

Институт за европска политика - Скопје • European Policy Institute - Skopje • Instituti për politikë evropiane - Shkup

## **ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2014**

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## CONTEXT

In 2014 the general context for advocacy of the EU integration process in Macedonia has further deteriorated. The prospects for Macedonia opening accession negotiations have not improved, as there was no advancement in the name issue with Greece. At the same time, harsh backslide in democratic standards was observed, which re-focused the process to political criteria. In addition deteriorated political dialogue in the country and the dialogue with the civil society had an adverse impact on EU related research advocacy.

In this challenging environment, EPI has continued to pursue its main program goals, while adapting to the context. This included increased focus on democracy and rule of law, while at the same time continuing the IPA monitoring programme, as well as engagement on certain acquis and sectoral policy issues. Networking with other CSOs nationwide and regionally further developed. Furthermore, despite of the deteriorating environment, EPI continuously endeavoured to maintain its communication with national authorities and stakeholders, as well as to approach the wider audience.

## MAIN ACTIVITIES

### ACCESSION MONITORING AND ADVOCACY

Following publication of the EC Progress Report EPI published the *Analyses Recommendation Overshadowed*.<sup>1</sup> The report generated wide public interest among media and academic community. EPI was featured in several electronic and print media, thus achieving wide public outreach.

*EU funded project Broadcasting Europe – Evrozoom (January 2014 – January 2015)*



(Project budget: 122.381 EUR; Grant: 85.000 EUR; EPI's share: 10.000 EUR; Donor: EU Delegation Broadcasting EU)

EPI was a partner of the project *Evrozoom* (main implementer: Evrovizns Ltd., partner: SEETV as co-applicants) funded by the Delegation of the European Union through its Broadcasting Europe program. The project included production of a new cycle of *Evrozoom*, a TV magazine specifically dedicated to the EU accession process of the Republic of Macedonia. The main applicant Evrovizn was responsible for the production and post-production, while EPI was in charge of providing input in the content of the program - preparation of scenarios, experts, resources, etc. The project was launched in January 2014 and it was completed in January 2015.

The main objectives of the project were: to improve the understanding of the citizens of the impact, benefits and challenges of the EU accession negotiations; to encourage public debate on specific issues of EU accession negotiations and to contribute to promotion of the freedom of expression and independent media through un-biased and independent reporting on accession-related issues. The project was designed to address the lack of knowledge by citizens on the EU accession process and to bridge the gap between the commitment for accession and the awareness of the reality of the process.

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<sup>1</sup>[http://epi.org.mk/docs/Preporaka%20vo%20senka\\_Analiza%20na%20Izvestajot%20na%20EK%20za%20napredokot%20na%20RM%20za%202014.pdf](http://epi.org.mk/docs/Preporaka%20vo%20senka_Analiza%20na%20Izvestajot%20na%20EK%20za%20napredokot%20na%20RM%20za%202014.pdf)

Consequently, the specific objective of the project was to increase awareness of the citizens and specific stakeholders of reforms resulting from EU accession negotiations.

The project results included 26 episodes with a specific format of EUROZOOM, exclusively devoted to accession negotiations. Each episode presented a specific chapter/subheading of accession negotiations.

The months prior start of the broadcasts (January – April) comprised mainly from preparatory and launching activities. The broadcast of the show started in the first week of May and by the first week of July the first nine episodes were broadcasted. Followed by an interruption due to the summer scheme the broadcasts continued as of September 2014 until January 2015.

The scenarios prepared by EPI were designed to serve as a reminder of the priorities that need to be fulfilled for EU accession with the aim of creating pressure for delivering them. The topics have been selected from the negotiations chapters in the manner to sensitise and attract the attention of the public and at the same time illustrate the structure and content of the specific negotiations chapter. While preparing the scenarios attention was paid to cover the most pressing issues, address the EC recommendations expressed in the annual progress reports, the NPAA was taken into account to track to Government plans in the specific areas, success stories and lessons learned from the new EU Member States were identified. Overview of finalized IPA projects for the particular chapter of each episode was prepared for the scenarios.

