# THE ROLE OF CSOs IN MONITORING AND EVALUATING NATIONAL ACTION PLAN (NAP) FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF UNSCR 1325

*Successful implementation of the National Action Plan (NAP) on United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 requires the establishment of an effective mechanism for monitoring and evaluation. To ensure that monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are effective, it is necessary to include involvement and ideally, oversight, from civil society organizations (CSOs). Unfortunately cooperation between government institutions and CSOs in implementing, monitoring and evaluating the NAP on 1325 is often reduced to a single CSO consultation and only in a formal and limited context. As a consequence, meaningful dialogue and cooperation between state institutions and CSOs in NAP implementation, monitoring and evaluation is either missing altogether or limited to the point of ineffectiveness. As a result, the intended positive effect to improve considerations of gender and security through the development and implementation of the NAP on 1325 is marginal.*

# Recommendations

➜ **For security sector institutions:**

1. Prepare and publish (on their respective websites) their annual plan of activities aimed at forwarding implementation of the NAP on 1325; and post regular reports on completed NAP implementation activities.

2. Appoint a person to be responsible for regular communication with CSOs in order to coordinate NAP 1325 related implementation activities.

3. Increase cooperation with CSOs involved in security related issues, gender equality and the protection of women's rights.

➜ **For the Multi-sectoral Coordinating Body (MSCB):**

1. Organize an annual meeting with all interested representatives of civil society to discuss the implementation of the NAP on 1325.

2. Schedule and host annual consultations with CSOs to address thematic areas within the NAP on 1325.

➜ **For CSOs:**

1. Increase understanding and deepen knowledge on the connections between security sector reform and gender equality, in order to effectively cooperate with statutory security institutions in the implementation of the NAP on 1325.

## Introduction

One of the main challenges to operationalizing NAPs, in order to implement UNSCR 1325,[1] is the absence of specific and effective mechanisms to monitor and evaluate NAP implementation. NAPs are often designed without a clear division of responsibility among different institutions, qualitative indicators or a timeframe for achieving specific goals (EPLO, 2010:6). As well, many NAPs lack the designated resources necessary to support implementation (ibid).

CSO participation is a critical element of NAP implementation – CSOs are well positioned to support the effective implementation of NAPs as well as the efforts of security and government institutions. CSOs can offer direct input on topics related to the security needs and concerns of the community and the existing status of and challenges related to gender equality as well as support the inclusive and representative development of strategies to prevent, manage and resolve violence, conflict and crime. Moreover, in view of the fact that CSO advocacy was largely responsible (in Serbia) for adoption of the NAP on 1325, it is arguably important to include those most invested in and dedicated to the purpose of a NAP. [2]

Unfortunately, cooperation between government institutions and CSOs in the implementation of the NAP on 1325 is often reduced to involving CSOs on only a single occasion in a limited and purely formal capacity. For example, consultations with CSOs in the case of Serbia were limited in scope, duration, and quality. As a result, true dialogue and cooperation between government institutions and CSOs in NAP implementation is often missing, which raises questions related to the relevance and effectiveness of the NAP.

The intention of this paper is to illustrate the importance of establishing cooperation between government institutions and CSOs for successful NAP 1325 implementation. The first part of the paper analyses the different roles that CSOs can have in NAP 1325 monitoring and evaluation. The second part of the paper discusses the

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1 United Nations Security Council Resolution number 1325 is the first resolution discussing the consequences conflicts have on women and women's role in resolving conflict and building peace. The Resolution was adopted in 2000 and UN states parties operationalize and implement it through their national action plans (NAPs). Up to now, the NAP on 1325 has been adopted by some 40 states, including four countries in the Western Balkans (B&H and Serbia in 2010, Croatia in 2011, and FRY Macedonia in 2012).

2 The importance of having cooperation with CSOs and having them involved in peace building and conflict resolution processes was recognised in UNSCR 1889 (Art. 6, 10, & 18).
 http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1889%282009%29

contemporary challenges in relation to cooperation between Serbian government institutions and CSO and proposes solutions for promoting increased cooperation.

## Monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of NAP 1325

*The importance of monitoring and evaluation*

Following NAP adoption to implement UNSCR 1325[3] it became clear to many countries that their efforts remained limited unless the NAP document itself defined a mechanism for monitoring and evaluation. As a result, recommendations related to NAP implementation increasingly began to outline the need for inclusion of a clear mechanism to monitor and evaluate implementation activities. Additionally, these recommendations routinely outlined the need for CSO involvement and oversight in monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. Thus, successful implementation of a NAP requires a clear division of duties and responsibilities among the parties in charge of NAP implementation, adequate material and human resources, clear goals in relation to defined timeframes, and a system for monitoring and evaluating the implementation processes and activities. Ideally, all these elements should be predetermined in the NAP; unfortunately this is often not the case[4]. Moreover, it is not possible to implement monitoring and evaluation without indicators based on which the effectiveness of NAP implementation can be measured.[5]

### The difference between monitoring and evaluation[6]

The terms 'monitoring' and 'evaluation' are often mistakenly used interchangeably. Monitoring means continually collecting data about NAP implementation (e.g. activities including trainings, meetings, policy development, etc.), analysing and presenting that data in the reports to be delivered to the competent authority. Monitoring makes it possible to, within NAP implementation, to note problems and make adjustments in a timely and efficient manner. Evaluation means the occasional assessment of the extent to which the defined goals have been achieved, by comparing effectiveness and (expected and unexpected) effects of the activities in relation to the defined goals. Even though these two processes are different in respect of the intervals in which they take place their purpose, and scope, together they represent a single continuous process.

Although monitoring and evaluation indubitably have a positive effect on policy implementation processes, they are often overlooked. Namely, it happens that  institutions (and persons) in charge of implementing a policy are at the same time in charge of monitoring, and sometimes even for  evaluation of  implementation of that same policy. Because the focus is on implementation, it happens that monitoring and evaluation are under-prioritized, postponed or even completely disregarded[7]. There are several reasons for this:

➔ The lack of technical skills and resources required for monitoring and evaluation, such as the lack of trained staff, financial resources and time;

➔ Monitoring and evaluation are seen as a form of inspection or control by a supervisor;

➔ Fear that evaluation will be negative, which may affect the status of the persons in charge of implementing the document;

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3        Chile and Denmark were first countries to adopt NAP 1325 in 2005. Source: http://peacewomen.org/naps/list-of-naps
4        Most often with regard to resources. Thus, for instance, the Macedonian NAP on 1325 states that "the activities envisaged in the NAP will not have any financial implications and the funds required for its implementation will be provided within the institutions in charge of implementing the NAP on 1325". http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/WBStorage/Files/nap_rezolucijanov.doc
5        While this paper is not dealing with indicators, but rather the role CSOs can play in monitoring and evaluation, more information about indicators for monitoring the implementation of the Serbian NAP on 1325 can be found in: Džigurski, S. (2013) Praćenje i izveštavanje o sprovođenju Nacionalnog akcionog plana Republike Srbije za primenu Rezolucije 1325 Saveta bezbednosti Ujedinjenih nacija: prakse i izazovi (Monitoring of and Reporting about the Implementation of the Republic of Serbia's National Action Plan for Implementing the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325: Practices and Challenges). Belgrade: Belgrade Centre for Security Policy. Available at: http://www.bezbednost.org/upload/document/pracenje_i_iz-vestavanje_o_sprovodjenju_nap_1325.pdf
In 2012, following a two-year process, the UN defined a list of indicators for monitoring the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and related resolutions. See more information in:
http://www.un.org/womenwatch/ianwge/taskforces/wps/Strategic_Framework_2011-2020.pdf
6        According to: http://www.theglobalfund.rs/files/Priru%C4%8Dnik%20za%20potprimaoce.pdf
7        Ibid

➔ Implementing monitoring and evaluation requires investing time and resources and benefits from this process may not be immediately and directly visible. Besides, many believe that monitoring and evaluation is an "unnecessary waste of time" and that investing in activities for the implementation of monitoring and evaluation is an "unnecessary waste of financial and human resources" (JAZAS Youth, 2009:22).

