



## *STRATEGIC PLAN 2021-2023*

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## 1. Introduction

Civic Alliance (CA) is nongovernmental and nonprofit foundation, established on 1 June, 2011.

### Vision

Montenegro is civic and democratic society, founded on the rule of law. Montenegro develops as the society of active and informed citizens, while public institutions function in accordance with the positive legal regulations and in order to accomplish public interest.

### Mission

Civic Alliance (CA) contributes to strengthening of civic and democratic society through the support to civic initiatives, protection and promotion of human rights and control of work of public institutions.

### Goals and responsibilities of CA are as follows:

- Respect of the rule of law principles,
- Harmonization of Montenegrin legislative framework and institutional practice of public sector with the standards of human and minority rights,
- Development of civil society,
- Improvement of environment for the work of media,
- Openness of public institutions towards citizens,
- Improvement of public policies in the field of human rights and civil society, and their efficient implementation,
- Provision of free legal aid to seekers of international protection and persons with approved protection, and victims of human rights violations and discrimination.

CA works on promotion and strengthening of civic awareness, in a view of recognition of the key social problems and formulation of alternatives, based on the culture of human rights and principles of tolerance and public dialogue. CA achieves this through the control role of civil sector, and via provision of the concrete support to civic initiatives and activists.

The key priorities of the CA team have been determined in accordance with the idea about development of Montenegro as the society of active and equal citizens, with public institutions that function in accordance with positive legal regulations, aiming to achieve public interest.

We create concrete activities on implementation of program goals of our organization through the processes of analysis of our and relevant reports of local and international organizations and through comprehensive consultations with the network of local partners. Finally, we receive important suggestions from citizens we regularly communicate with through the project activities, and social networks.

As the "Civic Alliance team", we intensively work on improvement of our knowledge and abilities, and on networking and building of capacities of local partners from the civil society, dealing with monitoring and reporting in areas related to human rights, the rule of law, good governance. We are dealing with the capacity building and the support for organizations that collect representatives of multiply marginalized groups.

CA monitors the work of all branches of power from the perspective of “a citizen”, with special focus on the process of implementation of measures defined by negotiating chapters in the framework of the EU integration process, which represents the key reform framework of Montenegrin public administration and judiciary. This is especially related to Chapters 23 – Judiciary and fundamental rights, and 24 – Justice, freedom and security, which create permanent normative and institutional presumptions for creation of responsible and efficient public and judicial sector, whose work is harmonized with the principles of human rights.

Possibility to be flexible and dynamic and fulfill desired impact, we owe to the confidence of donors and partners who give immense support to our work, through our partnership and institutional, program and project support.

We will continue with various structures of donors, professional progress and professional profiling of employers and networking with all organizations in Montenegro and the region that share the same values as CA.

All members of the team will deal with the actual problems in their areas, with the public interest; while donors’ public calls will not be our motive, or party positions or anything similar. We will be initiators of establishment of social dialogue practice and positive moves for the benefit of the society as a whole.

CA Strategic Plan 2021-2023 is the framework for work and development of organization. The Strategy is envisaged as the foundation of meaningful connecting of annual activities that will be planned through development of annual operational plans. Plans with defined measurable success indicators, have been drafted in operational plan for implementation of the strategy. CA team shall monitor its achievements through systematic monitoring and self-evaluation process.

## 2. Program areas

### 2.1 *Human Rights and Justice Program*

Human Rights and Justice Program covers monitoring, researching and documenting of cases of human rights violations, its processing and representation of victims before the competent courts and public bodies. We also analyze proposed legal solutions in this field and raise the level of informing of citizens about human rights. Through this program, we control and monitor the reform of judiciary, as well as the competent state institutions. We provide free legal assistance to marginalized groups and individuals to receive the necessary protection and support, in order to exercise their rights and we also remain open to direct communication with citizens. Through numerous contents in the Information and Documentation Center (IDC), we raise the awareness of citizens with the war past.

