



NEWSLETTER 2019



Center for Economic Analyses

Newsletter 2019



...We are making a difference!
January 2020

Dear reader,

The year 2019 was successful year for the Center for Economic Analyses, filled with challenges and efforts for the restoration of democratic standards and values in North Macedonia. Through its engagement, CEA increased awareness for the need of public participation, improved efficiency of the public sector, and contributed toward a more competent and credible civil society and more competitive business environment.

Through the research, monitoring and policy recommendations we provide, and in accordance with our mission, we commit to deliver timely, high-quality, and policy-relevant analyses that will be of social and economic benefit and will foster an environment that brings better governance, transparency and satisfactory rule of law.

In the coming 2020 CEA will continue to question government policies and inform debates through rigorous research and analysis on important developmental issues, with a strong emphasis on the socio-economic problems and more efficient and effective public finance. CEA continues to contribute to the North Macedonian EU integration processes.

CEA will continue to engage in capacity building efforts and advice to a substantively vibrant and informed discourse on good governance, as well as strive to upgrade its communications and dissemination efforts in order to reach a much wider audience.

Please look through the palette of our work in the past year on the following pages.

We would be pleased to provide further information to clarify or deepen the scope of our work at your convenience.

CEA Team

Achievements and challenges in 2019:

- ⇒ Initiating dialogue on key economic topics and policies;
- ⇒ Fighting against the lack of fiscal transparency on national and local level and actively participating in its improvement.
- ⇒ Advocating for social and labor market inclusion of different target groups ;
- ⇒ Strengthening the civil society and networking for greater civic causes;
- ⇒ Providing quality analyses and recommendations relevant for improved public policies;
- ⇒ Building capacities of different stakeholders and target groups.

Highlights from 2019:

- ⇒ Considering public policies, and the lack of responsibility of the institutions, emphasizing the need to restore and increase trust in key state institutions.
- ⇒ Need for greater public awareness the work of the State Audit office, and the responsibility of the institutions?
- ⇒ Need for open expert discussion on key economic topics, such as topics that CEA initiated: discussion on public debt sustainability in the country and further streamlining public spending.
- ⇒ Social inclusion and employment are facing a serious challenge with continuous high rates of long-term unemployed, youth unemployment, lack of properly designed social care and low PISA testing results .
- ⇒ Continuous need for increased budget and fiscal transparency, accountability and public participation.

⇒ *Good Governance and Rule of Law*

Regulatory Impact Assessment - In shadow

CEA in partnership with IDSCS continued implementing the project, supported by the EU, which aims to analyze how the process of RIA is being implemented while drafting the laws and what the possibility for civil society organizations to be engaged in creation of public policies in North Macedonia.

During 2019 we completed all planned activities, and worked toward advancement of good governance in North Macedonia through networking and capacity-building of civil society for monitoring and analysis of RIA implementation, through increasing the possibilities for active CSO involvement in the RIA process and public policy reforms through networking, inclusive consultations and capacity-building, and by bringing the implementation of RIA closer to the public, understood as specific public embodied by CSOs but also the wider public.

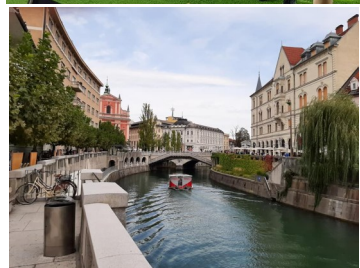
Several pieces of research and analyses were conducted during the previous year such as: [Survey of Citizens' Perceptions of the Regulatory Impact Assessment Process in 2018](#) ; [How the good laws are made.](#)

Study Visit for Regulatory Impact Assessment in Ljubljana, Slovenia

As a part of the project Regulatory Impact Assessment – RIA fostering effective partnership between the civil society and policy makers as a key constituency in RIA processes, based on mutual cooperation and knowledge sharing.

Representatives of the civil society and state institutions participated in the study visit to Ljubljana, Slovenia which is a country that has proven experience and knowledge in conducting an adequate RIA process. In addition to facilitating learning and experience and knowledge sharing during a visit to the Ministry of Public Administration of the Republic of Slovenia, this study visit will provide an additional link between CSO representatives and state institutions.

For more information about the project through the years, see [here](#).



⇒ Improving Civil Society

Why improved civil society?

One of the reasons why society is important is that it gives you a framework to work together. It provides you with a platform to take collective efforts towards improving social conditions. Most importantly, a society serves as a strong support system in life.

Increasing Employability and Improving the Economic Condition of Women in Society

CEA and the women's organization Vision from Kavadarci are implementing a project funded by the United Nations Development Program – UNDP. The project is under the Regional Program for Local Democracy in the Western Balkans (ReLOaD) currently being realized by the Municipality of Kavadarci.