Irrespective of this, monitoring and evaluation represent necessary steps for the effective implementation of a document or policy; planning of any future activities would not be successful without it. Security sector institutions should therefore appoint a person to be responsible for implementing monitoring and evaluation (or coordinating these activities). The same person may be put in charge of communicating with CSOs[8].

*The role of CSOs*

For monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to be truly effective it is necessary that CSOs are involved, or at the very least, consulted at regular intervals. There are several reasons for this. First of all, including CSOs is important because the participation of citizens in all political processes, including in the development of security policy, constitutes a key element of participative democracy. Moreover, CSOs represent an efficient and effective method of obtaining valuable input from citizens related to their security needs, concerns and priorities. Finally, CSO and citizen involvement constitutes a critical element of democratic accountability and transparency between government actors and civil society in security policy development and implementation. Thus, the absence of CSO engagement represents a failure to adhere to democratic principles of security sector reform and governance. In addition, a lack of input and communication by civil society can lead to operational failures in the implementation of security policy as a result of misguided priorities based on limited or partial information related to the needs of the community.

## The participation of citizens and CSOs in security policy is an important element of participatory democracy

The complexity and dynamics of political, economic, and social processes in the modern world require governments and government institutions to quickly adjust to changes and readily respond to different (crisis) situations. One of the necessary preconditions for government responsiveness is the involvement of citizens and their associations. The effectiveness of representative democracy, based on the principles of the separation of powers, free elections, and multi-party system, is increased with the introduction of the principle of participatory democracy. Participatory democracy implies permanent inclusion of citizens in the processes of managing public tasks and should not be limited to election of individuals at different levels. This type of democracy implies that citizens have at their disposal different mechanisms that allow them to express their needs or positions about specific topics, which are then translated into policies. Therefore, citizens are entitled to ask and be informed about the decisions and processes that have an impact on their life. Moreover, citizens pay for public administration (through taxation) and that therefore public administration should operate in accordance with the priorities defined by citizens.

Having this in mind, as well as the multiple challenges UNSCR 1325 addresses, the NAP on 1325 constitutes a priority Government (security) policy about which citizens and CSOs have the right to be informed and take part in. CSO participation in NAP 1325 implementation is even more important when you consider that UNSCR 1325 is a direct product of the organized advocacy of women and CSOs who have been leading advocacy initiatives, training programs and mobilization of grassroots groups and networks worldwide (Naraghi Anderlini, 2010:16).

The importance of including CSOs is also highlighted in UNSCR 1889, which directly relates and refers to UNSCR 1325. **Concretely, the participation of CSOs in the implementation**, monitoring, and evaluation of the NAP on 1325 is **important because** of the following:

» *Enhanced transparency and accountability of government institutions in implementing the NAP on 1325. This is achieved through CSO data collection on NAP implementation including: requesting information from government institutions on the planned and executed activities in connection with NAP implementation; identifying*

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8    Such is the case in Switzerland.

*challenges and developing solutions in relation to NAP implementation; and keeping the public informed on the status of NAP implementation. Moreover, by including CSOs, and women in particular, in the process of NAP implementation, the governmnet signals to citizens its serious intention to improve the status, security and safety of women.*

» *CSOs are an important source of information (about the needs of individual social groups, the challenges they face and strategies to deal with these challenges). CSOs often play the role of 'intermediary' between social groups, whose interests and safety and security needs they represent (e.g., women and children, LGBT population, etc.), and the security sector. This is achieved through their public advocacy efforts specifically related to the policies and institutional mechanisms which facilitate the appropriate response to safety threats for these groups.*