The announcement of the position of the new European Commission on no enlargement in the next five years and the re-configuration of the Enlargement directorate to Directorate for European Neighbourhood Policy and Accession negotiations sent a clear message that enlargement to the Western Balkans is not the priority of the foreign and security policy of the EU. Having this in mind, an episode “Debate in the European Parliament – unfulfilled promises” was dedicated to this announcement and addressed multiple scenarios for the Balkans

According to the specifics of the each episode the interlocutors and the composition of the expert forum were identified from the range of politicians, government officials, independent experts, representatives from the nongovernmental organizations, EU officials, officials, experts and former negotiators from the MS that underwent negotiations or are currently in negotiations.

The Eurovzn team organized and filmed interviews segments in Macedonia, and other candidate countries and the new MS. The aim of the segments is presenting relevant information on the significance of the process of membership negotiations as an instrument for the efficient transformation and democratisation of the institutions, passing on the positive experiences of the New Member States of the EU as an illustration of the role of the negotiations for membership in the institutional and societal transformation in the direction of ensuring a better life for all citizens.

Reportages with relevant interlocutors in Brussels were carried by the SEETV team.

The project has been evaluated through two focus groups (30.07.2014 and 15.01.2015). The evaluation provides an assessment of the content provided in the TV magazine. The focus group reflects the identified stakeholder (target audience), as well as the wider public.

Eurozoom was broadcasted on TV 24News each week on Sunday at 19:15 pm and re-run during prime time each Friday from 12.30pm.

The show was promoted on the social media as well, on Youtube channel <https://www.youtube.com/user/EurozoomMk>, Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/evrozum> and internet <http://novatv.mk>.

## DEMOCRACY AND RULE OF LAW PROGRAMME

*Network 23 (May 2014 – July 2015), project funded by the European Union*



(Project budget: 192.417 EUR; grant: 158.858 EUR; Donor: EU delegation - IPA 2013 Civil Society Facility)

At the end of April 2014, EPI as a lead partner (in cooperation with the Helsinki Committee Macedonia and the Centre for Change Management) was granted its first Civil Society facility IPA grant. The project includes a re-granting scheme for capacity building of local civil society organizations. This is the first re-granting scheme implemented by EPI.

The main objectives of the project are: creating structured coordination between CSOs regarding the implementation of the areas covered by Chapter 23 of the Acquis – Judiciary and Fundamental Rights; increasing the capacity of CSO to act as watch-dog organization in the process of monitoring and evolution of Chapter 23 on national and local level through a concrete transfer of know-how, enabling mechanism for CSOs to influence the policy making process through coordinated input on the network; and finally by raising awareness on the implications of Chapter 23 on the overall progress of the accession process. Consequently, the specific aim is to foster commitment and capacity of civil society organization networks/partnerships to give citizens a voice and influence in the key sector reforms in the country through analysis, monitoring and advocacy as a key factor for ensuring sustainability of democratic reforms in the area of rule of law.

The partner organizations signed a Memorandum of understanding, clearly defining their roles and responsibilities as stipulated by the project document. A survey of CSOs active in the rule of law area (specifically areas under Chapter 23) was performed.

In line with the Application form, EPI with the partner organizations on 2<sup>nd</sup> of August published the public call for CSO's to participate in Network 23. The entire call can be accessed on: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/goqtxn9elww6wag/AADAAjBbKpELIyOeJvvS7wLJa>

The call for application if the re-granting scheme was published in the three major news outlets in the country and advertised through the social networks. Furthermore, an open Info Day for interested CSO's was held with wide participation of interested participants (<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/kcbc3044mbm5kkv/AAC7uJuPoop91mYAvWQbtXbaa?dl=0>). A total of 39 organizations submitted applications for the re-granting. Through an evaluation process, 10 projects were selected.

