

Civil Society in Action



Up to
October 2009

What's new ? THEMATIC CONFERENCES

CSST thematic conference on the
"Environment", 22 - 23 June 2009.

The CSST second thematic conference took place on the 22nd and 23rd June 2009. The conference was the fourth of a series of round tables organized with the CSO community aiming at promoting a participatory approach and being responsive to the concerns of Environmental Civil Society Organizations. 50 people from 25 various CSOs attended the conference which was opened by Virginia Cezilly Fernandez de Liger, EC Task Manager for Reconciliation, Civil Society and People to People contacts in the Turkish Cypriot Community Task Force. Other EU funded programs such as the EU Nature Protection Project, the Technical Assistance Information Exchange of DG Enlargement (TAEIX) contributed to the conference and delivered key note speeches on the EU's environment principles, achievements and legal framework. The second



CSOs taking action: Thematic Conference on "Environment"

day of the conference was devoted to workshops, and preparation of a joint action plan for an environmentally aware society. Please look at our website for the conference report and program. The notes of all round tables are also available at www.siviltoplum.eu



CSST FIRST ROUND TABLE on Gender Equality: 29 September 2009

Civil Society Organizations working on gender issues gathered on the 29th September 2009 for a first meeting organized by CSST. 40 people representing 23 organizations joined this first gathering including trade unions, networks, grassroots organizations and CSOs. The objective of this round table was to share common concerns on gender approach. The discussions focused on common issues, highlighting the need for an effective approach. Among the priority areas identified were gender and discrimination, issues

arising from gender perception; equal representation in decision making and structures needed to attain gender equality. At the end of the first meeting, the participants agreed to meet regularly to make proposals. The next working group or round table were scheduled for 8 and 15 October. Meetings notes are available online: www.siviltoplum.eu



Special points of interest:



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Outreach visits to “Civil Society in Action I” Project Grantees

**ÇATALKÖY DEVELOPMENT and CULTURE ASSOCIATION
Local Efforts, global Outcomes**

The new EU funded project aims at increasing the involvement of the Çatalköy community in the development of their village by fostering awareness of certain local and global issues. The project also aims at strengthening capacity and providing opportunities for the Çatalköy community to have a say in what they really need in the village. In August, when the CSST visited the village of ÇATALKÖY, renovation of the oldest building of the village was ongoing in order to transform it into the premises of the project. Since the project started, it has provided social, cultural, and educational activities, seminars celebrating UN days.



ECO-TOURISM ASSOCIATION of BÜYÜKKONUK



The CSST visited Büyükkonuk village in August. An EU seed funding project started supporting the development of an eco tourism organisation.

The specific objective of the project is to help the Eco-Tourism Association of Büyükkonuk to get established and strengthened as a not-for profit civil society organization involved in eco-tourism and cultural development as well as to provide them with start-up assistance, including a fully equipped office, the services of a project coordinator for two years and training to help its members gain knowledge and skills enabling them to become strong civil society members.



AKOVA WOMEN ASSOCIATION AND KTAMS (Cyprus Turkish Civil Servants Trade Union)

“Strong Women For a Strong Civil Society”

AKOVA , together with its partner the Cyprus Turkish Civil Servants Trade Union, is implementing a two year project funded under the European Union “Civil Society in Action I” programme . The project called **Strong Women for a Strong Civil Society** aims at training trainers and raising awareness about domestic violence. A group of trainers selected from various schools will be trained and will return to teach the health workers, nurses, teachers, police and other relevant professions of the future how to recognize and assist victims and perpetrators of violence.



The overall objective of this project is to set in motion the steps needed to bring about the necessary legislation and infrastructure to help victims of violence.

Turkish Cypriot University Women Association “Nicosia Mothers’ Centre” Project”.....

This EU funded project is established in the heart of the Old City of Nicosia. Its overall objective is to strengthen the role of the women’s civil society organizations in Cyprus and to promote the balance of work and family values. A **Nicosia Mothers’ Centre (NMC)** in the walled city will be opened, a community centre to listen and to be listened to. Women and mothers in Cyprus are struggling between the traditional values of family support and the modern trends for active participation in professional and public life. Through this project, the Turkish Cypriot University Women Association aims to contribute to the empowerment of women and mothers. In addition, the project will establish a safe environment for women and mothers to meet, to share problems and obtain support on how to raise their children, as well as receive counselling and information.

