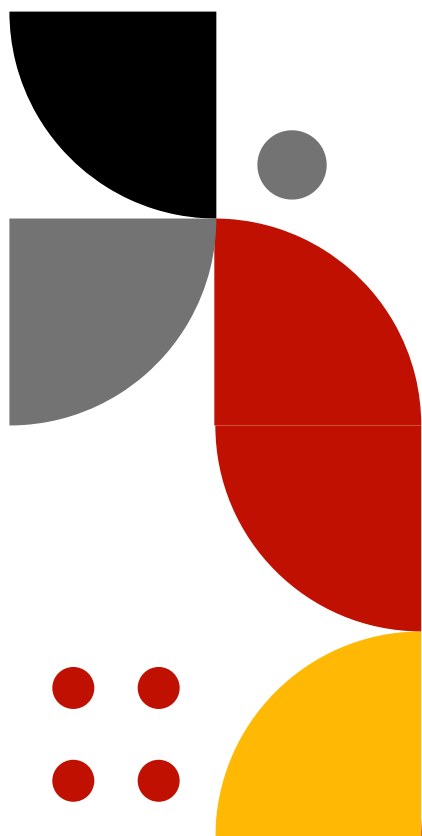


ANNUAL REPORT



2024



Sustainability
Good Governance
Human Development



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Foreword by the Executive Director



2024 marked a year of celebrating 20 years of policy impact and expanding into new topics and partnerships. CRPM set its sights beyond the region, initiating side events and actively participating—as speakers and panelists—at six major global forums: Raisina Dialogue, CSW, Beijing+30, UNECE SDG Forum, World Forum for Democracy, and the GTIPA Forum. These milestones reflect our growing engagement and accelerated presence in global policy dialogues.

This year was also marked by new partnerships. We began collaboration with the French Development Agency (AFD) to explore demographic dynamics, economic development, and the sustainability and viability of financial, health, and social protection systems. Additionally, through the EU Interreg program, we launched two new projects—one under the Europe and one under the Adrion sub-programs—expanding our work across borders.



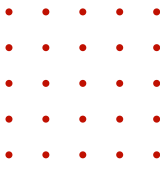
Dr. Marija Risteska

With Interreg we explore citizen's participation in biodiversity techniques and develop capacity for use of AI for disaster risk response. The topics of these three interventions are in line with the independent research agenda of the organization, and respond to the foresight analysis findings of what the future problems of the region will be.

CRPM delivered effectively its annual program with impressive results:

- In our capacity building for CSOs over 60 third parties (CSOs) were funded through our CSOs fund and mentored to develop its organizational and advocacy impact
- Our research and analysis work resulted with published 2 gap analysis; 1 policy study on bio waste circular economy models; four national studies on circular supply chain; 1 compendium of budget watchdog reports; 1 compendium of best practices for circularity;
- Networking remained very high on our agenda as we organized 2 conferences, 2 international forums and 2 community of practice events; delivered 6 seminars; organized 2 study tours and co-organized 6 high level events and contributed to debates in circularity, labour market, development financing, digitalization of education and use of AI in innovation
- Remained leader in leadership with 160 mid-career professionals trained within the CRPM School of Public Policy and developed 2 new online training modules; 1 tutorial; 6 podcasts; 6 guidebooks on gender responsive budgeting tools

On organizational level of development in 2024, CRPM became accredited adult education provider and opened its branch office in Serbia. In 2025 we will continue changing policies that serve people equally!



1. High Level Dialogue

Raisina Dialogue – New Delhi, India

The 2024 Raisina Dialogue, the biggest geopolitical forum in the world, was fostering dialogue on topics related to energy, the Arctic, and AI. The energy trilemma: access, affordability, availability seems to be resolved with policy that is important to enable financing of carbon emission reduction targets achievement and mobilizing resources in value of 2.4. trillion dollars per year.

The conclusions defined were that every country should have its own energy mix that fits the needs of businesses and consumers; in order to have energy security every country needs to diversify their energy supplies.

On AI the discussions were related to vehicles that will make AI technology spread, the ethical considerations of AI and regulation (of technology or its application). With climate change the Arctic is getting warmer and cooperation with Russia becomes a priority.

Marija Risteska in capacity of Regional Director of the Gender Budget Watchdog Network was a speaker on the idea pods on Raisina Dialogue and talked about the European integration of the Western Balkans and the power the GRB tools have to make the Western Balkan growth pack and in particular the WB investment fund not create further gender inequalities.

While in New Delhi, Marija Risteska, as an Executive director of CRPM, has signed a cooperation agreement with the India's leading think tank - Research and Information System for Developing Countries - and joined the Global South Center of Excellence DAKSHIN.

With other think tanks from the global south CRPM will exchange and learn in resolving current challenges in agriculture, health, financial inclusion through digital solutions and creating global public good.



The Global North is good at asking the 'what' questions, and the Global South at providing solutions how to achieve more inclusive, democratic and cost-effective solutions for the future.