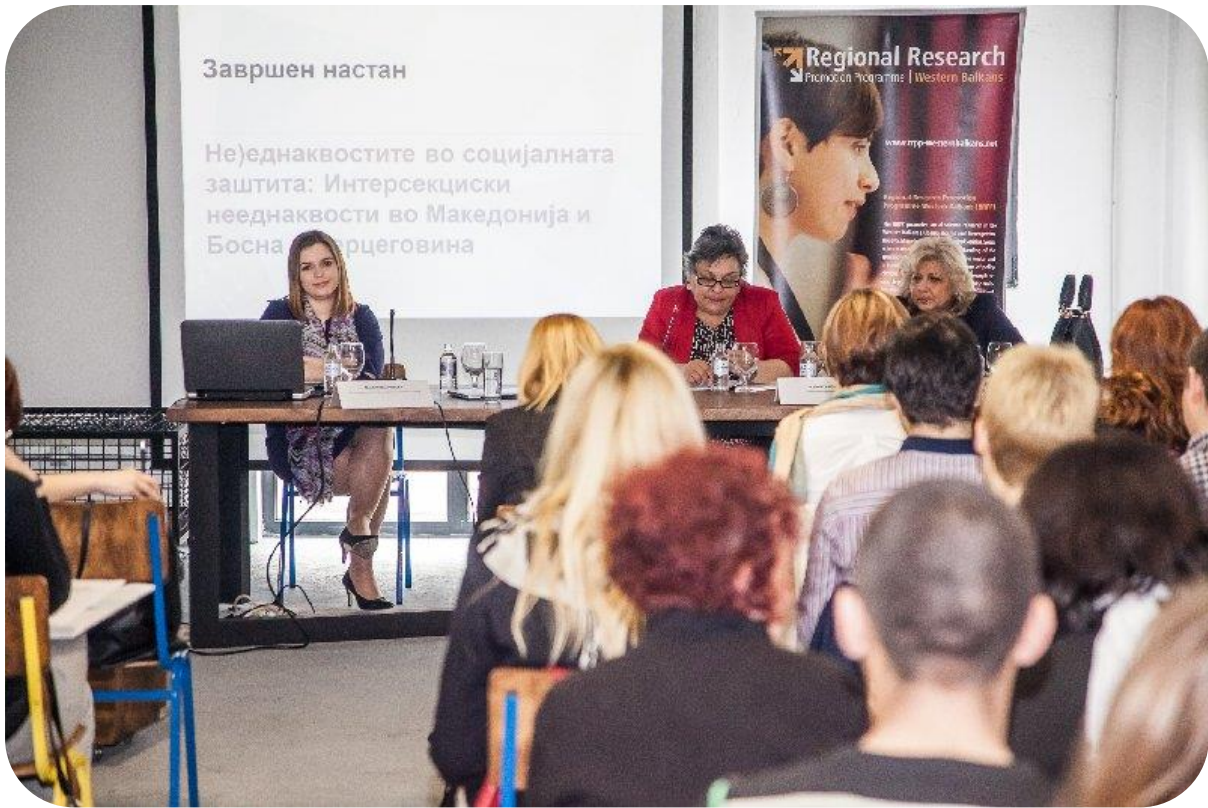
The concept for development of an internet tool (MERC) –MK-EU Resource Centre was developed.

The first workshop for the grantees of Network 23 was held from 31st of October until 2nd of November in Bitola, Macedonia. The workshop was attended by 37 participants, out of which 20 grantees, 2 representatives of the national stakeholders, 2 trainers, 5 representatives from the associates and 8 from the partner organizations. The topic of the workshop was "Methodology for monitoring and evaluation of public policies under Chapter 23 – Judiciary and fundamental rights". The participants acquired knowledge and skills on the concept of methodology and evaluation of public policies, the applicable tools and success indicators, as well as the difference between the monitoring and evaluation. These outputs were presented to the grantees through understandable and applicable case-study. The associates from Belgrade, Podgorica and Sofia presented their best practices and comparative experiences.

