OPEN GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP

Second European Outreach and Support Meeting

Dubrovnik, 4-5 October 2012

The Open Government Partnership (OGP) is a multilateral initiative that aims to secure concrete commitments from governments to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption, and harness new technologies to strengthen governance. It aims at building more transparent, inclusive and participatory policy making processes, and contributes to strengthening the overall cooperation of citizens, civil society and governments in boosting economic and social growth.

The Government of Croatia hosted the Second Open Government Partnership European Outreach and Support Meeting in Dubrovnik, Croatia on 4 – 5 October, 2012.

As the stronger involvement of civil society in all OGP activities is one of the pre-requisites for successful implementation of national OGP action plans, the purpose of the Second European Outreach and Support Meeting was to provide space for discussion and exchange of experiences between civil society organizations and governments about the progress of implementation of the national OGP action plans and to share developments and best practices. The Meeting gathered 125 participants, coming from 37 countries.

First day of the Meeting, in the morning and early afternoon, provided participants with an opportunity to participate in two parallel sessions – one organized for the representatives of the governments and the other organized for CSO representatives. The government participants had the possibility to meet world's leading access to information specialists and explore ways of strengthening OGP Action Plans and their implementation in this segment, during the **OGP Networking Mechanism session on Access to Information,** while the CSO representatives self-organized sessions on topics of their interest, during the session called **Open Government Agora.**

In the afternoon, on the official opening session, participants were greeted by the Deputy Minister of Foreign and European Affairs, **Joško Klisović**; the Open Data and Transparency Advisor at the UK Government, **Charlotte Alldritt**; the Head of the Delegation of the EU to Croatia, **Paul Vandoren** and the Ambassador of the United Kingdom in Croatia, **David Arthur Slinn.**

First day of the meeting ended with plenary session during which participants shared experiences on the implementation of OGP Action Plans so far.

Second day of the meeting was organized in three main sessions, covering three OGP priority topics: **fiscal transparency, E-government and E-services, and access to information,** and was concluded with the closing session that provided opportunity for wrapping up key points from previous sessions and give some recommendations on how to provide support to efficient implementation of national action plans.

First day, Thursday October 4:

OGP Networking Mechanism session on Access to Information

The OGP Networking Mechanism organized a networking session to connect representatives from 16 governments in the region to nine experts on access to information registered with the Networking Mechanism. This was the first in a series of planned events in the Networking Mechanism's strategy to serve as an active matchmaking agent between governments and experts in order to facilitate action plan implementation.

Participating countries included Albania, Armenia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Israel, Moldova, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Serbia, Spain, Sweden, and the UK. Experts in attendance were **Toby Mendel** (Center for Law and Democracy), **Anne Thurston** (International Records Management Trust), **Rosemary Agnew** (Scottish Information Commissioner), **Helen Darbishire** (AccessInfo Europe), **Nikhil Dey** (MKSS, India), **Yuliya Tkachuk** (IREX Ukraine), **Gergana Jouleva** and **Alexander Kashumov** (Access to Information Programme Bulgaria), and **Paul Lenz** (MySociety).

During the session, a different engagement approach was tested to bring about fruitful conversations between government representatives and open government experts. The idea was to move beyond the panel discussion format and focus on facilitating individual outcomes-oriented conversations around key access to information themes, including legislative reform, proactive disclosure, enforcement and monitoring, records management, civil society engagement, ICTs, and government implementation. Conversations were held around the key access to information themes in 15-minute intervals to give an opportunity for all participants to interact.

Governments were asked to come prepared with specific questions on their access to information commitments in their national action plans. Correspondingly, experts were requested to familiarize themselves with country national action plans.

Following introductions, the session began with governments sharing challenges faced in implementing their access to information commitments, followed by experts responding with thoughts on addressing those challenges and prioritizing reforms. Those discussions served as a point of departure for individual conversations that followed between government representatives and experts.

Discussions covered the different aspects of access to information implementation issues. Participants had encouraging advice to share with the rest of the group as countries move forward with implementing their commitments. Following are a few highlights of conversations that took place:

- The challenges of the quality and usability of data were discussed across a number of countries. Specifically, the need was stressed to talk about the use of information based on a citizen-centric prioritization of information needs.