» *Transmission of the UNSCR 1325 'message' to the general public. The public is generally very poorly informed about UNSCR 1325 and its importance for women. This is only understandable if we assume that neither representatives of international organisations nor CSOs are sufficiently familiar with this resolution (EPLO, 2011:4)9. In Serbia the situation is similar – little is known about UNSCR 1325, particularly at the local level, and it is even less clear how local CSOs can participate in the implementation of the NAP on 132510. However, CSOs can, if provided with information and access to information, constitute an important conduit of information to the public on UNSCR 1325 and the Serbian NAP.*

» *Prevent the instrumentalisation and militarisation of UNSCR 1325. Some women's organisations point out that in many countries the implementation of UNSCR 1325 simply amounts to increasing the number of women in the security sector, namely that a kind of 'feminisation' of the army may take place (EPLO, 2011:4). This trend is visible both in European countries and in countries outside of Europe. That is why, according to representatives of these organisations, it is worth questioning whether certain states and regional and international organisations, are selectively implementing UNSCR 1325 in order to exclude certain elements. In this context, CSOs (or more specifically, women's organisations) have an important role in preserving the original values of UN-SCR 1325 and related resolutions. These documents underline the need to include women in decision making processes, peace negotiations, and the development of strategies to prevent, respond to and protect against gender based violence.*

» *Increase efficiency and impact of NAP related activities. If the process of monitoring and evaluating NAP 1325 implementation is participatory, namely if representatives of CSOs are directly involved, their participation can and will contribute to more clearly identifying the needs of women and thus the ability to develop better responses in the field.*

As a result, CSOs in some countries have gathered together to promote their equal participation in the process of NAP 1325 implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. Governments have responded differently to such requests from CSOs – from absolutely ignoring CSOs' (e.g. Cyprus) to recognizing civil society as a key partner in developing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating the NAP on 1325 (e.g., the Netherlands[11]). While there is no single model of cooperation between government institutions and CSOs for NAP 1325 monitoring and evaluation, in most cases, the role of CSOs in this process is not formalised within the NAP as such. For instance, countries in which CSOs are recognised as important and their cooperation is formalised include Switzerland and Great Britain. While, for example, the Swiss NAP on 1325[12] states that the ministries responsible for implementing the NAP must regularly report to CSOs.

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9       The Report indicates that some of the participants at the 2010 session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women were not familiar with UNSCR 1325, and that there were some participants who thought that this Resolution victimises women and promotes war.

10      In 2011 and 2012 BCBP organised a number of consultations about security and safety and gender equality at the local level. The participants at these consultations included representatives of CSOs, local governments, police, and judiciary; it turned out that only a small number of participants (and these were all the representatives of CSOs) was aware that Serbia had adopted a NAP on 1325 and more or less the purpose of the document. See more about the consultations in: http://www.bezbednost.org/Vesti-iz-BCBP/659/Bezbednost-na-lokalnom-nivou-da-li-su-zene.shtml and http://www.bezbednost.org/Vesti-iz-BCBP/4504/Sta-su-bezbednosni-izazovi-u-Sandzaku-i-kako-ih.shtml

11      http://www.peacewomen.org/assets/file/NationalActionPlans/dutch_nap_2012-2015.pdf

12      http://www.peacewomen.org/assets/file/NationalActionPlans/switzerland_nationalactionplanrevised_october2010en.pdf

*Models of CSO participation in NAP 1325 monitoring and evaluation*

The topics of gender and (human) security connect together a large number of government institutions (defence, police, judiciary, healthcare, social institutions, etc.), non-statutory actors, and often international organisations. The establishment of effective coordination and cooperation between all these actors is one of the greatest challenges in the implementation of NAPs (Beetham and Popovic, 2009:17). The implementation of NAPs on 1325, therefore, requires the establishment of an effective mechanism which will coordinate the activities and facilitate the exchange and collection of information from different sources, and by doing so, enable successful cooperation of state and non-state actors.