UNECE Regional SDG Forum side-event: Empowering Youth for Sustainable Futures

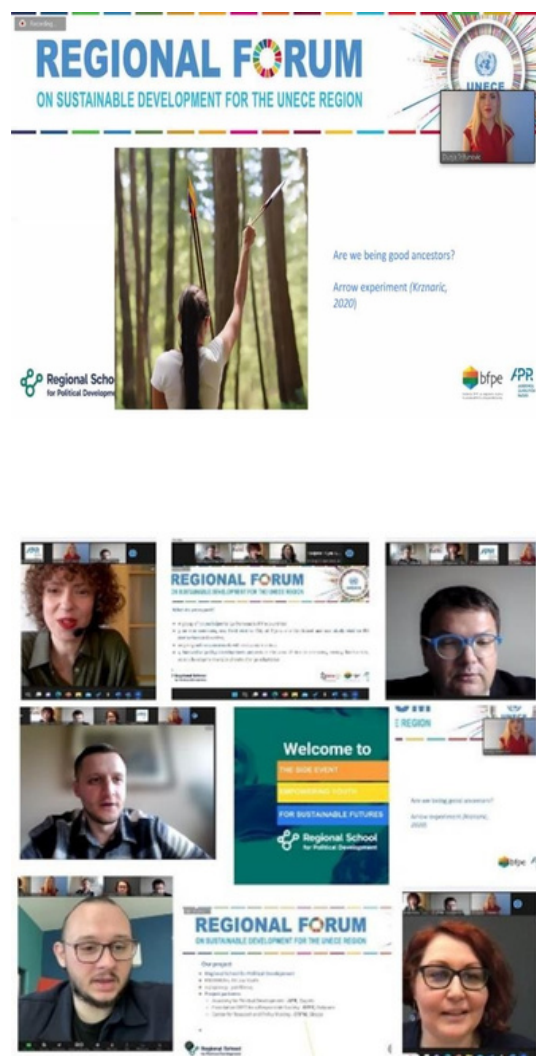
Sustainable Development

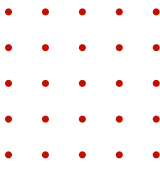
The side-event titled "Empowering Youth for Sustainable Futures: Sustainable Development", organized by the Center for Research and Policy Making (CRPM) in collaboration with the Academy for Political Development and the BFPE Foundation, was held on March 13, 2024, as part of the UNECE Regional Forum on Sustainable Development.

The event served as a platform to engage youth in sustainability efforts, emphasizing their crucial role in shaping future policies and advocating for change at local and national levels. Discussions at the event highlighted Southeast Europe's neglect of the green agenda amid ongoing crises, with experts stressing the urgent need for greater youth participation in policymaking. A key focus was the launch of the Regional School for Political Development (RSPD), an initiative aimed at equipping young leaders with knowledge, skills, and networks to influence sustainability policies.

Prominent professors and youth advocates engaged in thought-provoking discussions on education, advocacy, and political engagement, addressing both the challenges and opportunities in mobilizing young people for sustainable development. Young activists from Macedonia, Serbia, and Croatia shared their experiences, emphasizing the barriers they face and the transformative power of youth-led initiatives.

The event concluded with a strong call to action, reinforcing the importance of empowering youth through education and capacity-building. Participants agreed that youth engagement is key to driving meaningful policy changes and advancing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.





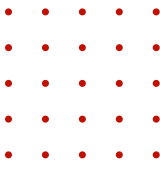
CSW68 Parallel Event “Gender Responsive Budgeting: Delivering on Gender Equality Commitments in Multilaterals’ External Financing”

Together with the Gender Budget Watchdog Network, CRPM organized a parallel event to the Commission of the Status of Women bringing the topic of how multilaterals are using financing for gender equality to discussions at the CSW. The primary objective of this parallel event was to present and further identify recommendations for improving gender-responsive budgeting in development cooperation external financing.



GBWN is an international network collaborating with key partners with an aim to strengthen this coalition through joint advocacy and engagement with the UN system, the EU, and Member States, with the goal of establishing a truly global alliance.





20 Years After: Perspectives on Industrial Relations in Central and Eastern Europe Since the 2004 EU Enlargement

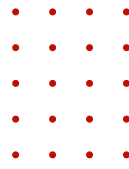
European Trade Union Institute (ETUI) in Brussels on 7.11. 2024 organized the conference “20 Years After: Perspectives on Industrial Relations in Central and Eastern Europe Since the 2004 EU Enlargement”, in which CRPM took part. The conference gathered social partners, researchers, and policymakers to reflect on the profound transformations in industrial relations following the EU’s largest enlargement in 2004. Discussions focused on the opportunities and challenges that continue to shape the region, particularly in the areas of: wage parity and labor market dynamics; social protections and labor standards, and the adaptation of the European Social Model in new Member States. By learning from the experiences of Central and Eastern European countries—both their successes and obstacles—the candidate countries can better prepare for EU integration. Key takeaways include the importance of capacity building, fostering social dialogue, and aligning governance structures with EU labor market and social policy frameworks.

2024 Global Trade & Innovation Policy Alliance Summit



CRPM participated in the GTIPA Summit, held in India in November 2024, where global leaders gathered to discuss India’s rise as an innovation power. This year’s summit focused on India’s emergence as a global innovation hub, highlighting topics such as the future of semiconductors, sustainable development, women entrepreneurship, innovation in life sciences, healthcare delivery, and intellectual property policies. A key theme of the Summit was India’s journey toward becoming an economic power and the importance of fostering open collaboration, innovation, and creating employment opportunities for its growing workforce. Discussions emphasized how technological advancements are essential for driving sustainable growth and how strategic investments in sectors such as semiconductors, AI, and renewable energy can position India as a global leader. The Summit underscored the need for policies that encourage technology adoption and global competition to foster innovation and development. One of the most significant sessions focused on India’s growing role in the global semiconductor industry, addressing both strengths in chip design and challenges in local production. Another notable discussion revolved around innovation ecosystems, emphasizing the importance of capital, talent, and knowledge in fostering technological breakthroughs.