The overall objective of the project is to contribute to the economic empowerment and improvement of the economic condition of unemployed women through the envisaged activities focusing on single mothers and women from rural areas in Kavadarci. The target group: of the project consists of unemployed women from Kavadarci municipality

For more information about the project through the years, see [here](#)



Strengthened Capacities of Local Grassroots Leaders for Rapid Tourism Development

In partnership with the Veles Biking – Veles organization, CEA implemented the project Strengthened Capacities of Local Grassroots Leaders for Rapid Tourism Development. The project was supported by the “Civil Society Resource Centre”, and implemented by the Macedonian Center for International Cooperation (MCIC), the Association for Democratic Initiatives (ADI) from Gostivar and Media Plus from Stip.

The project sought to strengthen the capacity of the local organization – Veles Biking for Sustainable Development through transferring knowledge and experience. The project activities implemented together with project partners, had a multiplier effect on the members of the association in terms of an increased capacity to implement and run large projects, financial management and for the first time to create a strategic document that will serve as a basis for the identified goals for centered improved athletic recreation, environmental protection and tourism development

The members of the Veles Biking Association – Veles were trained in administrative and financial management and project cycle management.

⇒ Improving Civil Society



Social Interaction and Economic Youth Empowerment

CEA in cooperation with the Prespa Local Action Group in Resen, implemented the project Social Interaction and Economic Youth Empowerment. The project was realized within the framework of the Regional Program for Local Democracy in the Western Balkans – ReLOaD funded by the European Union (EU) and implemented by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP).

The project has its goals to contribute to the social and economic empowerment of youth and encourage youth volunteering by opening up a Youth Club through the foreseen activities. Under the project, a Youth Club was opened, for the young people in the educational process from the municipality of Resen.

For more information about the project through the years, see [here](#).

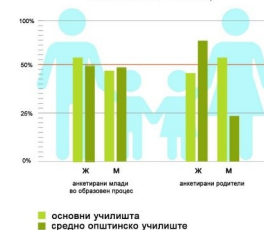


Проект: Општествена интеракција и економско заредување на младите во Општина Ресен

Генерални податоци за анкетираниот млади лица во образовен процес од Општина Ресен



Полова застапеност на испитаници



Rural Tourism – Opportunity for Sustainable Community Development

CEA in partnership with AO Blagoj A. Kotlarovski from Resen, implemented the project Rural Tourism – Opportunity for Sustainable Community Development, part of the framework of the Regional Program for Local Democracy in the Western Balkans- ReLOaD funded by the European Union (EU) and implemented by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP).

During the project a strategic document for rural tourism was developed and also, a bike trail was created in association with the Veles Biking organization.



⇒ *Initiating Dialogue - EU Integration and Networking*



Establishing Policy Bridges with EU-CEA (North Macedonia)

CEA continued implementing a project that aims to enable enhanced networking and collaboration between Macedonian think tank CEA and western European think tanks in the process of Europeanization of the sector and the overall country towards EU.

This project is timely both for North Macedonia as it now has a window for change as the government changed which government opened the deadlocked communications with the EU. The new government also created an opening for the CSO sector and thus, this OSIFE helped the CSO sector in Macedonia to connect better with EU based peers and provided synergy for opening the wider Macedonian society to the EU. Furthermore, it also allowed EU based CSOs to better understand the development in EU periphery.

Under the project, several advocacy and capacity building activities – bridging activities were conducted.



TG-Web – Second International Workshop

CEA organized and hosted the second annual workshop The TG-Web which is an informal network of Western Balkan enthusiasts and other country relevant experts who are concerned and have a clear vision and opinion on the necessary developments of the WB on their path towards the EU in terms of a territorial development approach. Western Balkan Network on Territorial Governance was established to serve as a platform aimed at bringing forward research on territorial governance in the Western Balkan countries and bringing together research and policy-influencing forces from the region.



Participated in the European Week of Cities and Regions,

which held in Brussels in October 2019, during a special session on territorial governance practices in the Western Balkans. CEA participated with a description and opinion on the regional disparities in North Macedonia and the ineffectiveness of different aspects of policies related to balanced regional development, local governance, fiscal decentralization, etc.