- Several countries discussed challenges of engagement related to strengthening the demand side of access to information, particularly in getting CSOs and technology groups to use the data and services made available by governments. It was stressed that governments need to

"make data relevant to the user", and some ways for governments to stimulate information use were highlighted, including reaching out to citizens offline and using low-tech platforms for information exchange.

- Managing government records through the National Archives was a common challenge in many countries, especially in the context of a growing and increasingly fragmented digital environment within which access to information requests occur.

- Netherlands and Finland commented on their experience of implementing open data projects with an enthusiasm unmet by civil society, prompting a government participant to question if open data is a 'solution without a problem.' Norway recognized the danger of backsliding due to a growing perception that "transparency has gone too far" at the expense of individual privacy.

- Armenia recognized low levels of participation, lack of resources, and a dearth of expertise as factors in delaying reforms.

- Spain and Albania were interested in drafting effective right to information laws and issues of implementation.

- The Scottish Information Commissioner Rosemary Agnew spoke about enforcement within the access to information context as the key to change. She encouraged governments to build enforcement processes from the beginning and to view enforcement as a trust-building mechanism by making citizens aware of their rights.

- Experts emphasized institutionalizing participation through various means, like public audits or e-petitions to strengthen access to information mechanisms' role in making government more open.

A major goal of the session was to create the space for engagement between governments and open government experts to allow conversations initiated at the session to develop into concrete country assistance efforts. A concrete request from Armenia for assistance with establishing a website to raise public awareness of its national action plan is an illustration of that principle sat work. The Networking Mechanism will continue following up with participants to monitor the outcome of conversations as well as generate case studies for peer learning.

Positive participant feedback and the willingness of governments to talk about issues and seek potential solutions for implementing OGP commitments confirmed the value of facilitated face-to-face exchanges, a priority for the Networking Mechanism.

There were also lessons learned that will be applied to future sessions. To ensure deeper discussions and encourage peer learning, participants suggested that conversations should be scheduled for intervals longer than 15 minutes and can be conducted in small groups to give governments the opportunity to learn from each other.

The energy and enthusiasm in the room was encouraging and clearly demonstrated the potential of the OGP as a convening platform to animate and accelerate open government reforms globally. Given the success of this event, the Networking Mechanism proposes that themed networking

sessions should be replicated across different regions based on a needs analysis of regional OGP action plans and priorities. This would allow governments to explore potential solutions as they pivot towards action plan implementation this year.

Open Government Agora

The Open Government Agora was created as a place for civil society organisations to self-organise sessions on topics and experiences they find interesting and important to discuss, with main goal was to exchange experiences and make plans for further individual and joint actions. Around 80 participants attended the two parts of Open Government Agora. The first part consisted of 4 plenary presentations, after which the second part brought discussions in 3 smaller teams. The group had an interesting mix of people from over 20 countries, and part of the participants was new to the concept of OGP.

Introducing the Croatian OGP experiences and promoting Global Movement for Budget Transparency, Accountability and Participation and Global Initiative for Fiscal Transparency (Katarina Ott, Institute of Public Finance, Zagreb, Croatia)

Aware that the Croatian fiscal transparency has been lagging behind best practices (e.g. poor results in International Budget Partnership's Open Budget Index as well as in domestic measurements of local budgets transparency), enthusiasts from public administration, academia and civil sector, from the very beginning, embraced the idea of Open Government Partnership and pushed for emphasizing fiscal transparency in Croatian OGP Action Plan. The Action Plan – made jointly by representatives of public administration, academia and civil sector in almost by the book procedures - reflects their views, and they can all be satisfied, but it ended up more modest than these enthusiasts hoped for. Besides, despite the OGP commitments, real dedication to transparency has still been rare within the overall administration (e.g. each session of Croatian Government still has a closed part). However, used to step by step approaches and gradual improvements and aware of constrains and challenges faced by the administration, even the timely and proper realization of all measures and actions from that relatively modest Action Plan will satisfy people engaged in monitoring the implementation of the Action Plan.

Information was given about the [Global Movement for Budget Transparency, Accountability and Participation](#) which brings together nearly 100 civil society groups from 56 countries and 12 international organizations to work at the local, national, and international level to promote government budgeting that is open and accountable to the public. Participants of the Agora were encouraged to consider joining the Global Movement as European CSOs are relatively underrepresented in that Movement in comparison to CSOs from other parts of the world. Similarly information was given about [Global Initiative for Fiscal Transparency](#) (GIFT), a multi-stakeholder action network working to advance and institutionalize global norms and significant, continuous improvements on fiscal transparency, participation, and accountability in countries around the world. Audience of the Agora was encouraged to visit GIFT's web site, promote it in their respective countries and activate themselves when the time comes.

