

THIRD PARTY PROJECT OVERVIEW – IMPACT4VALUES

CALL 1 – SMALL AND MEDIUM PROJECTS

SMALL PROJECTS

4. CENTRE FOR DEMOCRACY AND LAW MIKO TRIPALO: I4V – STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITY OF CIVIL SOCIETY TO PROTECT AND IMPROVE THE RULE OF LAW IN CROATIA

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| Contact | centar@tripalo.hr |
| Partners | Human Rights House Zagreb |
| Funding awarded | 29.996,08 EUR |
| Project duration | 18 months (01.09.2023-28.02.2025) |

This project will strengthen the advocacy/watchdog role of civil society organizations in the Republic of Croatia for the improvement and promotion of the rule of law as one of the fundamental values of the EU. This objective will be achieved through the following activities: formation of informal coordination of CSOs for the rule of law and participation in the preparation of the EC Report on the rule of law for 2024, strengthening the capacity of CSOs for watchdog and advocacy work on the rule of law, dissemination of the Report on the rule of law rights and advocacy for the implementation of recommendations, monitoring the implementation of recommendations from the EC Rule of Law Report and participation in the preparation of the EC Rule of Law Report for 2025. In this way, the project will influence national policies that thematically cover challenges related to the rule of law in the context of human rights and the functioning of the democratic system as three inseparable pillars on which modern European democratic society rests. This would significantly contribute to the protection and respect of fundamental European values in Croatia.

Expected project results:

- **Strengthened advocacy capacities of CSOs in the area of the rule of law** through the participation of at least 10 civil society organizations (CSOs) in the work of informal coordination of CSOs for the rule of law during the project, at least 30 representatives of CSOs participated in exchanges of experiences with related CSOs from other EU member states, at least 5 CSOs actively participate in the advocacy process. In addition, a publicly published shorter policy document or written contribution on good European practices of advocating the rule of law based on held exchanges of experiences with CSOs from of other EU countries and the experiences of the advocacy coalition which was disseminated to at least 200 email addresses of relevant CSOs throughout the Republic of Croatia (100) and the EU (100), permanent peer cooperation with at least 3 CSOs from other EU countries was achieved during the duration of the project.
- **Increased scope of public debate and dialogue with government institutions related to the issue of the rule of law in the Republic of Croatia as a fundamental European value and the backbone of public policies** through two prepared and publicly published analyses (in Croatian and in English) on the implementation of the recommendations of the EC at the level

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of the Republic of Croatia in the area of the rule of law based on the conducted monitoring, 4 thematic public discussions on the rule of law were conducted, which resulted in 4 written reviews of each of the four pillars of the report on the rule of law, analyses on the implementation of recommendations disseminated to the official addresses of at least 20 relevant institutions in the Republic of Croatia and the EU, reports on the rule of law and monitoring of recommendations, as well as reviews of the conducted public debates were disseminated to the official addresses of at least 20 relevant institutions in the Republic of Croatia and the EU, a minimum of 40 representatives of CSOs and institutions responded and participated in public debates in organization of the advocacy coalition for the rule of law, discussions on the report on the rule of law proposed as agenda items at least 3 sessions of relevant public bodies, dialogue with government institutions regarding 5 national policies and proposals for advocacy measures coalition, at least 15 media publications that refer to the findings and recommendations of published reports, and reviews, public debates and other advocacy activities during the project.

Achieved results:

The Miko Tripalo Center for Democracy and Law, in partnership with the Human Rights House, implemented the project "Strengthening the Capacity of Civil Society for the Protection and Promotion of the Rule of Law in Croatia" in the period from 1.9.2023.-28.02.2025. and achieved result 1 - **Strengthened advocacy capacities of CSOs in the area of the rule of law**. As part of it, an informal coordination of CSOs for the rule of law was formed, consisting of 13 civil society organizations. Each of these organizations participated in the preparation of contributions for the needs of the Rule of Law Report for 2024. [The joint contribution](#) along with the document containing [recommendations](#) based on CSOs' inputs and the discussion with the EC was sent to the European Commission, and the Commission's feedback on the joint contribution sent was very positive, and it was assessed that the document contains extremely valuable analyses and inputs that will be useful to the Commission in the preparation of the Report. In addition, [a joint contribution regarding the Rule of Law Report 2025](#) was made, along with the associated [recommendations](#) and 18 organization took part in its creation. As part of the online panel, an exchange of experiences was also held with 33 similar CSOs from EU countries that are included in the European Rule of Law Mechanism, with the aim of exchanging good practices and strengthening capacities. Concrete thoughts, proposals and recommendations are summarized in a [policy document on good European practices for advocating the rule of law](#), disseminated to the addresses of over 200 civil society organizations in the Republic of Croatia and the EU. Five civil society organizations, Gong, CMS, House of Human Rights and The Miko Tripalo Center for Democracy and Law participated in advocacy with representatives of the European Commission for the Report for 2024 and for 2025, and it is expected that this process will continue with the further organization of thematic discussions and in the process of providing contributions for the next Report. Lastly, the user achieved permanent peer cooperation with 3 European organisations (Stefan Batory Foundation, Netherlands Helsinki Committee and European Civic Forum), which, among other things, resulted in a policy document sent to the new European Commission, [the](#)