Within this program, we focus on the problems of torture and discrimination, politically motivated violence, freedom of expression, freedom of gathering, personal data protection, minority rights, status of displaced persons, persons at risk of statelessness, applicants for international protection and persons with approved protection, border security and the fight against migrant smuggling, as well as economic and social rights. We will also organize training for civil servants in these areas. Also, CA will insist on a professional, independent, accountable, transparent and efficient judicial system, as well as quality work of state services.

Activities in the area of dealing with the past will be intensified in the coming period with the established Information and Documentation Center (IDC), where the topic of war crimes will be more clearly presented to the public. The focus is especially on young people, whose knowledge in this field is currently at a very low level. We will point out the need to reopen investigations, cooperate with the competent institutions and provide as much material as possible for the functioning of our Information and Documentation Center (IDC).

Certain goal of CA is to network and provide diverse support to other organizations with a similar mission.

### 2.2 *School of Political Studies*

CA believes that participation of citizens in political processes and debates about resolving of social challenges is one of the most important preconditions for harmonization of acting and public sector and political parties with the needs of citizens. This implies the support to informal and local initiatives of citizens, gathered for concrete social and economic problems and challenges, who often do not possess basic organizational resources or knowledge on legal rights and obligations.

CA perceives education of different social groups - including representatives of civil and business sector; strengthening of civil awareness and informing of citizens and provision of support to civic initiatives and organizations sharing the same values, as its primary goal. Aiming to network all CA activities, this program area shall provide strategic support to other activities, by collecting and analyzing necessary data, putting them in the context of the system problems, and formulating adequate solutions and better public advocating in cooperation with relevant partners.

In that manner, we shall contribute to the institutions to respond to citizens for its acting and achieved results, to be efficient and achieve results, to provide participation of various actors from the society, to work transparently, and communicate with citizens and react on new situations and changes in the society, to strive to consensus and to be fair, respecting the rule of law principles. In order to provide society like this, citizens should be encouraged to participate adequately in decision making processes and to represent the control mechanism for improvement of work of institutions.

Through this program area, School of Political Studies program will be implemented, which has already been positioned as the leading national program of the non-institutional education in human rights area and the area of reforms in the framework of the EU integrations. Politicians and public servants, journalists, representatives of NGOs and trade union leaders are the target group of the School. The School, at the same time, provides and encourages a dialogue of representatives of various social groups and institutions on important reform topics, and is the catalyzer of cooperation between them, and is also the platform for the promotion of key values and program goals of our organization.

### **2.3 Media Program**

Media Program has been developed on the grounds of the idea on creation of the strong network for cooperation and support to various critical opinions in Montenegro and the region. The program is grounded on three fundamental pillars: citizens and civil sector, media and public institutions/organizations. Such a comprehensive space provides significant impact on creation of public opinion and focus of public debates on society.

Basic values of the media program are: access, based on rights of all citizens, with the accent on responsibilities of the Government and public institutions, especially in relation to citizens and freedom of critical opinion and public expression of standpoints. The program includes projects and activities that are connected, contributing to successful implementation and sustainability.

The Media Program enters the second decade of its work with a new approach focused on supporting media legislation, functioning of media institutions and raising professional standards. The media program will emphasize the voice of underrepresented actors in the media community, publicly advocate the introduction of standards in this area and overcoming divisions within the media community, constantly emphasizing human rights aspects – starting from freedom of expression until the rights of marginalized groups.

The basic values of the media program are - approach based on the rights of citizens to objective information, information without political influence, the abolition of all monopolies and sustainability of the professional media community.

Through the analysis of conclusions of international institutions, we will come to the necessary activities that must be done in this period.

Convinced that all these goals should be adopted after the dialogue in the Parliament of Montenegro, we believe that this two-year period is crucial for the media in Montenegro, and thus the overall democratic development of society and integrative processes in Montenegro.

### 3. Organizational capacities of Civic Alliance

#### 3.1 *Organizational structure*

Management Board is the collective body composed of three members. The Board elects the president, program and administrative director. Each program has its coordinator, who has the assistance of program managers.

