



# SÜDOSTEUROPA- GESELLSCHAFT

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## International Workshop

### Shaping the Future in Macedonia: Civil Society's Questions and Answers to Current Issues

**Berlin / Germany, 19 - 20 October, 2009**

#### Background

Civil-society organisations in the widest sense have a crucial role to play in refocusing political attention on urgent and tangible reform issues and societal needs. Indeed, much depends on a limited number of small organisations and determined individuals. More often than not the formal framework and practical conditions for civil-society activities and the transfer for civil-society initiatives into politics are suboptimal.

The purpose of this (series of) workshop(s) is to contribute to communicating civil-society issues and concerns into the political realm. To this end, the workshops bring together civil-society representatives to discuss priority issues on the agenda and ways to redirect political attention. Our target group primarily consists of younger decision makers who are likely to have an open mind for civil-society concerns and alternative agendas for the future of their country. Apart from civil-society activists, think-tank analysts, NGO representatives and journalists, the workshops also encompass younger politicians and international experts. The ultimate objective of the workshops is to make a modest contribution to the medium-term redefinition of politics and the political agenda in the region of Southeastern Europe.

The workshops take place under **Chatham House Rules** in order to facilitate an unhampered exchange of views and ideas.

#### Issues for Macedonia

Preliminary list of issues:

1. **Conflicts past and present** (lack of real ethnic integration / ongoing ethnic separation of society, implementation of Ohrid Framework Agreement, representation of ethnicities, non-discrimination regulatories, educational system)
2. **State and society** (politicisation of public services / administration, transparency and accountability of police and judiciary, fight against corruption, role of political parties)
3. **Civil society independence** (societal cohesion, educational work and institutions, freedom of media and association, NGO work, universities and political education, youth work and projects for disadvantaged groups in society)

The final list of relevant issues for the workshop depends on the participants and reflects the current preferences and priorities in the activities of their organisations.

A “future panel” concludes the workshop and addresses the nexus between the issues discussed and the ongoing debate on statehood arrangements.