Analysing different models of CSO participation in the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of NAPs on 1325 in European countries[13] illustrates that **consultations** are the most common model of cooperation. Consultations are usually organised annually (by way of large events with many interested organisations) or as regular (quarterly or biennial) meetings. Ad hoc meetings may also be held and are usually arranged to collect CSO input needed for the development of an annual report on NAP implementation. Annual reports on NAP implementation are therefore usually prepared after consultations with representatives from civil society. The number of CSOs involved in the process of consultations with the government can vary from a few organizations to a couple dozen. In some countries, (e.g. the Netherlands, Great Britain, Switzerland), CSOs have created a **platform/network/coalition** devoted to the topic of women, peace, and security. These platforms allow for a larger number of CSOs to participate in consultations and as a result, increase involvement in the implementation of UNSCR 1325[14]. In some countries, the Government's officials, MPs, international organisations, etc. participate in the work of these platforms in order to jointly identify strategies to implement the commitments of the NAP (e.g. Finland and Belgium). For instance, a working group consisting of the representatives of the Government and the representatives of 1325 Network Finland meets six times a year. In some cases representatives of civil society take part at the **meetings of the government working group** for NAP implementation (e.g. Austria and Finland), or they are sporadically invited to meetings in order to provide specific information (e.g. Norway and Spain). In some countries representatives of civil society take part in the **work of the body** for NAP 1325 implementation (or the monitoring of implementation). For instance, a representative from civil society is a member of the body in charge of implementing the AP 1325 in B&H[15]. Participation of CSOs in the work of such a body is particularly important in the implementation of NAP evaluation or in its revision. While the first type of cooperation (taking part in meetings) gives CSOs the opportunity to occasionally meet with the representatives of state institutions, usually upon their invitation; the second type (taking part in the work of the body), gives CSOs greater access to information and allows them to actively take part in all activities of such a body.

# 1325 Network Finland

1325 Network was founded in 2006. It consists of 12 CSOs and several independent researchers from different universities. The network has a coordinator, a mailing list through which it collects and disseminates information, and it holds regular meetings. The Network played an important role in adopting the NAP in Finland – after a number of meetings with the representatives of different ministries and public advocacy, the decision to adopt the NAP was made in 2007. The Network was invited to take part in the working group in charge of drafting the document itself. The Network implements independent monitoring and evaluation of NAP implementation.

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13      The comparative analysis of NAPs in different European countries "Comparing National Action Plans for UNSCR 1325 in Europe" is available at: http://www.eplo.org/assets/files/2.%20Activities/Working%20Groups/GPS/GPS_Table_Comparing_NAP_Country_March%202012%20%282%29.pdf
14      The example of a successful platform is the Swedish CSO platform Operation 1325 - Women's Organisations Cooperating in Realising Resolution 1325. http://operation1325.se/en
15      In B&H, a Coordinating Committee consisting of 20 members is in charge of implementing the AP on 1325. Source: http://www.1325.arsbih.gov.ba/?page_id=8

## Parliamentary commission for monitoring the NAP implementation in Great Britain

Great Britain adopted its first NAP on 1325 in 2006 and then the NAP was revised in 2010 and 2012. For the purpose of monitoring NAP implementation, the Associate Parliamentary Group on Women, Peace and Security (APG-WPS) was set up. What distinguishes this group from other similar parliamentary bodies is the fact that the CSO network, Gender Action for Peace and Security (GAPS), is acting as its secretariat and coordinating the work of the Group. This parliamentary group ultimately contributed to the exchange of information and the establishment of cooperation between different ministries, MPs, and CSOs.

It should be noted that CSOs fulfill a number of important functions with respect to NAP monitoring and evaluation. For example, CSOs may develop an independent or shadow report on implementation of the NAP on 1325, which are usually published on an annual basis. Moreover, CSOs have the possibility to, through a report they may periodically submit to the CEDAW Committee,[16] to inform the Committee on the status of implementation of the NAP on 1325.

## Participation of CSOs in monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the NAP on 1325 in Serbia

Cooperation between the security sector and civil society in Serbia takes place on an ad hoc basis, without clearly defined rules and criteria for communication or dialogue (Hadžić and Stojanović Gajić, 2012:31). Security sector institutions (and public administration in general) are not aware that civil society may be an equal partner in formulating and implementing individual policies and thus may unburden and improve the work of institutions in their country.