Introducing the Ukraine success story and an analysis of regional plans and needs (Gabor Zimmerer and Oleksii Khmara, Transparency International - Ukraine)

Transparency International Ukraine has recently published its comparative research paper aiming to reveal how OGP participant countries understand the fight against corruption and citizen engagement, including some good examples of commitments drawn by participants in their action plans, along with TI Ukraine's recommendations regarding the elaboration and implementation of commitments. According to TI Ukraine's research, the level of understanding the importance of corruption and society engagement widely varies among the OGP participant countries. While, for instance the action plans drawn by Armenia, Macedonia or Estonia are fairly coherent and include the most essential aspects of fighting corruption, the majority of countries apparently disregarded one or another of the areas indispensable to eliminate the main factors that contribute to the abuse of political and economic power. This is even more concerning in the case of those countries, where the corruption perception level is rather high. In this regard, among the most omitted areas the fields of party financing, the judiciary, the private sector or the use of foreign financial aid can be mentioned. On the other hand the majority of countries recognized the importance of tackling corrupt practices in areas of public procurement and budgeting.

Concerning the issue of community engagement countries like Bulgaria, Montenegro, the Philippines or the United Kingdom could seemingly grasp the significance of engaging the different segments of civil society with the functions of public administration; in most cases participants did not formulate commitments in order to promote either citizen participation or operation of non-governmental organizations. Furthermore, in some cases, the governments did not feel the need to enhance the involvement of civil society both on the fields of decision-making and monitoring of state activities or simply failed to embrace the appropriate tools and methods to do so.

Therefore, Transparency International Ukraine believes, that OGP governments could achieve significant enhancements in strengthening good governance by examining peer countries solutions in the field of fighting corruption and enhancing collaboration between government and civil society. Moreover, after a thorough planning stage, governments should invest efforts to facilitate the process of realization of actions plans including laying down deadlines for the fulfilment of projects, defining which governmental agencies hold responsibility and accountability for the implementation of projects and ensuring adequate financial resources.

The overall study can be found here.

Defining Open Government Standards (Helen Darbishire, Access Info Europe)

Access Info Europe is leading a new campaign to create Open Government Standards and promote them around the world. The idea is to set standards on what open, transparent, accountable and participatory government really means.

Open Government is a hot topic right now, but what does it really mean in practice? What should governments be doing in the areas of Transparency, Participation and Accountability to qualify as "open governments"? What are the uses of new communications technologies which really advance openness as opposed to merely perpetuating existing bureaucratic practices in a digital

environment?

Over the next few months, the campaign aims to answer those questions, drawing together all the standards already developed by civil society into a coherent structure around the emerging concept of open government. The aim is to reach an agreement on the basic elements of what constitutes open government so that we can call on our governments to meet this standard. The Open Government Standards will be designed for all countries, with a particular relevance for members of the Open Government Partnership. It will also identify the actions that governments should take in order to make real progress in promoting the three core pillars of open government: Transparency, accountability, and participation.

Once developed, they can be used as indicators to measure the open government action plan of participating state in the OGP as well as other national and sub-national openness initiatives.

For more information visit the temporary web site.

Addressing the lack of commitments on Creating Safer Communities (Sandy Coliver, Open Society Justice Initiative, Tatyana Tolsteneva, Freedom of Information Foundation (Russia) and Ivanka Ivanova, Open Society Institute (Bulgaria))

This session gave an introduction of the importance of 'promoting safer communities' commitments that are up to know almost absent in national action plan. The presenters did so by sharing a range of examples.

 "Creating Safer Communities—measures that address public safety, the security sector, disaster and crisis response, and environmental threats" – is one of the five "grand challenges" governments that join the Open Government Partnership are invited to address.

Yet, although 57 countries are now OGP members and 47 have submitted action plans setting forth more than 700 concrete commitments, only four countries – Indonesia, Georgia, Spain and Montenegro – have made commitments to promote police transparency and accountability.