Participants explored the transformative power of artificial intelligence, debating the regulatory approaches needed to balance innovation with ethical and governance concerns. CRPM’s participation reaffirmed its commitment to fostering international cooperation, supporting forward-thinking policies, and driving progress in innovation and economic development.



UNECE Forum on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD): Empowering Youth for Sustainable Futures – Entrepreneurship Education and Youth Engagement

The UNECE Forum on Education for Sustainable Development, held on June 27–28 2024, in Limassol, Cyprus, brought together a diverse group of over 500 participants, including high-level officials, youth representatives, and stakeholders from international organizations, governments, NGOs, and the private sector. The event focused on empowering youth for a sustainable future, integrating sustainability into entrepreneurship education, and fostering youth engagement in sustainable development policymaking. Ivana Garanova-Petriskova and Biljana Matevska, as representatives from the CRPM, attended the forum as part of the Macedonian delegation.

Speakers sparked passionate discussions on the future of education in the context of digitalization, AI, technological trends, and the growing challenges posed by climate change. Stephanie Alvarado, Director of Global Programs at NFTE, delivered an inspiring keynote speech highlighting the importance of teaching an entrepreneurial mindset to youth, preparing them for careers and jobs that don't even exist yet. Her words resonated deeply with attendees, reinforcing how critical it is to equip the next generation with skills that foster adaptability and innovation.

Gerd Leonhard, renowned futurist and author, followed with a powerful talk about the dual forces shaping humanity's future: climate change and AI. He presented various scenarios, urging participants to consider how we, as a global community, can thrive amidst these challenges. His message was clear: machines may replace humans in routine tasks, but the focus should shift towards People, Planet, Prosperity, and Purpose—values that can guide us through an uncertain future.

The key takeaways from the panels and smaller group discussions emphasized the necessity of rethinking how we teach Sustainable Development. A key focus was learning to care for each other, the planet, and all living beings. In revisiting the practices of older generations—such as recycling, repairing, and reusing—we can learn to consume more sustainably.

This shift towards sustainable lifestyles is essential for building a sustainable future. The Forum also featured youth councils and young activists, creating a dynamic space for discussions on how youth can shape a sustainable future through meaningful engagement. The discussions and outcomes of the forum feed into consultations for the Summit of the Future, September 2024, with a focus on collaborative efforts, policy recommendations, and actions to enhance youth empowerment, employability, and entrepreneurial skills for a sustainable future.



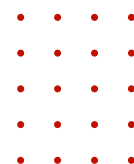
Presentation of the RSPD at the 2024 World Forum for Democracy

On November 8, 2024, in Strasbourg, as part of the Council of Europe's World Forum for Democracy, the Regional School for Political Development was presented in the session "Innovative Partnerships: Strengthening Cooperation of the Schools of Political Studies". The event highlighted the value of regional collaboration between three public policy schools, uniting young leaders from the Western Balkans to develop solutions, launch initiatives, and advocate for democratic and sustainable change. Held on the margins of the Forum which gathered over 500 participants, including youth, policymakers, civil society leaders, and academics, to explore pressing challenges to democracy and promote innovative solutions we promoted the school and the idea.



The RSPD event emphasized the importance of cross-border cooperation within the Council of Europe's Association of Schools for Political Studies, focusing on fostering youth engagement and leadership development. Representatives from the Academy for Political Development (Croatia), the School of Public Policy "Mother Teresa" (Macedonia), and the Foundation BFPE (Serbia) discussed the impact of their collaboration and explored opportunities for future expansion. Young leaders and alumni also shared insights on the program's role in empowering youth and strengthening regional democratic initiatives.

Participation in the World Forum for Democracy provided RSPD with significant visibility among European stakeholders, reinforcing its role as an innovative initiative promoting youth political involvement in Southeast Europe.



UNECE Beijing+30 Regional Review Meeting



Over 200 civil society representatives from 78 NGOs across 48 member states gathered in Geneva, Switzerland, on October 21-22, 2024, for the Beijing+30 Regional Review Meeting. This event, organized every five years by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and UN Women Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (ECARO), was marking the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA), a global blueprint for advancing women's rights. Participants reviewed and appraised the status of gender equality and UNECE's regional progress on the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) and its 12 Critical Areas of Concern.

Marija Risteska as a member of the ECA Beijing +30 Civil Society Steering Committee facilitated a workshop on which outcomes of online civil society consultations have been presented and strategic approaches of civil society to address these challenges were determined. She also spoke on the Review Meeting on the topic of Accelerating Women's Economic Empowerment: The Path to Peaceful, Just, and Inclusive Societies. Risteska noted that the region shows broad intraregional disparities and asked for: strengthening legal frameworks and policy reforms to remove gender-based discrimination in the workplace and ensure equal access to opportunities and equal pay; keep enforcement of gender equal legal regimes unburdened by traditions and customs especially in inheritance, and improving women's financial literacy, their access to finance and entrepreneurship opportunities.

33rd Economic Forum

Our regular biannual contribution to the [Economic Forum](#) in Karpacz was delivered in 2024. The Davos of Central-Eastern and South Eastern Europe gathers together the political and economic elites to discuss the challenges of the future. In 2024 the Executive Director Marija Risteska, took part in the forum and spoke at a panel "EU after the European Parliament Elections". The European Union will have to face new challenges and needs of Europeans, which may change the shape of the EU.