⇒ *Initiating Dialogue - EU Integration and Networking*

Territory, Politics, Governance in the Western Balkans Region

CEA participated in a special session at the RSA International Metropolises and Peripheries of CEE Countries: New Challenges for EU, National and Regional Policies, named SS1: Territory, Politics, Governance in the Western Balkans Region, at Lublin, Poland, where the TG-WeB session focused on the goal to generate knowledge on territorial development, governance and politics in the Western Balkans, and facilitate exchange among EU and Western Balkans researchers, in order to contribute to filling the gap of Western Balkans place-based evidence and perspectives in relation to a combined 'EU – Western Balkans' territorial development.

Scoping and Networking Activity in The Netherlands

CEA organized a scoping activity for establishing relations with think tanks from the Netherlands in the areas of relevance of the organization. During the visit we followed up on last year's activity when MMC consultants, updated and discussed the micro macro model for macro-economic implications of the policies.

Scoping and Networking Events in Brussels, Belgium,

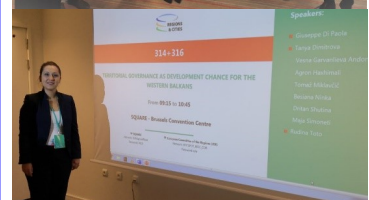
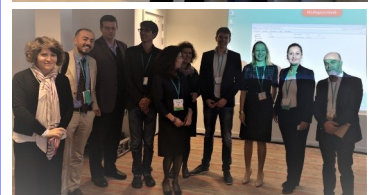
Considering the European way and the next process of IPA III, the EU is highly interested in future regional development policy reform. We had a meeting with DG regional policies for IPA countries representative who was interested in our area of work and regional policies. Information was exchanged, opposing views presented, and potential follow up visit in North Macedonia was scheduled. Furthermore we also conducted a meeting with the EU embassy of North Macedonia.

Attended the event in Brussels in the premises of the Open Society European Policy Institute

The topic of the event was: "Opening Accession Talks with Albania and North Macedonia: Lessons of the past". CEA's participation in the event was of crucial importance as it was expected that there would be a positive outcome for both North Macedonia and Albania concerning the start of the negotiations. However, the unfortunate outcome was that the decision was delayed and then a negative response came further down the road.

Attended the event in Dubrovnik organized by the IMF on the topic of Demographics, Jobs and Growth: Navigating the future in Central-Eastern and South Eastern Europe-CESEE. CEA's participation in the event was of significant importance maintaining past and future links between the IMF and CEA.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING signed between the Company for the Development and Management of the Property of University of Macedonia, Greece, Department of Economic and Social Sciences, and CEA.





⇒ Other CEA Activities



Fiscal Responsibility: Promoting Sustainability and Transparency of Public Debt

This project was implemented by the CEA and was financially supported by Analytica Gostivar as part of the project Civil Society Organizations as Equal Partners in Public Finance Monitoring, funded by the European Union. The project aimed to improve fiscal accountability by promoting and advocating for more sustainable and transparent public debt in North Macedonia. During the project, CEA collaborated with the following target group : Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Macedonia, Government of the Republic of North Macedonia, the Parliament of the Republic of North Macedonia, CSOs and citizens. For more information about the project see [here](#) .



Working Breakfast with Journalists on the Topic: Sustainability of the Public Debt of RSM

CEA organized an informal working breakfast with journalists and civil society representatives on the topic: Sustainability of the Public Debt of RSM.

CSOs emphasized the need for more dynamic policies to reduce public debt such as: the final adoption of the envisaged new law on budgets that would provide a more advanced framework for the public finance system and further streamline public spending, such as subsidies. On the other hand, the revenue side also needs to be more efficient in planning to reduce the primary deficit.



Needs Assessment–Confederation of Trade Unions in Macedonia

In order to improve the scope and quality of services provided by CTUM to its members, as well as greater visibility of the organization among the public, CEA in cooperation with CTUM and the International Labor Organization prepared a needs analysis of the Confederation of Trade Union Organizations of Macedonia, where presented the current situation of the Confederation, but also identified the needs of members, and opportunities for improvement, as well as provided recommendations on how the Confederation can strengthen and advance its position in society. The analysis is for internal use.



⇒ Other CEA Activities

A Vision for Territorial Development and Governance in the Western Balkans

The Western Balkan Network on Territorial Governance (TG-WeB), a group of civil society actors operating in the Western Balkan region supported by European partner organizations, shared “A Vision for Territorial Development and Governance in the Western Balkans”. This vision succeeds the position paper on the “Territorial Governance in the Western Balkans”, a macro-regional perspective in identifying and proposing a number of recommendations as to how territorial governance can play a role in the Western Balkans’ European Union integration process, by addressing development and governance challenges in the region.

See more about the initiative [here](#).