CA Council is external body that deals with the long-term development of organization; and Supervisory Board that monitors the work of CA and files the report to its founders about the use of finances of CA, with the proposals for adequate measures.

#### 3.2 *Present capacities*

Civic Alliance has 22 members. Out of this number, 14 persons are full time employees, eight persons are registered part-time on project activities, while three of them have supervisory role on voluntary basis

All taxes and fees are regularly paid for all employees in CA, in accordance with the law.

Web page on three languages offers the review of CA program activities, links with other organizations, insight into important national and international documents and at the same time contributes to improvement of visibility of work of CA and partners to wider public.

#### 3.3 **Values and principles of CA activities**

- Truth
- Justice
- Peace
- Tolerance
- Responsibility
- Equality
- Transparency
- Constant learning and cooperation

## 4. Environment

### 4.1 *Social and Economic Environment*

According to the census from 2003 and 2011, Montenegro had 620.145 i.e. 620.092 people. Hence, number of citizens stagnated and the age structure changed, directed towards further aging of the population. According to the census, 50.61% or 313,793 women and 49.39% or 306,236 men lived in Montenegro in 2011. Podgorica has the largest number of citizens – 185,937, which is 30% of Montenegrin population. After Podgorica, Nikšić and Bijelo Polje have the largest number of citizens. These three municipalities have 50% of overall population of Montenegro. Municipalities with the smallest population are Šavnik 2,070, Plužine 3,246 and Žabljak 3,569. Multiethnic composition of society is considered as one of the main values, although, at the same time, often causes divisions inside the country. Most of the population are Montenegrins (44.97%), Serbs (28.72%), Bosniaks (8.64%), Albanians (4.90%), Muslims (3.31%), Roma (1.01%) and Croats (0.97%). Most population are of Orthodox religion (72.07%) but there is significant percentage of representatives of Islam religion (15.97%), than Catholics (3.44%), and atheists (1.24%).

**The transition process** in Montenegro started in the previous century – in the early '90s, followed by war in the neighbor countries, hyperinflation, sanctions imposed by international community. These factors influenced on unfavorable interior political and economic environment, in a view of exile of political opponents, strengthening of cleric-chauvinistic tendencies, and the beginning of suspicious privatizations of social resources. However, in the second half of '90s, the public power shifted from the war policy, which opened the space for the number of social reforms during 2000s, although the consequences of that period represent nowadays the key obstacle for social changes, with denial of responsibility of public bodies for the number of war crimes and human rights violations.

Montenegro restored its independence in 2006. Period after regaining independence in economic view, was full of challenges for Montenegro. Strong economic growth from 2006-2008, followed the growth of foreign direct investments (averagely more than 20% of GNP) and the credit boom (annual growth rate more than 100%), World economic crisis hit Montenegro in 2009, and the contraction of the economic growth of -5,7% shook the ground of macroeconomic stability. At the same time, Montenegrin economic structure has undergone tremendous changes, with the abandonment of traditional manufacturing industries and an intensified focus on tourism and the construction sector. These changes, along with dubious privatizations of large and profitable system in the domain of telecommunications, banking and oil industry systems, and a huge increase of public sector employment, have exposed Montenegrin economy to external economic and political risks, which will further affect economic stratification and social instability, after 2008.

COVID-19 pandemic had devastating consequences for a country, where tourism generates a quarter of GDP, with growing numbers of citizens losing their jobs or significantly endangered livelihoods. In addition, worrying trends in the quality of public services and respect for human rights during the pandemic - the general political environment is taking on increasingly negative characteristics.

## **4.2 Present political situation**

Montenegro is the member of the United Nations, OSCE, Council of Europe, IMF and NATO. Montenegro has a status of the EU candidate country since December 2010, and has opened accession negotiations in June 2012. Euro-Atlantic integrations are the key priority of foreign policy of Montenegro with the focus on the rule of law, as the key condition for both processes. The key challenge Montenegro faces with are related to building of independent institutions.

Montenegro is in a complex environment that requires a lot of work and commitment to democratic processes of all decision makers and social sectors. The country also fulfills standards and criteria arising from the membership in the Council of Europe and the process of accession to the European Union, which represents specific challenge for the country that has not left from the transition phase yet, and which characterizes the lack of rules in a lot of areas. Widely adopted European standards and values have not contributed to establishing of internal confidence and the new system of values and development of political culture. Administrative capacities of institutions are recognized as the weak, especially in terms of harmonization of legislation and implementation of new legislative solutions in accordance with the EU standards. Also, public opinion researches indicate on evident lack of confidence in institutions and their efficiency. This is primarily related to judiciary, which is still often subjected to political impact. Corruption at all levels, lack of responsibility for corruptive activities and general acceptance of corruption and nepotism as the constituent part of functioning of the system – were identified as one of the key problems of Montenegro.

Democratic processes in Montenegro are in a negative trend. According to the Freedom House Report published in May 2020, Montenegro has lost the status of a democratic state it has held since 2003, and is placed in a group of transitional or "hybrid regimes". This highlights almost decade-long trend of declining ability of the state system to provide the rule of law through stable and independent institutions, full respect for human rights and overcoming sharp political divisions, which have shaken Montenegrin society since the great civil protests in 2011.

After elections in 2016, Montenegrin society entered a phase of radicalization of political divisions, which increasingly influenced the growth of hate speech, ethnic and religious distances, as well as the growing discrimination of marginalized groups. Lack of parliamentary dialogue was followed by increasingly unfavorable assessments of the efficiency of public and judicial system, corruption, and stronger civil protests. When the Law on Religious Communities was adopted in December 2019, which was strongly opposed by the largest religious community in Montenegro - the Metropolitanate of Montenegro and the Littoral, there was an eruption of political conflicts, which revived divisions from the referendum period, which led to the election campaign.

After the victory of the opposition in the elections, the process of establishing of the new Government started, and Montenegrin society began the processes of complex transition, formulation of new policies and priorities, and changes of numerous social and political paradigms that have become established over the past decades. All this contributed to creation of an environment where new people, who so far did not have much experience with the management of key state institutions - take on the key obligations and responsibilities arising from the European integration process. It also implies resolving all those accumulated problems that the previous government did not want or was not able to adequately deal with, from war crimes to judicial efficiency and independence.



## 5. Strategic goals

Strategic goals of CA 2021-2023, are divided in three operational parts that are suitable to our program areas – Human Rights and Justice, Media and School of Political Studies, with the fourth area that relies on organizational development and sustainability. This means that we will continue with the monitoring of work of public bodies in the following period, aiming to improve their efficiency and responsibility, to provide assistance to victims of human rights violations, and promote standards in this field, and at the same time strengthen cooperation with citizens, helping their local initiatives. We will also work with media in the field of stimulating the public dialogue on resolving the key social problems.

When it comes to basic methodology approach, CA implies the monitoring of work of institutions, documenting the failures and violations of human rights through comprehensive reports with recommendations, which will serve as the foundation of a dialogue with all social actors. At the same time, work with citizens, through joint initiatives and communication via social networks – shall represent the grounds of additional legitimacy of our people.

At the end, our organization will devote special attention to communication with citizens and creation of the long-term campaigns. In relation to this, we will strengthen our campaigns in the following period on social networks, using the digital services, bearing in mind that the average of Montenegrin citizens on social networks is significantly above the EU and the region average, and that social networks represent the source of information but also arena for public debates.

### 5.1 HUMAN RIGHTS AND JUSTICE

GOALS	METHODOLOGY
Increased level of punishments for perpetrators of human rights violations	Researching, documenting and publishing of cases of human rights, strategic court cases with the special emphasis on prevention of torture and discrimination
Better quality of respect of rights of marginalized groups	Provision of free legal aid to LGBT population, persons with disabilities, Roma and minority population, and migrants. Promotion of their rights and work on their full social integration
Improved efficiency, transparency and responsibility of state and judicial institutions obliged to protect human rights	Monitoring of law implementation regulating standards in the field of human rights, and work of state and judicial institutions, formulating of program reports with recommendations for amending of legislative framework and institutional practice. Public consultations and continuous dialogue with representatives of competent institutions. Public campaigns and promotion of recommendations and models for resolving of noticed problems. Monitoring of negotiations on EU membership in the domain of Chapters 23 and 24.

Improved level of information of public about the situation of human rights and work of competent institutions	Promotion of standards in human rights area, researching of public opinion, analysis and campaigns via social networks
Conditions set for defining the truth and facing the past in Montenegro, as one of the key preconditions for democratization of Montenegrin society.	Information and Documentation Center institutionally integrated with the Parliament of Montenegro. Initiated new procedures for definign of truth on war crimes andf facing the past, as the result of IDC work.

## 5.2 SCHOOL OF POLITICAL STUDIES PROGRAM

GOALS	METHODOLOGY
School of Political Studies participants actively direct the public dialogue on resolving the challenges arising from the EU integration process	Continuous trainings and seminars within SPS, with the participation of representatives of political parties, public sector, media and civil society, and international organizations. Tematic framework of the School corresponds with the priority and key reform issues withing the EU integration process.  SPS alumni Forum provides appropriate framework for joint initiatives of members.
Improved cooperation of SPS members with colleagues from the same regional schools	Strengthening of SPS regional network and cooperation with alumni in the South-East Europe through joint seminars and public meetings
Increased participation of citizens in decision making processes	Support to local initiatives in terms of legal advises, joint activities, promotion and logistics
Improved work and status of civil society	Monitoring of law implementation and strategic policies that condition the work of civil society, strengthening of coordination between NGOs, campaigns via social networks

## 5.3 MEDIA PROGRAM

GOALS	METHODOLOGY
Contribution to full implementation of reformed medial legislative framework	Monitoring of implementation of the set of media laws, which, besides the Law on Media, Public Service and Audio-Visual Media Services, include laws on free access to information and protection of personal data. Focus of monitoring will be directed towards the work of competent institutions and respect of human rights (primarily freedom of expression and rights of marginalized social groups).

	Monitoring of negotiations on EU membership in the domain of Chapter 10.
Improved legal and social and economic conditions of work of journalists	Cooperation with journalist associations, monitoring of work of the state and judicial institutions in cases of rights of journalists.
Montenegrin media continuously respect ethical principles and standards in the field of human rights in its reporting	Monitoring media in terms of respect of ethical standards and principles in the field of human rights. Trainings for journalists, consultations with editorial teams and self-regulatory mechanisms, promotion of standards, campaigns via social networks.
Achieved better impact on work of institutions dealing with the freedom of media and freedom of expression	Participation in work of institutions competent for implementation of media laws, and active cooperation with partners from the media and civil society. Support to development of legal documents and bylaws and their promotion.

#### 5.4 SUSTAINABILITY OF ORGANIZATION

GOALS	METHODOLOGY
Improved financial stability of organization.	<i>Fundraising strategy</i>
Improved professional capacities of CA staff	Continuous trainings and cooperation with the national and international experts through the present and new project initiatives.
Improved sustainability of organization	Improved cooperation with international organizations, and civil society partner organizations and media from the Balkan and the EU, aiming to strengthen program and partner framework for future development of organization
Improved visibility and the impact of organization	Recognizable work of CA improved thorough implementation of internal communication guidelines that imply: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strategic campaign planning via social networks and digital platforms;</li> <li>- Strengthening relations with online community and harmonization of the key program messages with media forms of digital environment;</li> <li>- Developemnt of internal promotion plan of the key organizational reports and</li> </ul>

documents, which will provide long-term effect on target groups and national public;

- Maintaining cooperation with the media and media digital platforms

## 6. Projection of the resources needed to achieve strategic goals

Predicted annual budget of Civic Alliance is 480 000 €.

Out of the overall annual budget, approximately 60% is foreseen for the program, while the remaining part is foreseen for administrative costs.