The new constellation of the European Parliament after the elections may prompt the European Union to strive for greater integration and cooperation for a more effective response to common problems, such as the migration crisis, climate or defense. Dr. Risteska emphasized the importance of this process for future EU enlargement and how Western Balkans can unlock the integration prospects. "The next Multiannual Financing Framework of the EU must be aligned with the EU Gender Equality Strategy which requires clear financial targets towards gender equality outcomes and targets for funding amounts.



2. CRPM Policy Research and Analysis Work

In 2024 CRPM – as a leading think and do tank – has developed a myriad of products such as policy studies and policy briefs, and managed policy processes that delivered policy change. CRPM worked on capacity building of civil society and continued implementing its flagship leadership program within the Network of Schools for Political Studies of Council of Europe. In the past year we have invigorated policy debates and instigated thinking in the following areas:

2.1. Leadership and Education for Good Governance

School of Public Policy Mother Theresa



In 2024, within its **School of Public Policy Mother Theresa**, CRPM has carried out the following adult education projects: three weekend seminars and eleven lectures by distinguished experts. The number of attendees at these events was 160 persons. The target group was: mid-career professionals (25-45 years) from the public and private sectors, interested in public policy making. The topics of the three weekend seminars were follows:

1. Definition of democracy, encompassing rule of law, civic education, civil society, independent media, culture, and art, touching upon various aspects of society (Spring Semester of 2024); 2. Issues in Europe's transformation I- EU enlargement, participatory democracy, security, green energy transition, (Summer Semester of 2024); 3. Issues in Europe's transformation II contemporary conservative ideology, Democratic values in the new international context- EU, USA and the challengers, Russia and China, geopolitics and media.

- Lecturers at the weekend seminars were the following professors and practitioners:
- Prof. Atanas Kirjakovski, International Balkan University;
- Prof. Nenad Markovikj, Law Faculty, University Ss. Cyril and Methodius;
- Prof. Karolina Ristova – Aasterud, Law Faculty, University of SS. Cyril and Methodius;
- Deniz Selmani, M.A, Institute for Research and Policy Analysis – Romalitico;
- Prof. Marija Milenkovska, professor at Faculty of Security, University St. Kliment Ohridski;
- Jane Trpkovski, Alumnus of the School of Public Policy Mother Teresa;
- Prof. Nikola Gjorshoski, Integrated Business Faculty;
- Katerina Klimoska, PhD candidate in International Relations and Conflict Management; International Expert in Higher Education and Research;
- Dragan Milosavljevic, Host of "Zaspj ako Mozhesh" political talk show at Alfa TV;
- Blerant Ramadani, PhD candidate in Sustainable energy development at Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Information Technologies, University Ss. Cyril and Methodius, National Coordinator for Information Technology and Energy, Government of Macedonia;
- Ardijan Ismaili, Expert on global politics, international relations, diplomacy and security, PhD, GCSP Alumni & Community Hub Leader;

- Katerina Neskova, journalist at Sitel TV, Advisory Board Member of School of Public Policy "Mother Teresa";
- Goran Ilikj Professor and Vice-Rector for Science at the University St. Kliment Ohridski;
- Iskra Koroveskovska, PhD, editor at TV Alfa, visiting professor at Faculty of Law, Goce Delcev University, Stip;
- Irena Shumenkovska, PhD, Young European Ambassador for the Western Balkans, NATO Youth Ambassador;
- Toshe Zafirov, former Deputy Secretary General at the Cabinet of the Macedonian President Stevo Pendarovski, and former Executive Director at the political think-tank Progress – Institute for Social Democracy;
- Nikola Trajchevski, LL.M, member of the Commission for Protection of Competition;
- Zlatko Jankovski, State Councilor at the Ministry for European Integration.



The topics of the eleven lectures by distinguished experts were the following:

"Understanding Diplomatic and Interference Models of Authoritarian Great Powers"; "Islam, Islamism, and religious diplomacy in the relations between Türkiye and Macedonia"; "American elections and electoral models"; "Official statistics as a policy tool (a window for understanding of the society)"; "The Bulgarian politics on Macedonia, today and in the past"; "Hungarian presidency of the Council of the European Union and EU enlargement"; "Will the EU enlargement continue in post-liberal Europe?"; "The European Court of Human Rights and the Convention System with emphasis on case-law concerning Article 10 of the Convention"; "Opportunities under the Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt Program"; "History teaching and democracy within the context of EU integration"; "Diplomatic Career in multilateral organizations".

The lecturers (the distinguished experts) were the following: Konstantinas Andrijauskas, Associate Professor of International Relations at Vilnius University; Samet Shabani, Director of Horizon Civitas and Research Fellow for Hellenic Foundation for European & Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP); Driton Kuqi, Ambassador of Macedonia to Norway and Iceland, former Minister of Economy, Professor of Constitutional Law; Dejan Stankov, PhD, Director of State Statistical Office; Prof. Nikola Minov, Institute of History at the Philosophy Department of University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius; András Klein, Hungarian Ambassador to Macedonia; Ivica Bocevski, Ambassador and special envoy of Macedonia to the Hungarian Presidency of the Council of the European Union; Oleg Soldatov, Head of the Council of Europe Programme Office in Skopje; Frosina Pandurska Dramikanin, M.A., Project Coordinator at the Macedonian Ecological Society (MES); Petar Todorov, Professor at Institute of National History at the University Ss. Cyril and Methodius, member of the Macedonian-Bulgarian Joint Multidisciplinary Commission for Historical and Educational Issues and Member of the Governing board of the Observatory for history teaching in Europe – of the Council of Europe; Zoran Dabikj (Former Macedonian Ambassador to OSCE and to UN, Vienna 2009-13) and to NATO, Brussels 2014-18).

