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I. News

1. **The Council of Ministers will Open Part of its Debates to the Public**

The Council agreed at the end of 2005 that it will meet in public when deliberating on a co-decided legislative issue, as proposed in the constitutional treaty. This will increase EU public accountability and allow NGOs to identify positions taken by the various Member States on legislative discussions on development, which is a co-decided issue. However, the discussion in the Council is the last stage of the co-decision process and opening it to the public will not be a great opportunity to influence the process. This should normally start very soon but the practical arrangements are not clear yet. The Council announced that all the debates would be on the web from the summer of 2006. For more information see [here](#).

[from EU News January 2006]

2. **Financial Perspectives - the European Parliament Rejects the Council Agreement**

The Financial Perspectives, setting the budget of the EU for the coming 7 years (2007-2013) are part of an inter-institutional agreement between the Council and the Parliament and now that the Heads of States agreed on a deal at the December Summit, the Austrian presidency will have to negotiate with the European Parliament. The position of the Parliament was clearly expressed on Wednesday 18 January with the formal rejection of the Council proposal. According to MEPs, the agreement fails to fulfil commitments made towards the new Member States and does not provide for a sufficient and detailed flexibility mechanism, a firm commitment to undertake the review with a clear role for the European Parliament or sufficient accompanying measures for example to ensure better implementation and control of expenditure of funds in Member States. The Parliament had previously asked for €975 billion while the Member States agreed on €862 billion. The divergence of views is big but the margin of manoeuvre of the Parliament is limited. The Parliament expects to get 3 to 4 billion extra as it succeeded to achieve in the previous FP deal (2000-2006) but the Austrian Chancellor Schussel already warned them that it would be really difficult to get more than 1 billion. The Commission is expected to hand in its draft inter-institutional agreement on the financial perspective in early February upon which parties will then negotiate. The president of the Commission said to the EP that the draft agreement will cover 3 main areas: greater budget flexibility and resource reactivity, creating a Global Adjustment Fund and a revision clause. While there is no deadline as such for the completion of the negotiations, there is a shared willingness to wrap it up by this spring. More information on [Council agreement](#) and [Parliament resolution](#).

[from EU News January 2006]

II. Funding

3. **CfP: EU Strengthening Capacity and Partnership-Building to Improve Roma Condition and Perception in Romania (deadline: 17.02.2006)**

The EU is seeking proposals for projects that will support the consolidation of the institutional framework for the implementation of the National Strategy for Improving Roma Condition at all levels. In this respect, the structures and the mechanisms for the implementing and monitoring the National Strategy for Improving Roma Condition will be strengthened. A specific component of this project is focused on awareness and information programmes targeting the Roma population, non-Roma population as well as the entire Romanian society. The contract will have 3 main components: institutional and capacity building in public sector and in Roma communities; assessment of the needs and development of methodology to solve the problems regarding the lack of identity and/or civil status papers; design and implementation of a public awareness and information campaign. Participation is open on equal terms to all natural and legal persons of the EU Member States, Phare countries

Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey, and the SAP countries (Albania, BiH, Croatia, Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro. Maximum budget for the project is 4.500.000 Euro. Applications should be sent to :Andrei Cotutiu, Project Manager, Ministry of Public Finance, Central Finance and Contracts Unit, 44 Mircea Vodă Avenue, 5th floor, 3 district, Bucharest, Romania, tel.: (40-21) 326 55 55, fax (40-21) 326 87 30 by 17 February 2006. Standard application form and other information are available from [Europeaid](#)

[from ECAS]

4. CfP: European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights Campaign 2 & 4 (deadline: 02.03.2006)

European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) is a European Union programme aimed at NGOs and other CSOs for their activities promoting and defending human rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy, preventing conflicts and dealing with their consequences. The programme is built upon four thematic campaigns, each of them comprising of well-defined thematic objectives. The programme is directed at selected regions and countries, each country targeted by two of the four thematic campaigns. Western Balkan and Candidate countries are targeted with Campaign 2: fostering a culture of human rights. The campaign gives support to CSOs advocating the rights of vulnerable groups; fights torture; and supports education, monitoring and awareness-raising on human rights and democratization issues and campaign 4: advancing equality, tolerance and peace. Under this campaign, support can be given to activities aiming to secure equal rights and treatment of minorities as well as indigenous peoples; activities that promote intercultural and interethnic understanding; and activities reinforcing the engagement of civil society in conflict prevention and resolution. Children's rights and gender equality are an important focus of the programme. Therefore, all project proposals should take these into account and demonstrate how the rights of children and women are realized in the project framework. Where relevant, the same concerns the rights of indigenous people. For more details on which Campaigns apply where, see the [EIDHR Programming Document](#). Projects can be supported on three levels: global, regional and country level. Further, depending on their size, projects are categorized as micro or macro projects. For each campaign, a single call for proposals will be launched for the whole period of 2005 and 2006. Proposals can be submitted by organizations from the eligible region as well as by EU-based NGOs in cooperation with organizations from the eligible region. Calls for proposals are published on the [EIDHR Programme website](#). Deadline for application is 2 March, 2006. For more information contact: EuropeAid Unit F3, European Commission, Office J-54 07/20, B-1049 Brussels, e-mail: EuropeAid-HumanRights@cec.eu.int.