*Independent monitoring of the NAP on 1325 in Serbia*

The Parliamentary *Commission for Monitoring the Implementation of the NAP on 1325* is in charge of implementing monitoring of the NAP in Serbia. The Commission is made up of representatives from competent parliamentary bodies[17] and gender equality mechanisms. This body controls and oversees the work of all the authorities and mechanisms put in charge of implementation of the NAP on 1325, including the Council[18] and the Multi-sector Coordination Body (MSCB). The latter two entities must submit their semiannual and annual reports concerning NAP implementation to the Commission. The Commission was set up only in February 2013 and so far has not considered any MSCB reports. Presently it is not envisaged that the representatives of CSOs will take part in the oversight work of this body.

The Serbian NAP defines independent monitoring in quite broad terms: "...*monitoring is implemented by the general public with whom the media needs to provide information concerning the status and results of NAP implementation ... but monitoring can also be implemented by the representatives of the NGO sector...*". The inclusion of CSOs in the process of NAP implementation, monitoring and evaluation, however, is not explicitly envisaged by the document as such; this greatly impedes CSO efforts to get involved in the process. On the other hand, in 2011 two organisations – *Women in Black* (WiB) and the *Belgrade Centre for Security Policy* (BCSP), started to conduct independent monitoring of implementation of the NAP on 1325 in Serbia. The most serious

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16    The Committee for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was established in 1982 based on the convention with the same name (CEDAW). The Committee is tasked with overseeing the implementation of the Convention in member states. Serbia submitted its first report in 2007 (for the period 1992 – 2006). Not only the states, but also the CSOs had to submit reports to the Committee, including alternative reports or shadow reports. The Alternative Report on the Implementation of CEDAW in Serbia for the Period 1992-2006 was prepared by the Voice of Difference organisation from Belgrade in cooperation with the Autonomous Women's Centre, ASTRA, the Incest Trauma centre, and Women in Black.

17    Members of the Commission are the representatives of the Committee for Human and Minority Rights and Gender Equality, the Committee for Defence and Internal Affairs, the Committee for Foreign Affairs, the Committee for Labour, Social Issues, Social Inclusion, and Diminishing of Poverty, the Committee for Judiciary, Public Administration, and Local Self-government, and the Assistant to the Commissionaire for Equality Protection. Source: http://www.parlament.gov.rs/narodna-skupstina-/sastav/radna-tela/komisija-za-pracenje-sprovodjenja-nacionalnog-akcionog-plana-za-primenu-rezolucije-1325-sb-un-.1763.html

18    The political council, as of the writing of this paper, has not yet been convened despite on-going NAP implementation efforts for the last two and half years.

problem encountered by both of these organisations was a lack of access to information concerning the activities undertaken by institutions in relation to NAP implementation. Both reports were published in mid-2012[19]. Whilst the WiB Report predominantly analysed topics related to the participation of women in peace negotiations, war crimes processing and reparations processes, the focus of the BCSP Report was related to institutional changes in the security sector (representation and protection of women employed in security sector, training of staff, etc.). The foremost issues that emerged in both Reports relate to the lack of transparency in the implementation of the NAP, inaccessibility of data related to implementation, and the reluctance of institutions to cooperate with women's CSOs. Both organisations continued monitoring in 2012/13, and the results are expected in the second half of 2013.

*Challenges in cooperation with CSOs and the security sector – What 'language' do we speak?*

The main reason state officials give for virtually excluding CSOs from the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the NAP on 1325 in Serbia is the widespread opinion that representatives of civil society are not sufficiently skilled to perform effective monitoring and evaluation of security policy. Namely, representatives of some government institutions stress that representatives of CSOs "*do not know the first thing about the functioning of the security sector, the structure of the institutions and what falls within the range of their powers and responsibilities and what does not*"[20]. This prevailing attitude within government, and particularly within security sector institutions, makes it difficult to establish a dialogue between security institutions and civil society. Moreover, government officials point out that in addition to having specialized and technical skills related to security sector work, CSOs also need access to confidential information – which they cannot be granted. Although it is true that representatives of civil society do not always enjoy the same access to information, some CSOs, and particularly think-tanks, have developed the requisite expertise (e.g. human rights, peace building, security sector reform, domestic violence, human trafficking, etc.) and thus, with their knowledge and experience can contribute to improving security for citizens. It should also be noted that the argument in favor of maintaining confidentiality may also be used to screen out access and thus avoid accountability within the security sector (Caparini and Fluri, 2006:5).

