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Banja Luka, 05 March, 2020

**To: Technical Assistance to Civil Society Organisations (EU TACSO 3) in the Western Balkans and Turkey**

**Subject: INPUT REGARDING CONSULTATION OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS IN THE PREPARATION OF THE INSTRUMENT FOR PRE-ACCESSION ASSISTANCE (IPA III)**

In relation to your public call for inputs from the CSOs in the preparation of IPA III, on behalf of the Foundation "United Women" Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina, I am submitting our comments, as follows:

- 1) Considering the significant gender inequalities in the Western Balkans, there should be a specific percentage of funding set regarding how much funding should go to gender equality, including within "gender mainstreamed" projects, similar as it is now for environment;
- 2) There should be a clear indicator (or more) related to gender equality, rather than burying it within an index, as proposed;
- 3) There should be earmarked funding for qualified, autonomous women's rights organizations that have several years of experience as service providers for women and children who have suffered violence, similar to Daphne, as a separate budget line within IPA III; and
- 4) Civil society facility should not go through governments, as considering the actual situation in the region, it will run the risk of GONGOs (those supportive of ruling governments) receiving all funding as well as jeopardize the autonomy CSOs whose independence is crucial for rule of law and holding government accountable.

Thank you for enabling us to contribute, as we believe that EU must take stronger approach in supporting autonomy of civil society organizations as well as women's human rights and gender equality.

Regards,

Aleksandra Petric  
Executive Director