Therefore, brief descriptions were given of a few illustrative projects that promote transparency and accountability of the police / prosecution, from Bulgaria, Argentina and Gujarat (India). Also, examples of OGP commitments to promote safer communities were shared, from above mentioned four countries which included these in their action plans.

Discussing the finding of Transparency International led research that identifies key cross-cutting gaps in anti-corruption systems in 25 countries (Mariya Gorbonava, Transparency International)

The findings of *Money, Politics, Power: Corruption Risks in Europe*, a recent TI report summarizing the findings of 25 National Integrity Assessments across Europe were presented. The Integrity Assessment evaluates key 'pillars' in a country's governance system, both in terms of their internal corruption risks as well as their overall contribution to fighting corruption and promoting integrity in society at large. The results of the European 'integrity check' reveal significant weaknesses and

highlight that no country is fully immune to corruption risks including mature Western democracies. The key weaknesses of the system are spotted at the intersect of business and politics with lobbying regulations remaining veiled in secrecy and party financing continuing to pose a significant challenge despite a boom of regulation. Further issues discussed were the practical barriers seen across the EU in accessing information, lacking whistleblower protection mechanisms both in the public and the private sector and parliaments that are generally not living up to ethical standards.

Break out session A: What are the Technical Assistance needs of CSOs regarding Open Government Partnership? (Facilitated by Aida Bagić and Zorka Rašković TACSO)

The topic was introduced by TACSO (Technical assistance for civil society organisations) team with the purpose to assess possibilities of assisting CSOs regarding Open Government Partnership for the remaining duration of the TACSO project (until August 2013).

As Paul Maassen, the OGP Civil Society Coordinator, joined the group, participants used the opportunity to find out more about the Open Government Partnership initiative. He briefly described history of the OGP initiative launched under Obama's presidency with the purpose of facilitating networking among change agents working towards increased transparency and accountability of the governments.

It was found that in the course of its duration (since summer 2009) TACSO project already contributed to the eligibility criteria since the main project components include strengthening relationship between civil society and government and capacity building of CSOs in various fields, including increased citizens engagement.

The CSO representatives mentioned following areas where they would need additional technical assistance:

- facilitation of communication between government and civil society (especially in the field of access to information);
- monitoring law implementation
- advocacy for new laws
- fundraising
- advancing consultation processes

As only CSO representatives from two countries participated in the group, it was emphasized that the needs for TA regarding OGP may considerably differ from country to country.

Break out session B: How to improve e-public discussions? (Facilitated by Ivan Grujić)

This group had a lively discussion on the possibilities and problems on using online discussions. The main conclusions of the group are:

- E-Public discussions should not be the only way of involving stakeholders in the decision-making process. We should use other forms of public debates.

- Government should lead the process of e-Public discussions (when adopting decisions at the government level).
- The subject of the e-Public discussion: the draft laws, strategies, action plans, by-laws, decisions on loans, budgets, etc.
- Exceptions to the e-Public discussions should exist in the case of the adoption of international agreements.
- Ensure that the act cannot be adopted if it is not held on e-Public discussions.
- The whole process of e-Public discussions should be transparent, questions, comments and responses should be made public.
- We must work to strengthen the capacity of the public administration and the civil society to participate in the e-Public discussions.

Break out session C: Deepening discussion on minimal standards (Facilitated by Daniel Dietrich and Smári McCarthy)

The group discussed at length what minimum standards are needed for:

- Access to Information / Freedom of Information
- Open Budgeting & Spending Data
- Electoral & Campaign & Political Party Transparency
- Corporate Transparency
- Procurement
- Police and public security
- Public asset management transparency
- Whistleblower Protection
- Privacy
- Archives
- Open Data
- Media/public relations (including social media)
- Public and professional consultations
- Core Government Data Sets & Schemes
- Publicly funded science (and open access)
- Political appointment procedures
- Open Judiciaries
- Open Parliaments.

More details can be found here.

Official welcome and opening remarks

Joško Klisović welcomed the participants on behalf of the Croatian Government, thanking for the trust that was given to Croatia by selecting our country to be the host of the event. "Croatia will continue actively participating in the OGP", Klisović stated, emphasizing that the role of the government is to serve, and not to rule over people. Also he emphasized the importance of the international component of the conference as it gives participant a chance to exchange experiences and to learn from each other.

In his address, Head of the EU Delegation in Croatia **Paul Vandoren** said that transparency of state service is extremely important for society in whole, as it opens a world of possibilities, and at the end it encourages economy growth and creates positive business environment.