The second workshop was held from 11<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> December in Struga, Macedonia. The workshop was attended by 30 participants, out of which 18 grantees, 2 representatives of the national stakeholders, 2 from associate partners, and 10 from the partner organizations (out of which 7 were trainees). The main purpose of the second workshop was to present to the grantees the development, structure and content of Chapter 23. Moreover, partner organizations conducted tailor-made training (on the basis of grantees' project), including experiences, challenges and dealing with possible risks through monitoring of judicial authorities and monitoring of litigation, freedom of expression and freedom of speech and free legal aid. The associates from partner countries shared their experiences of regional screening process and lessons learned during the accession negotiations.

EPI submitted a project application for financial contribution to the Project to the Dutch embassy.

*Regional Research Promotional Programme for Western Balkans (RRPP) - (In)equality in social protection: multi-level analysis of inter-sectionality in social assistance provision - A comparative study (August 2014 – August 2015)*



(Project budget: 67240 CHF; grant: 65560; EPI's share: 34590 CHF; Donor: Regional Research Promotional Programme- Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation-SDC)

Since of August 01, 2014, EPI has been implementing the regional research RRPP funded project *(In)equality in social protection: multi-level analysis of intersectionality in social assistance provision - a comparative study* as a main partner, in cooperation with the Centre for Social Research - Analitika, BiH. The overall objective of the research is to examine whether and how the intersections of inequality are addressed and impacted by social protection (focusing on social assistance provisions) in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia, on and within the symbolic, structural and individual levels, and whether and how this affects the perpetuation of inequalities. In order to present the research results, this project, to be completed by July 2015, will produce the following outputs: edited book, two papers (to be presented at an international conference), two policy briefs, one comparative paper (targeting primarily the donors and the international community), infographs, and country events (one per country).

A memorandum on cooperation, drafted by EPI, was signed by the partners. In September EPI prepared the first project coordinative meeting which took place in Skopje, October 13-14, 2014. Aside from a chance for both research teams to get to know each other better, this meeting had a primary goal to discuss and finalize the methodology paper for the research. To this end, the EPI research team prepared in September a draft-Methodology paper, which was shared with Analitika, and which was the basis for the discussions in the Skopje meeting.



The Methods and Methodology Paper was developed by the project leader and discussed at the Skopje meeting (October, 2014). The Methods and Methodology was discussed with the mentor and finalised by the end of December. Both organizations devised key contacts lists, and identified the first interlocutors for the interviews.

A coordinative meeting of project partners was held during the PBI RRPP conference in Belgrade (November 2014) - the agenda of the meeting included discussion of the analytical and methodological framework, risk assessment, discussion of further steps within the project, and internal deadlines for research.

Biljana Kotevska participated at the PBI launching conference in November, 2014, in Belgrade. Following the detailed elaboration of the PBI streams that was provided by the organizers, we reached a consensus that the project will choose the no-policy-link strand, since it will most likely have no substantive policy implications. However, we also decided that should a future PBI event/training be on a topic which overlaps with a researcher's training needs, they will participate in order to make the most use of the opportunity that is offered to us with this initiative.

Within the RRPP Policy Bridging Link, Biljana Kotevska and Kristina Cuculoska participated in the initial RRPP training on implementing the projects (the kick-off meeting in Belgrade) and Simonida Kacarska, Aleksandar Jovanoski and Kristina Cuculoska participated in the academic writing training in November, 6-7, 2014 in Skopje.

*Regional Research Promotional Programme for Western Balkans (RRPP) – Performance Audit and Policy Evaluation: On the Same or Parallel Tracks? (July 2014 – September 2015)*

(Project budget: 125775; Grant: 119415 CHF; EPI's share: 27005 CHF; Donor: Regional Research Promotional Programme- Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation-SDC)

Since July 2014 EPI has been implementing a project as a partner in the project *Performance Audit and Policy Evaluation: On the Same or Parallel Tracks?* as a joint endeavour of the Centre for European Policy (CEP) from Belgrade as the lead applicant, EPI, and the Institut Alternativa from Podgorica. The project aims to analyse the relationship of performance audit and policy evaluation, make conclusions on their complementarity and opportunities of using audit findings for strengthening policy evaluation, consequently advancing the quality of the policy making in the countries of the consortium.