The School of Public Policy Mother Theresa is funded by Council of Europe.

Capacity development of Informal Green Parliamentary Groups from South-East Europe on EU-complaint energy and transport goals

CRPM's collaborative efforts in building the capacity of Green Parliamentary Groups in South-East Europe led to significant accomplishments, including the establishment of the GPG in Macedonia, regional knowledge exchange, advocacy in parliamentary sessions, and the integration of gender considerations into climate action. These milestones were key to strengthening the legislative push for sustainable energy, transport, and climate change policies, helping align the region more closely with the EU's green goals. In 2024 we built capacity on the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans. The workshop's primary goal was to strengthen the GPG members' knowledge and advocacy skills on critical topics like energy efficiency, energy poverty, and sustainable transport. By doing so, it equipped them with the necessary tools to actively influence green policy decisions. Experts such as Prof. Dr. Sanja Popovska Vasilevska and Dr. Marijana Loncar Velkova delivered insightful presentations that focused on climate change, energy transition, and sustainable transport policies in the region. The workshop was not only successful in deepening understanding but also in empowering GPG members to take practical steps in shaping parliamentary discussions and policies around these green issues.



CRPM also conducted a gender-gap analysis of the Long-term Strategy for Climate Action and its Action Plan, with support from the gender and climate change expert Gordana Nestorovska. The analysis revealed key gender disparities in existing climate action policies and highlighted the need to integrate gender-responsive measures into national decarbonization strategies. This important report deepened the understanding of how climate change disproportionately affects men and women, ensuring that future green policies are more inclusive and equitable. Moreover, the findings of this analysis will serve as a powerful advocacy tool to push for the improvement of policies that promote gender equality in climate action.

CRPM worked on strengthening regional cooperation among GPGs across the Western Balkans. This included preparing for the WB Green Parliamentarians Meet Green SFF event in Sarajevo, where exchange of best practices and policy approaches on climate change, energy transition, and urban mobility was facilitated. These activities contributed to raising the profile of Macedonian delegation and their role in regional collaboration on green policies, ensuring that MPs had the tools to engage in legislative dialogues about sustainable development. One of the most significant milestones was the formal establishment of the GPG with over 40 MPs from multiple political parties committed to advancing green issues, in December 2024, and continued its role as a key player in the energy, climate, and transport policy discussions within the national legislature.

Funded by:



Implemented by
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Regional School for Political Development

The Regional School for Political Development delivered three seminars, one in each of the countries of implementation, Croatia, Serbia and Macedonia, bringing together young leaders from the three countries; and two study visits in Krk and Brussels in the course of 2024.

The seminars focused on the following topics:

- Political Institutions, Constructive Dialogue, and Green Politics, providing participants with insights into the EU political system, national governance structures, and green policies.
- Policy-making process, with a special emphasis on environmental protection and green policy development. Discussions covered key topics such as the role of citizens and civil society organizations, public policy instruments, principles of good governance, and policy implementation monitoring.
- Advocacy strategies on social media in activism, and climate security and resilience. Participants also presented their green policy proposals, exchanging feedback to refine their ideas.

The program combined lectures, interactive workshops, and group discussions. The seminars successfully fostered regional cooperation, knowledge exchange, and networking, strengthening participants' ability to advocate for green policies and democratic values in their communities. Through collaborative learning and mentorship, the Regional School for Political Development continues to empower young leaders to drive meaningful change in the Western Balkans.



The RSPD group conducted a study visit to Rijeka and Krk, Croatia, from October 3 to 6, 2024, focusing on sustainability, energy efficiency, and eco-tourism. Following the previous seminars in the participating countries, the visit provided valuable learning opportunities from local decision-makers and stakeholders in these regions known for their environmental initiatives. In Rijeka, they visited Rijeka City Hall, where Mayor Marko Filipović shared the city's accomplishments in environmental protection, including energy efficiency, waste management, and ecological projects.



They also visited Riperaj, an initiative promoting the reuse of materials, and the Science and Technology Park of the University of Rijeka, where a lecture on sustainable tourism was delivered. On Krk Island, the group met with Emil Vlaisavljević, Head of the Ponikve Waste Removal Service, before attending a panel discussion on civic energy and the sustainable development of islands with Maja Jurišić. The group also explored Vrbnik, learning about wine tourism as a driver of sustainable rural development. The visit concluded with a tour of EcoCamping Glavotok, showcasing sustainable tourism, and a visit to the private, eco-friendly home of Vjeran Piršić, an advocate for ecological practices.