Moreover, it is not reasonable to expect representatives from CSOs (particularly those not specialised in security related topics) to have in-depth knowledge of the hierarchical structure of security sector institutions or all the powers and responsibilities of their specific organisational units. CSOs argue that their lack of specialized technical skills is a result of their work on a large number of different topics in combination with the likelihood that they will only address security issues on an *ad hoc* basis. This is particularly true for smaller organisation outside Belgrade. Security sector institutions, however, should provide NAP implementation related information to any CSOs which request it (and within a precisely defined timeframe per the Law on Free Access to the Information of Public Importance). As well, some CSOs have a critical attitude towards security sector institutions, which further impedes the establishment of meaningful dialogue. Accordingly, it is necessary that both parties – the government and CSOs are open and ready to listen and discuss the issues.

The other challenge to cooperation, stressed by representatives of some security sector institutions, is that even if they are willing to cooperate with CSOs, they do not know with whom to collaborate.  Or in other words, "*which organisations are representative organizations important for cooperation [on NAP implementation]*"[21]. This question raises several legitimate issues. For example, civil society is heterogeneous; CSOs are not uniform in the topics they address nor the social groups they represent.  This undoubtedly makes cooperation with them more difficult for state institutions. Yet state institutions may cooperate with just one or two organisations with specialised knowledge and skills on a particular topic related to security, gender equality or women's engagement. However, this cannot and does not constitute cooperation with the whole of civil society – but rather a specific area of civil society. That is why it is necessary to, through different activities (consultations, meetings, focus groups), include the largest possible number of organizations, with different profiles and from different parts of Serbia. This can insure a participative and representative process and additionally fill important gaps in input and experience of CSOs.

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19      WiB report is available at: http://www.zeneucrnom.org/pdf/nezavisni_monitoring_primene_rezolucije1325_u_srbiji.pdf , and BCBP report at: http://www.bezbednost.org/upload/document/nezavisni_izvestaj_o_sprovodjenju_nap_1325_u_srbij.pdf
20      This information was provided to BCSP researchers in an informal conversation with representatives from various security sector institutions.
21      BCSP acquired this information through informal conversations with representatives of government institutions during expert consultations with the representatives of government institutions organised for the requirements of research for the "2012 Almanac on Security Sector in Serbia ".

Representatives of CSOs may also see obstacles to establishing better cooperation with government institutions. For example, the Government's distrust of CSOs (especially feminist and peace organisations) compounded by a poor understanding of the role women's peace organisations can play in NAP implementation, monitoring and evaluation, undoubtedly impacts CSO willingness to work toward improved cooperation with security sector institutions. It is also a problem that government institutions do not provide equal treatment to all civil society organizations. It therefore happens that government institutions only include certain CSOs with whom they have better relations. Yet it remains unclear what criteria are used to select participating CSOs and to evaluate their credibility and representativeness. One of the most important obstacles in the way of increasing the participation of CSOs in NAP implementation is staffing resources and connections within CSOs themselves.