The consortium will prepare a comprehensive comparative study encompassing 6 countries from the EU and the 3 consortium countries. In the framework of this project, EPI analyses the link between performance audit and policy evaluation in one old and new member state of the EU and Macedonia.

In the course of 2014 EPI's team prepared a methodology for the project which was also shared with our mentoring institution *The Hertie School of Governance from Berlin*.

## IPA MONITORING PROGRAMME

### *IPA- PRAG II*

This particular programme continued with EPI's participation in IPA – PRAG II project, led by Eko-Svest in Macedonia, together with Analytica, Macedonian Centre for European Training, Association Zenith, Front 24/12 and Reactor. Subsequently, the informal network led by Ekosvest submitted a project-proposal *IPA-Minding Network* the USAID call for proposals. The project was implemented in a period of six months and was concluded in June 2014.

The most immediate task of the Network within the project was to organize a forum to consult credible CSOs active in their respective fields on the contents of the draft Country Strategy Paper on IPA for 2014-2020 (CSP). This forum took place on 27-28 February 2014 in Ohrid where 112 CSO representatives had the opportunity to express their views. The concept of the forum was a plenary session, followed by 7 separate workshops. EPI was in charge of sectoral policy V. Competitiveness and innovation. 13 participants from the civil society sector (nation-wide)

attended this particular workshop. The result of the two day Conference also included preparation of an integrated Position Paper on the Country Strategy Paper composed of inputs by all 7 working groups.

The Position Paper on the Country Strategy Paper composed of inputs by all 7 working groups<sup>2</sup>, was shared with the Delegation of the European Union and the Secretariat for European Affairs.

The partner organizations strengthen the organizational capacities of CSO to participate in the IPA programming process. Furthermore, during October a training module has been conducted on IPA II for elected representatives from CSOs.

The partners have advocated establishing an IPA consultation mechanism with the Secretariat for European Affairs, but with no visible results until the end of 2014, despite several meetings and consultations with the Secretariat.

So far, advocacy efforts have resulted in support by the Committee for European affairs for establishing a co-financing state fund for IPA civil society funds (conclusions of the Committee).

*Foundation Open Society Macedonia Fellowship in cooperation with USAID (January 2014 – June 2014)*  
*EU AND THE ACTIVIST ORGANIZATIONS IN THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA - Analysis on the activist societal organizations that deal with social, labour, and human rights issues and their capacity to apply and administer EU funds*

(Project budget/grant: 2400 USD USAID- Foundation Open Society- Macedonia)

Under the USAID Civil society project - Small Grants for CSO Fellowships, in December 2013 EPI was granted a small research grant **EU and the Activist Organizations in the Republic of Macedonia**. The research was carried by EPI's grantee Kire Vasilev and focused on: the relationship between the European Union and non-governmental organizations in the country working in the areas of: social rights, LGBT issues, and Roma and gender equality. Given that these problems in the EC Progress Report were highlighted as areas that Macedonia has to pay special attention, the paper took into a consideration the critic of the European Commission, considered the possibilities which the EU offers for support to civil society organizations and the capacity of NGOs working on this issue for administration of European funds.

The paper, including recommendations to the Government and CSOs was presented at an official promotional event in the EU Info Centre in July, 2014. Around 30 different representatives from the CSO sector participated and took part into the dynamic discussion during the event.

The research paper can be accessed at:

<http://epi.org.mk/docs/EU%20i%20aktivistickite%20organizacii%20vo%20Republika%20Makedonija.pdf>

*Westminster Foundation for Democracy - Parliamentary Oversight of IPA*

(Project budget: 7.150 EUR)

In the framework of the cooperation with the Regional Network of Parliamentary Committees for Economy and Finance of the Western Balkans supported by the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD), Dr. Malinka Ristevska Jordanova provided training (21-22 July 2014), on IPA II and parliamentary control over the use of EU funds for Bosnia and Herzegovina's Members of Parliament and parliamentary staff of three parliamentary assemblies of BiH.