The final study visit to Brussels was held 19-22 November, 2024, and focused on engaging with Brussels decision-makers and stakeholders to deepen the participants' understanding of green policymaking within the heart of the European Union. The study visit began with a trip to the European Parliament, where participants attended a lecture on EU institutions and discussed key topics with Croatian MEPs Gordan Bosanac, Tonino Picula, and Karlo Ressler. After touring the EP Plenary Hall and the Parliamentarium – EP Visitor Center, the group met with Giulia Gouet, Agroecology Policy Officer at Slow Food International, to discuss sustainable food practices. On the second day, participants visited the European Hydrogen Week and the Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development (DG Agri). They attended a lecture by Ivan Delibašić, Advocacy Director at Hydrogen Europe, and had the chance to interact with Ana Brnčić, Assistant to the Director-General at DG Agri, discussing EU policy and daily life in Brussels.



Founded by:  Erasmus+

SMART Balkans

The Smart Balkans project continued with the implementation of planned activities focused on strengthening participatory democracies and Euro-Atlantic integrations in the Western Balkans by empowering civil society organizations and CSO networks for stronger and active role in creating peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia.

In 2024, the SMART Balkans project marked its third year of implementation, building on the strong foundation established during the initial two years. Following a period focused on setting strategic directions, digital tools, and visibility, the project has now transitioned into a phase of intensified activities, with special emphasis on expanding its impact across the region. This year brought a deepening of engagement with civil society organizations (CSOs), continued capacity-building efforts, and an enhanced focus on the effective management and monitoring of grant support.

Grant scheme

A key part of the project is the grant scheme for CSOs, aimed at improving or building their capacities in financial and program management. As mentioned in previous annual reports, SMART Balkans planned 7 types of grants to address the different needs of civil society organizations, based on their development stage and area of work. Below is a list of grants that were either completed in 2024 or are still in the implementation phase in N. Macedonia and Serbia, organized by grant type.

Core grants

Core grants are providing funding to civil society organizations, combined with planned capacity building, to enable them to pursue an independent political agenda, separate from donor priorities, and focus on fulfilling their missions while addressing the needs of their constituents.



Core Grants - N. Macedonia					
N	Organization	Country	Amount NOK	Area	Duration
1	Bravura Kooperativa	N. Macedonia	306,000	Governance	25.01.2023 31.12.2024
2	HOPS- Healthy Options Project Skopje	N. Macedonia	765,000	Security and Stability	25.01.2023 31.12.2024
3	Local Community Development Foundation	N. Macedonia	414,120	Governance	25.01.2023 31.12.2024
4	Women's organization Sveti Nikole	N. Macedonia	306,000	Security and Stability	25.01.2023 31.12.2024
5	Transparency International - Macedonia	N. Macedonia	561,000	Governance	01.01.2024 31.12.2025
6	Association for protection of workers' rights "Glasen Tekstilec" - Shtip	N. Macedonia	408,000	Governance	01.01.2024 31.12.2025
7	Association for Educational Development - Ekvalist Skopje	N. Macedonia	408,000	Governance	01.01.2024 31.12.2025
8	Association Leaders for Education, Activism and Development (LEAD)	N. Macedonia	408,000	Governance	01.01.2024 31.12.2025

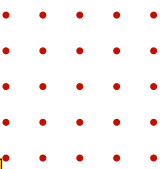
Core Grants - Serbia					
N	Organization	Country	Amount NOK	Area	Duration
1	Independent Journalists' Association of Vojvodina	Serbia	816,000	Security and Stability	01.01.2024 31.12.2025
2	Academic Inclusive Association	Serbia	408,000	Governance	01.01.2024 31.12.2025
3	Center for support of women	Serbia	754,800	Security and Stability	01.01.2024 31.12.2025
4	Organization for Political Ecology - Polekol	Serbia	408,000	Governance	01.01.2024 31.12.2025
5	FemPlatz	Serbia	550,800	Security and Stability	25.01.2023 31.12.2024
6	IUP - Institute for Urban Politics	Serbia	612,000	Governance	25.01.2023 31.12.2024
7	ProTok21	Serbia	408,000	Governance	20.01.2023 31.12.2024
8	Share Foundation	Serbia	816,000	Security and Stability	20.01.2023 31.12.2024

National intervention grants

National Intervention Grants provide funding for national projects focused on security, stability, and governance. Projects funded through national interventions align with relevant strategies and policies, contributing to their objectives and advancing broader national goals. On September 20, 2024, the National Intervention Second Call for Applications for National Intervention Grants was published on SMART Balkans' website. Over 150 applications we received.

National Intervention - N. Macedonia					
No	Project title	Organization	Amount in NOK	Area	Duration
1	Improvement of the national drug policy in the Republic of North Macedonia	HOPS-Healthy Options Project Skopje	407,286.00	Security and stability and good governance	01.07.2023 31.12.2024
2	Corruption prevention mechanism	Center for Environmental Democracy FLOROZON	522,240.00	Good governance	15.06.2023 14.10.2024
3	Civil society in the promotion of the youth regulation	Coalition of youth organizations SEGA	542,600.42	Good governance	08.06.2023 31.01.2025
4	Creating a safer digital environment for young people	Helsinki Committee for Human Rights Skopje	509,880.25	Security and stability	01.09.2023 30.11.2024

