of democracy in practice (not only parliamentary, but also participatory and deliberative democracy).
2. To overcome the political deficit (political parties represent a comparatively small share among CSOs); CSOs need better organisation.
3. To empower CSOs – increasing their competitiveness by attracting experts and promoting links with academia.
4. To improve CSOs image in the media.
5. To design a plan for the long-term development of civil society.
6. To increase education for civic responsibility and rights.
7. To strengthen links between CSOs.
8. To strengthen CSOs' support structures, such as agencies or an NGO fund.
9. To facilitate the organisation and development of volunteering (determining the formal status of a volunteer).
10. To ensure that CSOs continuously respond to their environment and take part in policy and decision-making processes.
11. To encourage critical thinking and expression at the level of individuals.

The following recommendations were made regarding the **level of organisation** (recommendations 1–7 were identified as priorities):

1. To establish uniform criteria for the work of CSOs in the public interest.
2. To establish an NGO fund that will ensure co-financing in cases when additional funds need to be raised for the implementation of projects.
3. To increase donations by amending the Foundations Act and tax legislation.
4. To replace the short-term financing of CSO's with long-term programme-based financing.
5. To increase the number of socially responsible partnerships between CSOs and companies.
6. To amend the Institutes Act (separating institutes from public institutes) and thus reduce demands on institutes that are NGOs.
7. To introduce employment opportunities.
8. To foster international integration through a shared infrastructure.
9. To strengthen transparency and responsibility within civil society.

The following recommendations were made regarding the **practice of values** (recommendations 1–2 were identified as priorities):

1. To include values in CSOs' strategic plans (strategic planning training).
2. To continue the implementation of the quality assurance standard in CSOs.
3. To improve ethics in civil society (highlighting examples of good practice).

4. To raise awareness among CSOs about the importance of promoting values through their own examples.
5. To respond promptly to current issues.

The following recommendations were made regarding the **perception of impact** (recommendations 1–5 were identified as priorities):

1. To acquire political will and train civil servants for civil dialogue.
2. To increase the influence of civil society in pre-election periods (to attract better candidates).
3. To improve communication methods with a view to attaining objectives (lobbying).
4. To vigorously push for civil dialogue (NGO strike, civil disobedience).
5. To demand that the government establish appropriate mechanisms for civil dialogue in concrete cases.
6. To improve the promotion of, and acquire public approval for, the civil society sector (promoting the advantages of civil society and supporting the case with examples of good practice from abroad).
7. To resort to legal remedies under EU law in cases of specific violations.
8. To educate citizens for civil dialogue (in school and at home).
9. To ensure stable sources of financing that enable the independence of CSOs.
10. To strengthen the network of CSOs.
11. To broaden expertise and improve know-how.
12. To boost the confidence of individuals and CSOs in their belief that they can make a change.
13. To increase employment in CSOs.
14. To encourage activism.
15. To increase the number of well-conceived long-term campaigns.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

Having analysed the state of civil society in Slovenia, we are inclined to conclude that the civil society sector has not yet reached the point at which it would begin to develop. Increasing the financial strength of the sector and its ensuing professionalisation can identify the point at which the sector's growth is transformed into development, but given the information collected in this research, this has not yet begun.

The persistently limited scope of the civil society sector and its marginal role are largely the results of the limited space in which it operates. The restrictions stem from the fact that the vast public sector caters to the majority of needs for public goods and services. The role of the civil society sector is thus restricted to supplementing what the public sector has to offer, particularly in instances where the latter fails to provide adequate services in terms of quality or quantity. With regard to providing these services, the relationship model between CSOs and the government remains the same – the government is clearly the dominant partner.

The research also shows that other major obstacles in the way of civil society's development include the fragmented and poorly interconnected civil society sector, and the lack of political mechanisms and channels for the direct involvement of CSO representatives and the articulation of interests of the civil society sector. Only a strong, integrated and publicly prominent civil society sector has the potential to penetrate the political and public administration structures which continue to protect the public sector and distribute public funds to its advantage (Črnak-Meglič and Rakar 2009).

Participants at focus group meetings and the national workshop see these results as expected and as clearly representative of the state of civil society in Slovenia. They believe that the main contribution of the project lies in the fact that their warnings about the poor state of civil society – along with their efforts to improve it – are supported by international research. They hope that by strengthening the endeavours of the civil society sector, the CIVICUS project will help to improve the state of civil society, which is its ultimate objective.

In order to improve the state of the civil society sector, the government should not only increase public financing of the sector through introducing new measures, but also – by amending the relevant legislation – encourage funding from other non-public sources, mainly private donations from individuals and companies, which would increase its autonomy and independence. In order to facilitate the implementation of such changes, both the government and non-government side require clear-cut strategies detailing the development of the civil society sector, while they must also reach consensus. The absolute prerequisite for this, however, is to strengthen civil dialogue in Slovenia.

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VIII. APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: CSI Data Indicator Matrix and Diamond

APPENDIX B: List of Participants

APPENDIX C: List of Participating CSOs

APPENDIX D: Case Study Summaries

APPENDIX E: Summaries of Focus Groups' Conclusions