**Short report/note:** ***Public consultations within the Swiss-Croatian Cooperation Programme for the Support Measure for the “Civil Society and Transparency”***

Public consultations within the Swiss-Croatian Cooperation Programme for the Support Measure for the “Civil Society and Transparency” thematic area was held on June 16th, 2023, Hotel Dubrovnik, Zagreb. This public consultations where in hybrid format with total of 108 participants out of the total number of registered participants, 51.4% participants watched the event online, while 48.6% of participants were present in the hall.

In line with expectations, the largest number of interested participants came from civil society organizations (79.6%), followed by public institutions (primary schools, universities) with 15.7% and local (regional) self-government units with 5.6%.

The Head of Department for Strategic Planning, Programming and Informing Jelena Princivali, held a brief presentation while presenting the 4 components: Education for Sustainable Development, Strengthening volunteering, Micro projects and Service Learning programmes in the Community. MS Princivali asked participants about their opinions around 4 thematic areas and relevance of their focus. Public consultations participants mostly agreed with 4 components.

Participants where interested in time frame of announcement the calls, so Ms Jelena Princivali explained that every call from each of programme area will be launched on different date. So project proposal planning will be easier, there will be no overlap.

Next question was about Swiss Croatian partnerships between project applicant organisations public consultation participants request explanation are they recommended or mandatory? Jelena Princivali explained that partnerships are recommended encouraging the establishment of cooperation between the Switzerland and Croatia organizations.

Also, public consultations participants where interested in percentage of cofinancing obligatory for all project proposals and estimation number of planned projects for financing. Ms Princivali explained that beneficiares will be required to co-finance projects with the minimum share of 10% of the overall project value. That 10 percent of minimal CSO share in project financing can be requested form The Office which will co finance that amount up to 70 percent.

In addition there was question about estimated number of project proposals which will be financed, answer from Ms Princivali was that 10-15 projects are planned for financing in Strengthening volunteering component for example, but after budget clearing that number can be bigger.

The CSOs emphasized the need to take into account the school holidays and the difficulties that arise when looking for partners and entering into project partnerships with schools and universities during that period when announcing calls. There were also questions about the suitability for implementing project activities in schools because of annual schools working plan which are adopted until 7 October of current school year (according to Croatian law) by School Boards. Participants suggested that project calls announced during year (between 7th October of current year until 7Th October next year) should take care about that the activities planned to take place in the school do not have approval and can’t be planned in projects and latter implemented in Croatian schools, which were answered by the participants of the public consultation who are employed in schools. According to them, the approval of the activity can be requested afterwards from the School Board of the school where the project activities will be carried out.

**SHORTS**

* The participants mostly agreed that the thematic areas were well chosen
* Expected time frame of call announcements was explained to participants, each call on different date
* Swiss Croatian partnerships between applicant organisations are recommended but not mandatory
* Cofinancing-that beneficiares will be required to co-finance projects with the minimum share of 10% of the overall project value was explained to the participants
* That 10 percent of co-financing can be requested form The Office who will co finance that minimal CSO share in project financing up to 70 percent
* The school holidays had to be taken in account-difficulties during assembling project partnerships with schools and universities
* Implementing project activities in school outside school annual working plan-need for special procedure requesting approval from School Board of each school during project preparation