National Intervention - Serbia					
No	Project title	Organization	Amount in NOK	Area	Duration
1	"EXCELLENT"	Association for Development of Creativity	494,700.00	Security and stability and good governance	01.07.2023 30.09.2024
2	Increasing the readiness and participation of civil society organizations and youth in reducing the rise of disasters in Serbia	Fenomena Association	509,688.90	Security and stability	01.07.2023 30.09.2024
3	Begging - (in)visible exploitation around us	ASTRA- Anti trafficking action	473,995.02	Security and stability	01.07.2023 31.12.2024
4	Towards more efficient regulation of electronic media in Serbia in the interest of citizens	Slavko Curuvija Foundation	509,796.00	Good governance	01.07.2023 31.10.2024
5	Violent extremism and youth: from disinformation to radicalization	Center for Free Elections and Democracy - CeSID	540,139.73	Security and stability	01.07.2023 31.12.2024
6	Strengthening participatory democracy in Serbia through building capacity to recognize fakes news, misinformation and dangerous discriminatory narrative about the LGBT+ community	Da se zna!	508,189.50	Security and stability	01.07.2023 31.12.2024
7	Citizens in action for sustainable gender responsive policies	Association Uzice Center for Human Rights and Democracy	525,280.11	Security and stability	01.07.2023 31.01.2025
8	From the margin to the center	Civic Initiatives	509,869.34	Good governance	01.07.2023 30.06.2024
9	Rejuvenation of public policies	National Youth Council of Serbia	458,988.27	Good governance	01.07.2023 31.12.2024
10	Democracy needs Democrats	Zaječar Initiative	523,260.00	Security and stability	01.07.2023 30.09.2024
11	Protection of personal data in a world of cyber challenges	Partners for Democratic Change Serbia (Partners Serbia)	493,858.50	Security and stability	01.07.2023 31.01.2025



Local Initiatives

Local Initiatives Grants provide funding for local projects aimed at enhancing security, stability, and governance. Projects supported under this grant scheme are designed to align with relevant strategies and policies, contributing to their goals and advancing local development objectives.

Local Initiatives – N. Macedonia					
No	Project title	Organization	Amount in NOK	Area	Duration
1	Inspectorates at the service of citizens	Non-governmental organization KHAM Delchevo	77,418.00	Human rights	01.05.2023 01.02.2024
2	Safe in the virtual world	Association of citizens Media Plus	80,457.60	Security and stability	01.05.2023 01.05.2024
3	Digital skills – Challenges and opportunities for women	Women's Action-Radovich	80,478.00	Gender equality	01.05.2023 01.02.2024
4	Changes start at the local level	Association for rural development LAG Agro Lider	79,152.00	Rural development	01.05.2023 01.05.2024
5	Youth participation in rural areas	Center for Education and Development – CED	79,560.00	Education, development, culture and ecology	01.05.2023 01.02.2024

Local Initiatives – Serbia					
No	Project title	Organization	Amount in NOK	Area	Duration
1	Students' right to freedom of speech: Establishment of the municipal student parliament in Zemun	Association PARENT	77,061.00	Families with children and young people	24.04.2023 24.01.2024
2	Local digital registry of CSOs for transparent cooperation in Knjaževac	Local Democracy Agency LDA	74,979.18	Governance	24.04.2023 24.01.2024

AD Hoc grants

Ad hoc grants provide flexible support for urgent, unexpected, or time-sensitive interventions that fall outside other grant categories. They are designed for quick responses to emerging needs, with a simplified and accelerated evaluation process.

Ad hoc grants – Serbia					
No	Project title	Organization	Amount in NOK	Area	Duration
1	"People in focus: Support for the Roma population in preserving health"	Djina Humanitarian Association	50,898.00	Security and stability	20.09.2023 19.02.2024
2	How Can I Understand Better	Center for geostrategic research and terrorism	45,935.00	Security and stability	07.10.2023 07.03.2024
3	Study on Protection Mechanisms for Human Rights Defenders	Belgrade Centre for Security Policy (BCSP)	50,965.00	Security and stability	06.12.2023 06.04.2024

The purpose of this grant is not to support activities that can be planned/ foreseen in advance.

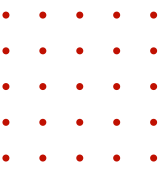
Capacity building

Tutorials

As part of the capacity-building activities within the SMART Balkans project in 2024, we have produced a tutorial titled "How to Write an Impactful Policy Paper?" The video is available at the following [link](#).

Tailor made training program

The aim of the tailor-made training programs within the SMART Balkans project is to address the specific needs of civil society organizations, media, and other stakeholders in the region. In 2024, a total three training programs were conducted on the following topics: Climate and Security, How to Combat the Environmental Corruption, and Advocacy Training: Inspirational Stories and Practical Examples for Driving Change.



Financial Academy

The accreditation process in N. Macedonia has been successfully completed. After a successful institutional visit in December, the Accreditation Certificate for the “Skills for Financial and Administrative Management for Civil Society Organizations” program was received in January 2025. This enables the selection of program participants and the official launch of the Financial Academy.

The accreditation process in Serbia is still ongoing. In December 2024, an agreement was signed with NALED, securing an appropriate venue for the training sessions within the Financial Academy. Experienced trainers have been selected for all three modules, and the development of teaching materials is currently underway.

Funded by:  **Norway**

Budget Accountability and Transparency

The Budget Accountability and Transparency project we implemented in Albania first focused on empowering civil society organizations (CSOs) at both the local and national levels to effectively participate in budget planning and monitor its implementation. In its second phase, the project provided financial and mentoring support to CSOs to further strengthen their role.

The 15 selected projects for funding and their teams were supported by CRPM expert in drafting policy proposals for improving budget accountability based on the data and findings generated by their research initiatives. In the course of 2024 the project also provided support to the Commissioner for the Right to Information in Albania and the Albanian Supreme Audit Institution to improve access to information and data on budget accountability/transparency, public participation and public expenditure/procurement. All this led to improved current government policies and practices on budget planning, implementation and reporting through greater public oversight and gender mainstreaming.