The objective is to reduce social exclusion. It will provide a space for mothers and their children to spend some time of the day in a caring environment. It is of tremendous need for the well-being of Turkish Cypriot society at large. This will be done through the transfer of know-how and good practices from other EU countries with similar experience.



CSST Training on “Participatory Decision-Making in CSOs” and “Strategic Thinking and Planning”



During the past months, the CSST has organized two capacity building training sessions , in line with the priorities identified by CSOs and set out in the needs assessment questionnaire. (available on line)

The participation was limited to 24 people. 15 CSOs attended the training on **Participatory Decision-Making in CSOs** on the 2nd and the 3rd of July 2009. The two day session focused on improving the organisational management capacity of CSOs, implementing participatory methods of decision making, and increasing their understanding of the importance of participation in decision making .



Another training session on **Strategic thinking and strategic planning** was held with 20 participants from 14 CSOs . The two day session concentrated on empowering CSOs in building strategies within their respective areas and in planning their operations & activities in line with these strategies. The topics covered SWOT analysis, case studies, experience sharing, strategic planning processes (values, vision, mission, strategic objectives, setting priorities, activities and responsibilities, monitoring and evaluation, etc). Participatory methods were used. The relevant presentations and training material can be downloaded from www.siviltoplum.eu, under useful downloads.



Highlights from Civil Society Organizations

The **Independent Media Centre**, a EU funded project organized a conference on 12 September on the relationship between the local media and civil society within the Turkish Cypriot community. The aim was to increase the visibility of the Turkish Cypriot Civil Society in the Media.

Earthdance, the Global Dance Festival for Peace is the world's largest simultaneous music and dance event. Founded in 1996, it coincides with the International Day of Peace where over 200,000 people unite in dance with more joining online in support of global peace. **Earthdance Nicosia** took place on 26 September 2009, organized by **HASDER** and **Peace Players International**.



 **The Aid Programme for the Turkish Cypriot community helps prepare for reunification**

On July 8th 2009, the Commission approved the 2008 annual report on the implementation of the aid programme for the Turkish Cypriot community. The aid programme aims to facilitate the reunification of Cyprus by encouraging the economic development of the Turkish Cypriot community with particular emphasis on the economic integration of the island, on improving contacts between the two communities and with the EU, and on preparation for the EU's legal order. €259 million is available to implement the programme over the period 2006-2011.

Funds are used for investment to help meet EU standards in areas such as water supply, waste water treatment, solid waste management, energy supply and telecommunications. Grants are given to a wide range of recipients: students and teachers, NGOs, farmers, small businesses, schools, villages. Technical expertise is made available to Turkish Cypriots to help them better understand and prepare for the implementation of EU rules following reunification.

Cyprus Network for Youth Development. The aim of this network is to encourage and inspire the youth of Cyprus to participate in the efforts for a peaceful solution of the Cyprus problem. It is hoped that it will bring together active and concerned citizens. The project is coordinated through Soma Akriton in the Greek Cypriot Community and the Mediation Association in the Turkish Cypriot Community. 12 organizations with diverse background are participating in this project funded by the **UNDP Action for Cooperation and Trust (ACT)**.

The **Cyprus Turkish Women's Solidarity Council** organised a concert of Carmina Burana which was received enthusiastically by many music lovers. The entire proceedings of the concert will be donated to civil society organisations.

 **The Council of Europe and Non-Governmental Organisations: Promoters of democracy and active citizenship in Europe**

The Council of Europe's work benefits extensively from contacts and co-operation with the dynamic elements of society, as represented by NGOs. One of the main challenges currently facing the Organisation is to strengthen NGOs and civil society and to develop participatory democracy on a pan-European basis. For more detailed information, please look at http://www.coe.int/t/ngo/default_en.asp

- web pages "**Conference of INGOs**" and "**Participatory Status**" for more information on the statutory relations with INGOs.
- web page "**Civil Society Initiatives**" for more information on programmes with partner NGOs
- web page for "**Code of good practice for practice for civil participation in the decision –making process**"



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