A VISION FOR TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT AND GOVERNANCE IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

Western Balkan Network on Territorial Governance | TG-WeB |



CEA Journal of Economics

The first CEA Journal was issued in 2006. Starting in 2012 CEA Journal of Economics become international journal, indexed in [EBSCO](#) and [EconLit](#) databases of journals. The journal creates a platform for economic forum where economists practice technical quantitative and qualitative analyses of economic problems and enrich the public debate on economic issues in Macedonia and the region. In 2015, CEA developed a new system for the journal. [Online CEA Journal](#). The last issue is from December 2019.

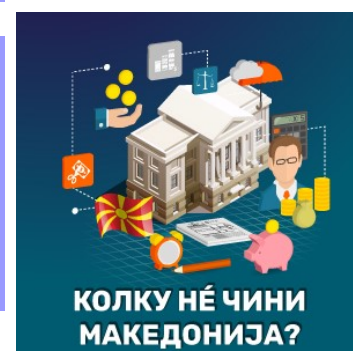
Open Budget Survey & Budget Tracker

CEA continues to partner with the world-renowned International Budget Partnership-IBP in the process of implementing the Open Budget Survey for Macedonia. Along those lines, CEA monitored government openness for the period 2015-2017.

The results from the last Open Budget Survey were presented on a national conference for Open Government Partnership in Skopje. [Link](#) of the last OBI Report for 2017 which was presented on January 30, 2018, and which was attended by the Ministry of Finance for the first time.

Web portal: www.mkbudget.org

CEA continuously and promptly updates the open budget platform since 2012. From 2012, CEA designed a platform where all budget information and data are available and open for further data processing.



⇒ *Capacity-Building Activities*

Conducted trainings in 2019:

CEA participated in various activities aimed at increasing capacities of different stakeholders. In 2018 CEA conducted trainings in:

⇒ Training for members of the Swaziland Parliament on Budget Literacy

The training was organized by the Financial Services Volunteer Corps (FSVC), February 2019.

Hands on training for the MPs of the Kingdom of Eswatini on the budget and budget principles, budget classifications and budget analysis roles and responsibilities of the public financial management act of Eswatini were presented and followed with a practical application. The volunteers attended the Parliament during the budget speech session for 2019 budget and met the clerks from the Parliament to further discuss the possibilities of budgeting the Parliament as a budget user, the role of the fiscal councils, the possibility of having a budget council within the Parliament, the oversight process and the Auditor general reporting and a proper Strategy for the Parliament.

⇒ Fiscal Decentralization Training for Local Government Finance Representatives of the Western Balkan, as part of World Bank's Austria-UPP project. CEA has been taking part of this project since 2011.

⇒ Project Cycle Management and Financial Management Training.

The members of the Veles Biking Association – Veles were trained in administrative and financial management and project cycle management.

⇒ Training under the project Social Interaction and Economic Youth Empowerment

Three training sessions were conducted for the youth: training for soft skills and skills for job seeking; small business development training and business plan development; training for digital marketing skills on social networks.



⇒ *CEAs work in numbers and photos*

- ✓ **6** Projects implemented in parallel
- ✓ **15** (and over) Analysis and studies conducted
- ✓ **5** Promotional fairs attended
- ✓ **10** (and over) Public presentations and events organized
- ✓ **10** (and over) Working groups attended
- ✓ **5** Training sessions organized and conducted
- ✓ **10** and over) International activities conducted
- ✓ **15** (and over) TV presentations
- ✓ **50** (and over) Presentations in media
- ✓ ... other



⇒ *Future activities*

In the forthcoming 2020 CEA will continue towards achieving of its goals for improving the environment and contributing to more efficient economic development in 2020. Following its mission, in the coming period CEA will:

- ⇒ Continue implementing the project Establishing Policy Bridges with EU-CEA (North Macedonia), and building international networks.
- ⇒ Continue with CEA's team capacity building through different activates and projects.
- ⇒ Continue implementing the Project Increasing Employability and Improving the Economic Condition of Women in Society.
- ⇒ Begin implementing the project "Competition and State Aid Policy Monitor: 8 Matters!" It will include activities for monitoring competition policy and state aid control.
- ⇒ Start implementing an EU project: "Tax responsibility Project – Towards civic responsibility and responsible tax".
- ⇒ Continue research and analyses on current economic topics.

CEA's Internship Program—a rewarding & valuable experience

Three dimensions available:

- ⇒ knowledge building,
- ⇒ policy research and writing and
- ⇒ communication and team work experience.

It offers an incredible amount of knowledge of economics, computer science, political science etc., but it also provides a significant amount of new skills and abilities.



CEA TEAM



If you share the same goals with CEA we invite you to be our partner in the coming period.

Center for Economic Analyses

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