Funded by:  **Bat** Budget Accountability and Transparency

 **Funded by the European Union**





Strengthening CSO capacities for enhanced participation and advocacy in public finance management processes

The project is promoting the following theory of change: through capacity building for budget literacy and using PEFA tools in CSO budget participation and advocacy work towards improvement of good governance in public finance management. The specific objectives of the project are: (i) to strengthen the capacity of CSOs to read the budget and participate in budgetary processes; (ii) to increase awareness on PEFA framework and its use for advocacy to improve good governance in public finance management by CSOs; (iii) to engage CSOs in contribution to development of bylaws for implementation of new Organic Law on Budgets.

In the course of 2024 the following results were achieved within the project:

On-line Course on Budget literacy

The project produced online training module on budget literacy that is currently being translated in four local languages: Albanian, Macedonian, Bosnian / Croatian / Serbian / Montenegrin and Romanian. The module will be added to the E-academy platform of the Gender Budget Watchdog Network. Overall learning objective of the course: To develop understanding of the budget, budget structure and process of adoption in order to pinpoint key players, budget calendar periods and entry points for civil society engagement in budgetary process; To understand what is the role of CSO's in budgeting and what are the possibilities for advocacy having in mind the legislation and practice; When, where and how to advocate on a central level for a certain objective or mission.

Tutorial on budget literacy for CSOs

A video focusing on increasing budget literacy for CSOs was produced in the reporting period. This resource aims to increase the understanding of CSOs on the budget as a policy document and the budgetary process. In the same time it provides guidance on how CSOs can get involved in each stage of the budgetary process, what will be their role and etc. The tutorial was made available on the Smart Balkans platform where over 1347 CSOs from the region are registered as users.

Training Module for engendering participatory budget community forums

In North Macedonia, 40 out of 80 municipalities have included provisions in their statutes for organizing budgetary community forums, which help determine public investment priorities for the upcoming year. Each forum typically consists of 3 to 5 sessions, depending on how long it takes participants—citizens—to identify and agree on key priorities. To ensure inclusive participation and meaningful outcomes, these forums must be organized in a gender-responsive manner that facilitates open discussion and reflects the needs of all community members.



The project produced an online training module for municipalities to engender the participatory budgeting community forums. The resource is made available on the online e-platform of the Gender Budget Watchdog Network (GBWN) which is uniting over 100 CSOs from the Western Balkans and Moldova. The online course is translated in four languages: Albanian, Macedonian, Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian/Montenegrin, and Romanian.

To access the training module please visit: <https://gbwnacademy.net>

The project is implemented in cooperation with



This project is funded
by the European Union



2.2. Sustainable Development

Development of recycling system for organic waste management in grapes and wine production in Tikves region

The project “Development of recycling system for organic waste management in grapes and wine production in Tikveš region” aims to foster environmental and sustainable goals while advancing the legal framework, allowing various stakeholders to contribute to promoting circular economy practices. Project’s main objective is to establish an efficient model for bio- waste management for vineyards and wineries in North Macedonia.

Within the project we have in 2024 successfully piloted the most promising solution, which not only reduces environmental impact but also boosts the local economy in the Tikveš Region. The transition from traditional heating methods, such as mazut and wood, to using briquettes made from wine branches has proven to be a game-changer. In addition to significantly reducing GHG emissions, we saw a remarkable 30% reduction in particulate matter (PM10) emissions compared to conventional heating fuel – wood. The environmental impact is further underscored by the fact that the project helps compensate for 1,837 tons of CO2 annually, thanks to the reduction in wood harvesting. This contributes significantly to preserving local forests and enhancing the region's environmental sustainability.



We have successfully organized three workshops in Demir Kapija, Negotino, and Kavadarci in June 2024, which attracted great interest from local stakeholders. These workshops were a valuable opportunity to share the developed business models and demonstrate the successful piloting of a bio-waste treatment solution. We were pleased to see strong engagement from around 60 participants, including vineyard and winery owners, public utilities, and local and national officials. During the workshops, we emphasized the win-win potential of bio-waste treatment and the importance of collaboration among stakeholders. A key element discussed was the Public-Private Partnership scenario, highlighting the possibilities for public utility companies and the private sector to work together to valorize the bio-waste and improve the current waste management practices.



The pilot solution, which has proven to be highly successful, was presented as a model for sustainable bio-waste management. We are particularly satisfied that 16 vineyard and winery owners signed Statements of Interest, demonstrating their commitment to adopting the new business models and contributing to a more sustainable and circular economy in the Tikveš region.

Funded by:  

Towards Regional Circular Supply Chains: Knowledge exchange from V4 to WB

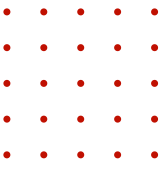
This project aimed to strengthen regional circular supply chains by promoting knowledge exchange between the Visegrad (V4) and Western Balkans (WB) regions. The focus was on improving waste management practices, fostering circular economy principles, and enhancing policy dialogue to align with European Green Deal goals.

The project successfully conducted:

- A comprehensive [regional report](#) and national reports were published on circular economy challenges and best practices. Good practices and collaboration platforms were identified, emphasizing the need for further funding for practical implementation.
- