

### **First session of the Working Group “Environment” held in Belgrade 27<sup>th</sup> September 2013**

Session WG “ Environment” of the National convention about European Union was held in National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia on the topic “ (Im)possibility of participation of OCD in the process of negotiations of Republic of Serbia with European Union in the domain of environmental protection (negotiation of chapter 27) - importance of participation and impediments”.

About conditions and assumptions of participation of civil society organizations in the process of negotiations spoke: Miroslav Tadić, secretary of expert group for negotiation chapter 27, Ministry of Energy, Development and Environmental Protection, Jelena Krstić from The Office for Cooperation with Civil Society, Ljubinka Kaluđerović from the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities, Mirko Popović from Belgrade Open School and Zorica Isoski manager of Aurora Green d.o.o. Internal expert of the group is Dragoljub Todić, researcher at the Institute for international policy and economy, moderator of conference was Ivan Knežević, deputy Secretary General of the European Movement in Serbia.

At session were presented procedures within the process of negotiations and assignments which Serbia has to fulfil. Part of the activity refers to prearrangement of documents, and the second part on establishment and procedure and structure of working groups and methods of its functioning, emphasized Miroslav Tadic. Except that, Tadic presented project which Ministry implements with support of Swedish government with intention to give necessary help and support in whole negotiations process.

Internal expert of the working group, Dragoljub Todić in his presentation focused on, in his opinion, most important questions in negotiations regarding transparency of procedure and question of deadlines. According to Todic opinion, negotiations exclusively serve for establishment of obligations. However, transparency of procedure is inseparable from transitional deadlines because in that way implications of taken obligations are overviewed and implications of postponement of deadlines for regulations use, respectively assumption of obligations.

Civil society will be included in the process of negotiations, it is the question of modalities, and it is the opinion of Jelena Krstic from The Office for Cooperation with Civil Society. She reminded on the role of the Office that had previously activity of Office which through build-up of capacities establishment channels of communications between civil society and competent ministries encourage continuity of cooperation of civil and government sector.

About the topic of estimation of capacities of civil society but also local self-government and business community for participation in negotiation process, attitude of members of working groups and speakers is divided. A number of present participants think that is necessary to build-up capacities of all sectors, public also, so the process would result adequate and sustainable changes

within the system that is subject to harmonization with European standards and regulations. However, another part of present participants thinks that in civil sector there are no capacities and that it is necessary to be careful and think how should public be included in the process of negotiations.

Working group “Environment” retains its basic function- forum for public debate on the most important or often neglected reform issues on the road to EU, as well as mechanisms for defining recommendations and proposals from civil society and business decision makers. During the month of October the internal expert of the working group will finalize conclusions of the working group on the basis of which will be prepared recommendations for decision -making in the context of the participation of civil society in the negotiations on Chapter 27.

European Movement in Serbia, in cooperation with the Belgrade Open School, the Centre for Civil Society and PROTECTA and UNECOOP organization, and with support of the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Belgrade, carries out the project " I know how to act " (KnowHow2Act) in order to improve and increase the participation of civil society in decision-making in the field of environmental protection at the local level in the process of European integration. An important project is the organization of the meeting of the National Convention on EU - Working Group "Environment".