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## **How to provide sustainable funding for civil society and community media: The case of Serbia and Western Balkan countries**

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This policy brief aims to recommend necessary regulatory and legal improvements to provide civil society media or community media in Serbia with more a friendly environment for their work. Taking into consideration the fact that public and commercial media are significantly influenced by political and economic interests, the civil society media model represents an alternative way to enable citizens' direct participation in information flow, content creation and provide them with an opportunity to be adequately informed.

The focus on Serbia, when it comes to analysis and recommendation, is justified by the dire political and economic situation of this country, enormous decrease of scores related to media freedoms, and feasibility to advocate changes and solutions of regulatory and legal framework, as well as in the domain of media practice.

In Serbia, there is a variety of citizen and civil society attempts to establish local media in order to provide reliable, trustworthy, timely and relevant information for their communities. Different funding options -- public funding, donations, advertising, sponsorships, and other options to create incomes for CSO media -- are discussed and elaborated. Taking into account contextual factors that may influence their implementation and current practices, this analysis presents their strengths and weaknesses.

It is indicated that for the sustainable operation of civil society media, neither of the aforesaid options can work by themselves. Instead, a combination of various income sources should be recognized and stimulated by regulatory and legal framework to create a funding model for CSO media to rely on. The recommendations for policy- and decision-makers fall into two main camps.

One that includes legal redefinition of civil society media and a second one which supports creation of enabling environment for their sustainable work. Special sections in the recommendations relate to project co-funding with suggestions on how to improve this mechanism that is essential for CSO media.

The final part includes recommendations for CSO media in order to build their internal capacities and become competitive in fundraising activities.

Further information and the full text article is available at the [Global Campus Open Knowledge Repository](#)

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