[from EuropeAid]

5. CfP: U.S. Embassy in Romania Democracy Commission Small Grants Program

The purpose of the program is to assist Romanian CSOs in their efforts to promote democracy through: human rights activities, media development, civic education, legal system reform, market reforms, the development of democratic institutions, equal chances, anti-trafficking in persons, and anticorruption. American organizations/individuals and American/Romanian joint ventures are not eligible for grants. Also non-eligible are projects relating to partisan political activity, charitable activity and humanitarian aid, fund-raising campaigns, commercial projects. The maximum amount per grant is \$24,000. However, most grants will be for smaller amounts. Budgets should be submitted in U.S. dollars. All budget items included should be related to project activities. Democracy Commission funds may not be used for international travel, direct social services, office rent, utilities and furniture, food expenses, alcohol and entertainment. Salaries and honoraria should be in accordance to rate of pay and percentage of time spent on project-related activities. These are one-time grants. The applicant should indicate how the organization will be sustained after the grant is finished. Project proposals must be in English. More information can be found [here](#) or contact: ParaschivescuM@state.gov.

[from IMPACT no. 43]

6. CfP: World Bank Small Grants Program in Albania, Croatia and Romania (deadline: various)

The World Bank (WB) offices in Albania, Croatia and Romania announced the launch of the 2006 edition of the Small Grants Program (SGP). All three offices encourage local CSOs to participate. The WB SGP supports activities by local CSOs whose primary objective is civic engagement; these activities may include workshops, seminars, appropriate communication campaigns and networking efforts for capacity building. Grants range from 3000-5000 dollars and activities should be completed within one year of the date the grant is awarded. The deadlines for accepting applications vary in each of the countries. Please visit the following websites for more information: www.worldbank.org.al, www.worldbank.org.hr, www.worldbank.org.ro. [from WB Civil Society Engagement Newsletter Jan 2006]

III. Training and education

7. CfA: Bled Forum on Europe-Foresight Conference on Global, European and Regional Governance, Slovenia, 3-4 March, 2006 (deadline: 06.02.2006)

Bled Forum on Europe, Slovenian Research Agency, Austrian Science and Research Liaison Office Ljubljana are organizing the Forum on Europe-Foresight Conference on Global, European and Regional Governance in Bled, Slovenia. The goals of the conference are to contribute to the further advancement of foresight research in Europe and especially also to the development of scientific capacities for foresight research (technological and socioeconomic foresight) in so called Western Balkan countries (Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro, Macedonia, and Albania). Main topics of the conference are: Global challenges (AC UNU Millennium Project) and the role of Foresight for global governance, European challenges (Lisbon process and beyond) and the role of Foresight for European policy making, Governance challenges

for Southeast European or Western Balkan countries and the role of Foresight for policy making in and towards this region. The organizers of the Forum are seeking interested applicants for the training seminar 'Introduction to Foresight Research' for researchers from SEE Countries (Albania, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro including Kosovo, FYR of Macedonia) and for the participation at the conference itself. While the conference will take place between 3-4 March, 2006, the training seminar will be held on 3 March, 2006 (morning session). For more information on how to participate visit [organizers' website](#) or contact: asolj-events@zsi.at.

[from Balkans list]

8.CfA: Invitation for Civil Society Nominations to attend UNGASS Review, New York, USA, 31 May-2 June, 2006 (deadline: 03.02.2006)

UNAIDS is inviting nominations for civil society organizations wishing to take part in a formal review of progress towards targets agreed by United Nations member states five years ago to tackle HIV and AIDS. The meeting will undertake a Comprehensive Review of the progress achieved in realizing the targets set out in the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS. The Review will take place at the United Nations headquarters in New York from 31 May - 02 June, 2006. Informal interactive civil society hearings will be held on the morning of 31 May. It is anticipated that more than 1,000 civil society organizations will take part in the Review. Organizations with a proven record of making a difference in the AIDS response are encouraged to indicate their interest in participating in the meeting through the completion and submission of an application form attached to this communication or available from the [UNAIDS website](#) by 3 February 2006. People living with HIV are especially encouraged to apply. Applications should be sent by 3 February, to csp@unaids.org or: 'UNGASS Nomination'; Civil Society Partnerships Unit; UNAIDS; 20 avenue Appia; 1211 Geneva 27, Switzerland; Fax: +41 22 791 4149; Tel: +41 22 791 4448; csp@unaids.org. For further information: www.unaids.org or by email to csp@unaids.org.

[from GPM]

9.CfA: RIVER SEE-Regional Integration through Volunteer Exchanges for Reconciliation of SEE Programme

The [UNV/UNDP RIVER SEE Programme](#) seeks to develop regional confidence and facilitate valuable linkages between the populations and governments in the Balkan region. Its overall objective is to contribute to regional integration, social cohesion and poverty reduction in the Balkans by strengthening networks through East-to-East volunteer exchanges, promoting volunteerism and proactive citizenship, building the capacity of civil society to deal with local development and governance processes, and establishing regional cooperation between civil initiatives. Legislative frameworks on volunteerism in the region will be promoted in order to secure a supportive environment and thereby engage local, regional, and national governments/institutions towards a vibrant volunteer sector. The Programme represents a unique UNV/UNDP regional collaboration that will be co-implemented with partners such as EU/EVS, VSO UK, SEEYN, OneWorld SEE; who will provide leadership, technical and financial support, and 14 Implementing Partners Organizations (IPOs) from seven countries/areas in the Balkans who will be responsible for the implementation of voluntary management activities at the country/area level and for relations with volunteers and Civil Society and Volunteer Involving Organizations (CS/VIOs). For application form and more information visit [RIVER SEE](#). To be able to apply you will have to register as volunteer or organization at [RIVER SEE](#).

[from Balkans list]

IV. Publications

10. New UN Report: The World's Women 2005: Progress In Statistics

Although the UN has collected data on gender inequality for more than 50 years, its new report on World's Women 2005: Progress in Statistics reveals an enormous lack of sophisticated statistical systems within many countries, above all in poor countries. To read the full report see [here](#).

[from GPF]

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