Furthermore, EPI prepared a policy brief on the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance II (2014-2020), which was presented on a regional conference in Skopje during November 2014 ([http://npcbalkan.net/admin/doc/3673broshura%20mala%20\\_EN-IPA.PDF](http://npcbalkan.net/admin/doc/3673broshura%20mala%20_EN-IPA.PDF)).

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<sup>2</sup><http://www.ekosvest.com.mk/mk/nastan.php?id=48>

In the course of February to April 2014, Ms. Kristina Cuculoska, LL.M from EPI prepared of a short brief and a manual/toolkit on state aid, competition policy and foreign direct investments for the Western Balkans countries. Moreover, Ms. Cuculoska provided regional training for parliamentary staff in Belgrade, Serbia and also prepared a case study for policies of state aid and competition policy in the Western Balkans. The toolkit can be accessed on the following link: <http://www.npcbalkan.net/admin/doc/2790NPC%20toolkitEN-FINAL%20-%20for%20WEB.PDF>

#### PROJECTS IN THE PIPELINE:

- The application for the Project “*Implementation of the Principle of Equal Representation*” submitted to the USAID Civil Society Project was approved in December (Project budget: 42.182 USD; grant: 38682 USD)
- EPI submitted a concept note for a two year project “*Dialogues for Vision*” to the FCO Strategic Programme Fund and Bilateral Programme Fund.
- The Project “*Strengthening Consumers Organisations for Better Municipal Services in SEE*”, in which EPI participates as a project partner-member of the TEN was in the last stage of approval.

#### REGIONAL COOPERATION

##### Ten Regional network

EPI is one of the founders of the “Think for Europe” Network of Think Tanks and EU Policy Research Centres in South East Europe (TEN). It was established in May 2013 with the signing of an Agreement of Cooperation. Besides EPI, the current members of the network are the European Policy Centre, based in Belgrade, Serbia and Institut Alternativa, based in Podgorica, Montenegro. The primary objective of the network is to advance evidence based policy making and promote EU integration.

In addition, regional cooperation was promoted through participation in the Westminster Project for parliamentary control of EU funds, as well as participation in the activities of the European Fund for the Balkans.

TEN members produced a background paper with the title *Coordination Requirements and Institutional Set-up in the EU Accession Process and Negotiations* for the Regional Workshop of the Network of the EU Integration Offices in South East Europe held in Montenegro, in the framework of GIZ Open Regional Funds for SEE – *Promotion of EU Integration project*. The paper was presented on 23-25 April 2014 in Bečići, Montenegro.

Subdivided into six chapters, the paper analyses requirements for institutional set-up and coordination in the overall EU integration process taking into consideration specificities of the Western Balkans enlargement and national coordination structures in the association process; institutional set-up and coordination requirements for accession negotiations from the view of the main structures needed for running accession negotiations; link between the policy making and coordination at the national level and EU accession; lastly, involvement of stakeholders such as civil society organizations and national assemblies in the EU accession process.

TEN Network members have made a background paper for a two days conference on strengthening the human capacities of the SEE public administrations towards EU accession organized by the Open Regional Fund for South East Europe (GIZ). The conference served as a platform for debate and exchange among high-level policy-makers, civil servants and other key stakeholders in the process of EU integration. EPI has participated in the drafting of a background paper to be presented by the TEN Network at the conference which is to serve for discussion and to be also included in the conference proceedings. The background paper deals with issues related to the human capacity development and management in the EU integration process – training, performance management, motivation,

retention policies as well as to the defining and managing skills and competencies for the EU accession process. In addition, it also provides summary of relevant experiences and lessons learnt from previous enlargements, as well as lessons learnt and best practices in building human capacities for EU accession within the SEE region.