"Open government is an important instrument for development because transparency encourages prosperity", said Ambassador **David Arthur Slinn**, emphasizing that co-chairing of the OGP Initiative is an honour for the United Kingdom, but a responsibility as well. "Open Government Partnership is an idea that progresses", said Slinn.

Charlotte Alldritt from UK Government emphasized that OGP is a political initiative that in its one year of implementation has gathered big significance, meaning and respect.

Plenary session: OGP as a Joint Endeavour of citizens, civil society and governments – sharing experiences

Panelists: **Abhinav Bahl**, Director, Global Integrity, USA; **Katerina Hadzi-Miceva Evans**, Executive Director, European Center for Not-for-Profit Law, Hungary; **Nir Hirshman**, Adviser to the Minister responsible for Improvement of Government Services and Open Government, Israel, **Oleksii Khmara**, President, TORO Creative Union – Transparency International, Ukraine; **Igor Vidačak**, Director, Government Office for Cooperation with NGOs, Croatia. Moderated by **Paul Maassen,** OGP CSO Coordinator.

The session provided the opportunity for debating results of national action plans' assessment conducted by Global Integrity and Transparency International Ukraine, but also on sharing best practices and lessons learned during the first six months of national action plans implementation. The debate was particularly focused on models of cooperation between CSOs and governments in implementing action plans.

Director of Global Integrity, **Abhinav Bahl,** introduced key findings of recent assessment of national actions plans. By adapting the SMART framework for the purposes of the analysis, Global Integrity examined each individual country plan to get a better idea of where countries stand in terms of shaping their open government agendas, and therefore, evaluated whether a country's commitments are 1) Specific 2) Measurable 3) Actionable 4) Relevant and 5) Time-bound. The idea is

to use these insights to work with countries towards improving their Action Plans through greater specificity and ensuring their goals can be met in the short- and medium-term. The forthcoming OGP Independent Review Mechanism (IRM), which will be an independent body tracking the progress of each country's Action Plan, will be central to this process. Also, OGP Networking Mechanism suppliers should get the opportunity to work directly with OGP governments on strengthening and implementing their new Action Plans in the forthcoming period.

President of Transparency International, Ukraine, **Oleksii Khmara**, shared insights from recently published comparative research paper on how OGP participant countries understand the fight against corruption and citizen engagement. The research also includes examples of commitments drawn by participants in their action plans, but also TI Ukraine's recommendations regarding the elaboration and implementation of commitments. He pointed out the lack of clear commitments to promote either citizen participation or operation of non-governmental organizations in national action plans. Furthermore, he also shared experience of Ukraine civil society efforts to promote open government partnership commitments among Ukrainian government bodies.

Adviser to the Minister responsible for Improvement of Government Services and Open Government of Israel, **Nir Hirshman**, emphasized that most OGP commitments of Israeli Government were bottom-up driven. Due to continuous civil society pressure and advocacy, Israeli Government introduced more ambitious measures and activities in its national Action plan. Strengthening public participation in policy making processes is one of the key priorities of Israel OGP Action plan. The Government plans to develop a central technological infrastructure that allows public participation, to be available for use by Government offices. The infrastructure includes participatory platforms and tools that allow for display of discussion summaries and public opinion. The Government will strive to encourage use of these and other participatory tools by Government offices.

Director of the Government's Office for Cooperation with NGOs, **Igor Vidačak**, shared Croatian experience in exploring various models and mechanisms of involving civil society and interested public at all stages of development and implementation of Croatian OGP Action plan. Following the Code on practice of consultation adopted by Croatian government, four degrees of involvement of CSO in OGP could be traced: 1) simple provision of information (through public debates and various other events dedicated to Croatia's participation in OGP), 2) consultation (asking feedback on priorities in OGP national Action plan), 3) active participation (in drafting all parts of Action plan), and 4) partnership (working together at all stages of developing and monitoring the implementation of the Action plan). Putting in practice the principle of partnership with CSOs is sometimes demanding, especially in policy areas that require substantial reforms. In principle, the higher the desired level of involvement of civil society is, the more demanding it gets both for government (need for constant negotiations with various government departments on CSOs proposals) and for CSOs (need for often highly specialised type of expertise/knowledge, as well as effective membership mobilization and prompt response). Respecting the principle of partnership in implementing commitments in all OGP related policy areas requires personal change and radical transformation of the culture of work of civil servants at all levels of public administration.

