



# socialplatform

**Annual Conference 2008**

**Report for Workshop 2:**

*Funding for public concerns: where should  
the money come from?*





## Objectives of the workshop

- To provide space for critical reflection on the strengths and weaknesses of the systems used to fund NGOS working in the public interest
- To establish concrete conclusions and recommendations on the future funding of NGOs
- To do so drawing on national and European experiences (Finnish Slot Machine Association, Romanian Federation of youth Foundations, European Public Health Alliance)



## Challenges

- To raise sustainable funds in order to cover operating costs
- To ensure transparency in the allocation of funds (clientelism)
- To influence the financial regulations that govern NGO funding (auditors don't know the realities of civil society organizations)
- To remain independent from influence by funders



## What works well

- Possibility to get funding for advocacy work at EU level (not the case in many members states)
- Some unconventional approaches to NGO funding building on national specificities:
  - > Romanian County Youth Foundations
  - > Finnish Slot Machine Association
  - > internet banking with donation option
  - > allocation of 1% of taxes
  - > income from commercialized services
  - > alumni support
- Well managed public funding with NGO engagement
- Recognition that support is necessary to support + defend rights of certain groups in society



## Recommendations to ourselves, NGOs

- Develop a communication strategy to explain better why our work is important, what role NGOs play in democratic societies + improve understanding of civil society
- Stimulate cooperation by creating alliances in fields of activity and avoid negative competition between NGOs and avoid duplication
- Set up advisory group of NGO leaders to advise the review of the financial regulations
- We should not rely on one type and one source of funding?
- Manage funds responsibly and transparently in order to create more trust in civil society



## Recommendations to decision makers

- Recognize NGOs as partners in development of society and assume political responsibility to support financially NGOs
- Develop and maintain expertise on the role of civil society within administration in order to respect independence and critical watch-dog role of NGOs
- Engage NGOs in definition of criteria for the allocation of money and development of financial regulations + co-management
- Ensure transparency of funding systems
- Provide funding on a mid- or long-term basis
- Cover operating costs not only project costs
- Suppress the demand for co-funding
- Be more open towards new organizations



## Outstanding issues

- Effects of financial crisis on NGO funding
- Independence from funders
- Ethical questions around origin of donors' money
- How to acknowledge that NGOs act in the public interest?



# Thank you!

## Our contact information

socialplatform

Square de Meeûs 18  
B-1050 Brussels  
Belgium

**T** +32.2.511.37.14

**F** +32.2.511.19.09

[platform@socialplatform.org](mailto:platform@socialplatform.org)

[www.socialplatform.org](http://www.socialplatform.org)