

The civil society in Montenegro is directly involved in the negotiations structure and all working groups since 2015.

Based on experiences to present, there are advantages and disadvantages, as well as key dilemmas and debates.

ADVANTAGES

Access to information

Involvement of civil society representatives in the working groups allows the public access to documents that are part of the negotiations process. If documents are public, civil society representatives can make them available to the public.

Increased transparency of the negotiations

In Montenegro, the civil society representatives managed to pressure the government into publishing important documents from the negotiations process, which increased the process's overall transparency.

A clear look from the inside of how negotiations are pursued and what are the main issues in communication among competent institutions and reporting

The Montenegrin experience shows there are various problems within the negotiations structure in respect to communication and coordination among the line ministries. The civil society representatives can develop models to address them.

Media and international stakeholders' interest in "look from the inside"

The media and international stakeholders are extremely interested in experiences, impressions and impartial evaluation by those inside the negotiations structure, and therefore civil society participation allows greater space for different stakeholders to advocate for change.

Better planning of advocacy activities

The best model for monitoring the negotiations process involves different channels for civil society's involvement in the decision-making process. Therefore, any additional source of information is good for better planning of activities and for quality input by all stakeholders.

DISADVANTAGES

Representatives from the institutions outnumber those from the civil society, which leaves space for CSO views and efforts to be outvoted.

Work of the working groups is often reduced to technical level, which prevents continuous and comprehensive involvement of the civil society.