Executive Director of European Center for Not-for-Profit Law, Hungary, **Katerina Hadzi-Miceva Evans**, stressed the importance of building capacities of both CSOs and governments for active cooperation and partnership in policy-making processes. ECNL has worked for a long time in the field

of strengthening of a supportive legal environment for civil society in Europe, by developing expertise and building capacity in legal issues affecting not-for-profit organisations and public participation. In addition to promoting innovative solutions and use of technology for implementing open government policy, there needs to be a clear commitment by all OGP participating countries concerning enabling legal and fiscal environment for work of civil society organizations. There cannot be real progress in open government policy without progress in creating enabling environment for civil society development.

Second Day, Friday October 5:

Session I: Fiscal Transparency

Panelists: **Knut Klepsvik**, OECD, Paris; **Ivana Jakir Bajo**, Ministry of Finance, Croatia; **Matej Kovačić**, Commission for the Prevention of Corruption, Republic of Slovenia; **Nurhan Yentürk**, Bilgy University, Turkey. Moderated by **Katarina Ott**, Institute of Public Finance, Croatia.

This distinguished and diverse group of panellists – through their experiences in international organizations, governments, academia and civil society - tried to contribute to a fuller understanding of how governments could better meet their fiscal transparency commitments, how civil society could better assist governments in meeting these commitments and contribute by monitoring and evaluating the delivery of governmental commitments.

The panellists and the audience discussed the Best Practices for Budget Transparency of the OECD; good cooperation of civil society and government in Croatia in devising and monitoring the OGP Action Plan; Supervisor, a fascinating online application that provides information on the business transactions of Slovenian direct and indirect budget users; and the experience of the Public Expenditures Monitoring Platform of Turkish rights-based NGOs that has been used to hold the government accountable and transparent.

Despite numerous valuable efforts in promoting fiscal transparency – e.g. Open Government Partnership; Global Initiative for Fiscal Transparency; Global Movement for Budget Transparency, Accountability and Participation - the current economic and fiscal crisis poses various additional challenges for fiscal transparency improvements. Because of the crisis governments have to concentrate on – in their view – more pressing issues than fiscal transparency, they have limited sources for employment in public administration and for funding the necessary IT improvements. In addition, the ability of those in charge of OGP action plans to achieve proper cooperation from other figures in the administration could well be frustrating.

And despite the slow, but evident and constant, improvements in fiscal transparency that expose the misdeeds of sometimes even the highest public officials and servants, in numerous countries courts are often too slow in processing the cases and electorates are too often too generous or maybe too apathetic, electing and re-electing the perpetrators.

To quote Warren Krafchik from the International Budget Partnership, Washington - "If we can make OGP work, its true legacy may be cultivating a new compact between citizens and their state" – the

discussion at the Fiscal Transparency Session best showed that both citizens and their states badly need that new compact.

Session II: E-government and E-services

Panelists: **Christian Rupp**, Federal Executive Secretary, E-Government, Austria; **Ratko Mutavdžić,** Microsoft, Croatia; **Daniel Dietrich**, Open Knowledge Foundation, Germany. Moderated by **Marko Rakar**, Windmill, Croatia.

During the debate, participants shared best practices and discussed key challenges in using information technology to increase transparency, and discussed how to facilitate public participation in decision making processes and improve the efficiency of public goods and services provision.

During the discussion, participants tried to make relationship between two terms which are usually considered to be the same or similar. It was showed that we might have same environment in which we witness widely different approach and level of development of eGovernment and eServices. Some countries, and Austria and Germany were pinpointed as examples have quite developed eGovernment services on all levels. On the other hand approach to open governance, data transparency and open data is different. Some countries are considered to be quite open and data is accessible (like United Kingdom), some countries are just starting with data publishing and open governance (like Austria), while some do not make any visible effort in that direction (again, like Germany).

Conclusion is that country can be at the same time open (open governance, data transparency) and lacking in eServices of all kinds or vice versa.

Also, it was pointed out, it is government's role and responsibility to create eGovernment services, but at the same time it should be given to CSOs and private sector to create applications or services based on the data owned by government. Public sector should provide data, while private (including CSO) should provide ideas. Typical example of databases owned by government (in broadest possible sense) are meteorological, geo-data or public transportation data sets or infrastructure data which can be reused and added value services can be created on top of that data layer – ranging from services like „fix my street" to the mobile apps dealing with public transportation schedules and routes.

It was stressed that also it should be borne in mind a question of responsibility: who is going to support community or private sector apps or services, who is responsible for data accuracy and that whatever service is promised is actually delivered.

Particular attention should be given to the „**off liners**"– citizens who because of their age, education, location or choice do not use internet. This people should not be forgotten and left on the other edge of **digital divide** and we should provide them with alternative means to access eServices. Sometimes this can be as simple as installing computer in public library or public office.

Session III: Access to Information

Panelists: **Helen Darbshire**, Vice-president, Access Info Europe, Spain; **Rosemary Agnew**, Scottish Information Commissioner, United Kingdom; **Tatyana Tolsteneva**, Development Manager, Freedom of Information Foundation, Russia; **Vuk Maraš**, Director of the Monitoring Programme, Organisation MANS, Montenegro. Moderated by: **Vanja Škorić,** Association GONG, Croatia.

Overall issue of this session was: how can governments build trust in citizens, so that they use their rights and are confident in them. However, the panellists discussed also a broad range of other specific questions.

First of all, it was discussed whether monitoring and enforcement of ATI should be independent of government. Participants agreed that only a strong, independent body can ensure effective oversight of the ATI. Positive example was presented by the Scottish Information Commissioner on how the institution can publically promote and elevate the ATI right. Special attention should be paid to the process of nomination of the Commissioner – public contest, parliamentary majority required, including public interviews with candidates and immediate release of information about the new Commissioner.

Another question that was discussed was how can we change the culture of top decision-makers so they are more open, and share information proactively. Examples given from Russia, Montenegro and Bulgaria presented different levels of pressure exerted by the civil society organizations towards the governments to open up more information. Specific method of "name and shame" top level politicians was discussed as being very effective in some cases.

Discussing whether access to information and open data are they the same and/ or do they achieve the same purpose, participants agreed we need minimum standards on which data sets actually contribute to transparency of the government (such as contracts registers, public procurement registers, public spending registers, commercial registers, etc.). The Government's should not create "shinny interfaces" but ensure the publication of quality data in easily searchable formats.

Another discussed question was how we can achieve a balance between access to information and protection of privacy. Many participants took floor on this issue as there are numerous examples of the balancing in everyday life. Some of the key challenges include: trying to get the acceptance of the "data owner" for release might lead to surprisingly positive results and build trust; does private become obsolete in the era of social networking; who oversees those who oversee and (mis)use the private data.

At the end, participants discussed should governments sign-up to a set of international standards on access to information. This question was only briefly touched upon. There is a set of standards including ATI in the document offered by the Transparency and Accountability Initiative: http://www.transparency-initiative.org/reports/opening-government

Closing session: The way forward in providing support to efficient implementation of national action plans

Panelists: **Joško Klisović**, Deputy Minister of Foreign and European Affairs /President of Croatian OGP Council; **Charlotte Alldritt**, Public policy and transparency specialist, UK Cabinet Office; **Nikhil Dey**, MKSS, India / OGP Steering Committee**; Paul Maassen, OGP CSO Coordinator; Abhinav Bahl,** Director, Global Integrity, USA. Moderated by **Igor Vidačak,** Director, Government Office for Cooperation with NGOs, Croatia.

The closing session provided the opportunity for wrapping up key points from previous sessions and announcing forthcoming activities. The results and lessons learned from OGP networking mechanism session on access to information for governments were presented by Abhinav Bahl, while key highlights from Open Government Agora sessions organized by CSOs were introduced by Paul Massen. In his final remarks, Joško Klisović, President of Croatian OGP Council, stressed the importance of continuing the practice of organizing similar regional events that enable the exchange of experience and mutual support in implementing OGP commitments. On behalf of UK Cabinet Office, Charlotte Alldritt presented key components of UK government vision as OGP co-chair and announced forthcoming OGP meetings in Rome and London. In his capacity of CSO member of OGP Steering Committee, Nikhil Day presented the purpose of recently established Independent Reporting Mechanism and stressed the importance of keeping OGP initiative open for inputs from CSOs and governments from all around the world. He reminded all participants that the essence of OGP is empowerment and engagement of citizens at grass-roots level.