*How to improve cooperation?*

Although Serbia has made some progress in establishing formal mechanisms for cooperation between the government and civil society, for example, by setting up the Office for cooperation with civil society in 2010, there remains much room for improvement. Government institutions still seem to lack a full understanding of and appreciation for civil society, their role and function. Cooperation between the government and CSOs in Serbia is most developed in the area of European integration, poverty reduction, and social policy, as well as that of sustainable local development (Golubović and Anđelković, 2008:11). On the other hand, CSO representatives only rarely take part in the work of individual government institutions responsible for security in Serbia. Most security institutions have not yet developed awareness that CSOs are an important source of information related to identifying whether a specific document or policy is being successfully implemented. The NAP on 1325 is no exception. For this reason, in 2012 at the initiative of BCBP, CSOs and the government began a dialogue related to the implementation of the NAP on 1325 in Serbia. This effort was launched with the goal of establishing a channel for regular communication on the topic of gender and security between CSOs and security institutions. To that end, CSOs[22] met several times to formulate the requirements[23] for government institutions to meet in order to create the conditions necessary for greater inclusion of CSOs in the implementation and monitoring of the NAP. The meetings resulted in the following guidance:

1. All institutions and authorities responsible for NAP implementation and monitoring should ensure that annual plans and reports on the implementation of NAP activities are publicly available on their websites. To ensure greater transparency concerning the process of NAP implementation, a unified website on the implementation of this document should be set up as soon as possible[24].
2. The Multi-sectoral Coordinating Body (MSCB) should, at least annually, organise a joint meeting with all interested representatives of civil society to discuss NAP implementation.
3. It would also be desirable for the MSCB to organise annual consultations with CSOs, namely thematic discussions in relations to the topics under the NAP.

## A step forward towards establishing cooperation between the government and CSOs in the implementation of the NAP on 1325

A one-day conference "Dialogue between CSOs and Multi-sectoral Coordinating Body on the Implementation of NAP 1325 in Serbia" was held in December 2012. This conference is important since it constituted the first time representatives of government institutions and (women) CSOs came together to discuss NAP implementation. Accordingly, this Conference is considered the formal starting point for establishing transparent dialogue between civil society and the government in the implementation of the NAP on 1325. All the participants of the Conference agreed that it is important to establish dialogue with CSOs; it is therefore expected that in 2013 this dialogue will continue in the form of a second conference that will be organised by the MSCB. See more about this conference in: http://www.bezbednost.org/Bezbednost/4991/Civilno-drustvo-se-kroz-dijalog-sa-drzavom.shtml

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22    The meetings were attended by representatives of the following organisations: Women in Black, Autonomous Women Centre, Belgrade Fund for Political Excellence, BIBIJA, Roma Association Novi Bečej, Safety Oasis NGO Kragujevac, YUCOM (Lawyers' Committee for Human Rights), Public Policy Research Centre, European Movement in Serbia, 'Osvit' Roma Women Association Niš, Centre for Gender Studies and Women's Studies NGO of the University in Novi Sad. The meeting were held in the period June-October 2012.
23    These requirements were presented at the conference "Dialogue between CSOs and Multi-sector Coordinating Body about the Implementation of NAP 1325 in Serbia", held in December 2012.
24    While it was announced that this website would be launched at the beginning of 2013, over half a year later the website has still not been implemented.

**Consultations** should be organised so that as many stakeholders as possible are able to take an active role. This may be achieved by publishing the invitation to participate in the consultations through different communication channels (online, etc.) and with ample notice. In addition to the invitation, CSOs should generally be invited by using mailing lists or making telephone calls. Consultations may be organised in different forms such as meetings, round tables, solicitation of written comments and so on.

Before the consultations begin, however, it is necessary that the institution, under the coordination of MSCB, develop and adopt specific guidelines for organising the consultations with CSOs. The guidelines should contain information about:

➜ when the MSCB, or government institutions, have to include women and other interested CSOs in the decision making process related to gender and security topics;

➜ the stage of the decision making process at which to organise consultations. Consultations should be organised in a timely manner, namely as early as possible, and sufficient time should be allowed for the implementation of consultations (minimum two weeks);

➜ public access to relevant documents that as well, are written in a manner that is clear and thus avoid bureaucratic jargon or technical terminology;

➜ the point of contact for the person who is responsible for conducting the consultations, collecting the data about all stakeholders (maintain the database), maintaining contact with them, and coordinate the activities during the consultations. Ideally every institution appoints a person for this;

➜ the process for follow-up cooperation after a consultation – the process, steps, timeline, point of contact, etc.

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