#### PARTICIPATION AT INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES

Dr. Simonida Kacarska organised and participated at a workshop on Governance of citizenship policy in the Balkans, held at the European University Institute in Florence in May 2014. The title of the paper she presented is ***Fundamental rights before and after the visa liberalisation dialogues – lost in the process***. Dr. Simonida Kacarska prepared a paper as the country author on Macedonia for the European Policy Centre edited volume on European Integration and Party Politics in the Western Balkans, published in September 2014. The title of the paper is ***The EU in Macedonian party politics – consolidating and dividing***

([http://www.epc.eu/pub\\_details.php?cat\\_id=4&pub\\_id=4849](http://www.epc.eu/pub_details.php?cat_id=4&pub_id=4849), pg. 69).

Dr. Simonida Kacarska participated as a speaker at the [International workshop on EU Integration and Minority protection in the Western Balkans held in Sarajevo](#), organised as part of the MAXCAP project (FP7 project *Maximizing the integration capacity of the European Union*).

During May, Aleksandar Jovanoski participated at the annual community event organized by the European Fund for the Balkans in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. In addition, Mr. Jovanoski, as representative from Macedonia and EPI, appeared in the first regional clip ***Motors of Change*** (<http://vimeo.com/96570031>). The idea of the video and the event in Sarajevo was to bring Europe and the donor community closely to the New Balkan perspectives, the stories of in-depth transformation of the Balkan societies and the EFB “Motors of Change” from the different programmes and countries. This topics which are the general pillars of the work and interest of the European Fund for the Balkans are presented through the human power of EFB – few selected people from the network of beneficiaries, collaborators and partners, whose real life private and professional stories and testimonials present the achievements of the Fund in retrospective, but also serve as a feedback impulse and stimulus for the future development of the Fund in perspective.

#### COMMUNICATION

EPI has modified its visual identity. A new logo was adopted and the web page was re-designed. The re-design of the web-page included increased transparency of the donor sources, which resulted the highest grade (5) in the published report for transparency of think-tanks by the Project *Transparify*.

The extensive use of the social networks (mainly Facebook) led to increased number of followers of EPI’s FB page from around 1000 to 2500 at the end of 2014.

EPI continued to be largely present in the media and is an unavoidable interlocutor when discussing EU issues. The Director was frequently interviewed by 24 vesti, ALSAT-M, Telma, Radio Skopje, Radio Free Europe, Deutsche Welle - Macedonia. However, the space in pro-government media was extremely limited.

#### ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In 2014 two sessions of the Assembly were held.

Following resignation to the Supervisory Board by Mr. Drilon Iseni. A new member of the Supervisory Board was appointed at the Assembly meeting at November (Verica Hadzi Vasileva Markovska).

EPI's internal procedures were drafted, discussed and adopted at the Management Board Meeting held on October 6, 2014. The document defines the internal structure of the Institute, human resources policy, planning and reporting, document management, and financial and accounting procedures. The Internal Procedures reflect the think-tank's best practices and lessons learned in the past three years. The adopted procedures entered in to force on 1 November 2014.

Research capacities were enhanced through several projects that included research and research training and mentoring, which resulted in EPI's engagement in two Regional Research Promotional Programme (RPPP), to be implemented by the end of August/September 2015.

Administrative capacities were enhanced through securing funding for engagement of an administrative officer, which will further facilitate the implementation of the internal procedures.

Capacities for carrying out consultancy and training were additionally advanced, which has resulted in EPI being contracted to assist other organisations locally and regionally.

The average employed staff in 2014 was 5, while at the end of the year it was 7.

Volunteers are continuously recruited. Two volunteers have been contracted under the Network 23 project.

EPI moved to new premises as of October 13<sup>th</sup>. The new address is Antonie Grubisic II/2. Skopje.

EPI submitted an application to OSI TTF for an organisational development grant, focusing on the priority areas: research, communication and internal governance.