[Rule of Law Report. A Notable Tool That Needs Fine-Tuning for Better Impact on Rule of Law in Europe Recommendations from Civil Society Organizations.](#)

Result 2 was also achieved - **Increased scope of public debate and dialogue with government institutions regarding the issue of the rule of law in the Republic of Croatia as a fundamental European value and the backbone of public policies.** As part of it, 4 thematic public debates were conducted on chapters from the Report: 1. [The situation in the Croatian judiciary: The Rule of Law Report - what next?](#), 2. [SLAPP and media freedoms: The Rule of Law Report](#), 3. [The future of the fight against corruption in the Republic of Croatia: The Rule of Law Report?](#) and 4. [The Rule of Law Report: Civil society and participation in decision-making processes](#). Each of the discussions conducted resulted in a written review: 1. [“The State of the Croatian Judiciary: The Rule of Law Report – What Next?”](#), 2. [“Comparison and Brief Review of the Chapter on Media in the Joint Submission of Civil Society Organizations and the Rule of Law Report of the European Commission”](#), 3. [“Review of the Joint Submission of Civil Society Organizations and the Rule of Law Report of the European Commission in the Fight against Corruption in Croatia”](#) and 4. [“Review of the Rule of Law Report Conference: Civil Society and Participation in Decision-Making Processes and the Fourth Chapter of the Rule of Law Report”](#). The reviews were disseminated to more than 100 addresses of relevant institutions in the Republic of Croatia and the EU, and 228 representatives of CSOs and institutions participated in the discussions themselves.

Also, 2 analytical reports on the rule of law, monitoring of recommendations and implementation of recommendations were written (in [Croatian](#) and [English](#)) and sent to 23 addresses of relevant institutions. The grantee proposed a discussion on the Rule of Law Report 2024 as an agenda item to three relevant public bodies: the Human Rights Council, the Parliamentary Committee for European Affairs, and the Council for the Development of Civil Society. The parliamentary committee confirmed that the Rule of Law Report would certainly be considered by the Committee in some form, and it was announced that the Miko Tripalo Center and the House of Human Rights would be invited to participate in the discussion. At its session in March 2025, the Council for the Development of Civil Society announced the inclusion of an item on the Rule of Law Report at the next session of the Council.

A dialogue was also established with government institutions regarding 5 national policies and proposed measures by the advocacy coalition, building on the EC recommendations from the Rule of Law Report 2024 and the recommendations of CSOs contained in their contribution. In cooperation with the Supreme Court, greater transparency of the judiciary was advocated for through the publication and dialogue on the Recommendations for Increasing Transparency and Accountability of the Croatian Judiciary. The Supreme Court abolished the anonymization of court judgments at the Commercial Court, which represents a significant step forward in strengthening transparency and the rule of law. A dialogue was also established with the Council for the Development of Civil Society, which responded to the CSO letter and organized a session at which one of the points addressed the role and effectiveness of the Council for the Development of Civil Society.

In cooperation with the Croatian Journalists' Association, the project partners also established a dialogue with the Agency for Electronic Media (Ministry of Culture) and the Ministry of Justice on the topic of combating SLAPP. The Human Rights House participated in the e-Consultation on the

draft Action Plan for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights for 2024 and 2025. At the invitation of the Ministry of Justice, Administration and Digital Transformation, Sector for the Prevention of Corruption, the representative of the Center Miko Tripalo participated in a meeting with the OECD as part of the 2nd phase of the evaluation of the compliance of the Croatian framework with the OECD Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions. Representatives of the Center Miko Tripalo and the Human Rights House are in dialogue with the Parliamentary Committee for European Affairs on the possibility of organizing a thematic session of the Committee on the Rule of Law Report. Finally, the project received excellent media coverage, with 37 media releases about project activities.