Prishtine, 09 March, 2021

**Meeting of the Forum MLG-CSO**

On 09.03.2021 it is held the second virtual meeting of the Consultative Forum of MLG with Civil Society Organizations. In the meeting were present:

* *Representatives from MLG*
* *Representatives from DEMOS*
* *GAP Institute*
* *Lëvizja FOL*
* *Syri i Vizionit*
* *KLGI*
* *D4D*
* *BIRN*
* *Help Kosovo*
* *PMO/SKQ*
* *KCSF*

**Agenda:**

**09:45 – 10:00**                 Arrival of participants

**10:00 – 10:10**                 Welcome address (Shkëlqim Jakupi, MLG)

**10:10 – 11:00**                  Presentation of the concept paper for municipal performance

(Diellor Gashi, MPL)

**11:00 – 11:30**Open discussion regarding the concept document

**11:30 -  11:45**                  Questions & Answers

**11:45 -  12:00**                  Other

**12:00 -  12:05**                  Selection of the chairperson of the next meetings/Closing of the meeting

**12:05**                   Lunch

This was the second meeting of the MLG forum with Civil Society, where the Draft-Concept document for municipal performance was discussed, a document drafted by the working group from MLG where part of this group are also representatives from civil society. The meeting was opened by Mr. Shkëlqim Jakupi (MLG) who welcomed the participants and emphasized that today's meeting is very important to discuss the concept paper prepared by the working group and before the public discussion this document was initially considered important to receive inputs from forum members.

He further requested that civil society should be more active in setting the topics and taking the initiative for organizing the next meetings of the forum, as so far all meetings have been initiated by the MLG itself.

**Presentation of the concept paper for municipal performance**

Mr. Diellor Gashi from MLG as chairman of the working group, who was also the initiator of such a meeting, presented the concept paper where he said that before initiating the drafting of this concept document an analysis of the need for a municipal performance grant was made, where DEMOS provided assistance in engaging an external expert in drafting this concept paper. In the concept paper will be included the 38 interviewed mayors and municipal coordinators for municipal performance as well as 506 reporting officers so that the concept document of the performance is comprehensible and acceptable and applicable in practice.

He also said that an electronic system has been created that will be launched in April, where the Norwegian state system is taken as a model. In this system will be published all data or information reported by municipalities, since 2017 perhaps even earlier, to see the changes that municipalities have achieved in certain areas. Mr. Gashi has also raised a debate by asking some questions to the participants, whether there should be a performance grant, should there be a legal basis to this grant, whether the independence of municipalities is endangered if this grant does not exist, etc.

Representatives from civil society present at this meeting all together consider that the performance grant is very necessary for municipalities, as this has increased the quality of municipal services and has increased the responsibility of municipal work and in most cases during the electoral campaigns it used as “bragging” by mayors on the eve of elections. Civil society representatives also agreed that there should be a legal basis for performance grant, as there is for specific grants such as for education, health and, most recently, social welfare. The topic of discussion was also the national grant that was mentioned by the leader of VV who will be the next prime minister and will lead the government, and it is not known if it is intended to be taken as a model, the one that MLG has or in what form this grant of 300,000,000 euros will be developed.

The possibility of evaluating the performance of municipalities by CSOs was also discussed, but it was estimated that if there is no such grant, it is a problem to make such an assessment, therefore there should be an Administrative Instruction issued or it should be regulated by a specific article in the law or regulations from the office of the prime minister.

What has been highly appreciated by all, is how in recent years the municipal performance report has received a lot of attention also from the media and it has been estimated that the MLG should organize more press conferences not only in the ceremonies for handing awards to municipalities but also in the phase of opening the Call or measuring municipal transparency.

While seeing the different specifics that municipalities have, the issue of the possibility of categorizing municipalities has been raised because it is not possible to make an equal evaluation of a large municipality such as Prizren, Prishtina, etc. with small municipalities such as Junik, etc. It was proposed by some representatives of civil society whether it was possible to categorize municipalities into three categories as small, medium and large municipalities, however, the MLG representatives said that this is impossible as the Law on Local Self-Government addresses all municipalities equally with equal competencies and responsibilities, despite the differences they have. However, during the performance evaluation, what was taken as a criterion was the number of public meetings with citizens according to the number of inhabitants of the municipalities.

Civil society has proposed that it might have been good to make an analysis of the possibility of categorizing municipalities and the benefits of this, while proposing to the MLG and DEMOS to look into the possibility of engaging an expert to draft such an analysis.

Another concern raised by civil society at the meeting were the grants or projects supported by other Ministries themselves, where it is seen that most of these investments depend on the acquaintance of ministers with mayors or those municipalities where they have their electorate and some municipalities remain in a poor condition, and this has to be regulated so that the municipalities are treated equally and can apply with projects that could be supported by the government in accordance with the needs and priorities.

**Other**

 At this point, importance was mainly given to the invitation of the media to follow the meetings and this way to promote the work of the forum. However, after a discussion about this, it was decided that the media to be invited only to conferences or when finalizing documents, because if they are invited often to meetings/workshops, usually the journalists they send are might not be familiar with this field and can do more harm to the work of the forum than to promote it. In this regard, it was explained that the media mainly sends a journalist who at that time is free or has no other story, rather than sending a specialized journalist for a respective field. Additionally, it is thought as reasonable that during March to hold a longer meeting of the forum that could last maybe a day and a half where could be included more items on the agenda, such as Quality in Education, taking into account the experience of the mayor of Kamenica, and invite representatives by MES, another topic in the agenda could again be the concept paper on municipal performance and other topics that were initiated at last year's meeting.

Furthermore, it was discussed the possibility for the next meeting to be supported by someone from the Civil Society, where it is mentioned possibly to be Syri i Visionit in cooperation with DEMOS or any other donor or organization, thus this needs to be specified by March 16, as agenda and workshop preparations need to start on time.

**Selection of the next chairman**

It was requested from MLG, that until the next meeting chairman of the meeting to continue to be Naser Lajqi from Syri i Vizionit, which was agreed by all members of the forum and in the next meeting the proposal and selection of the new chairman will be made.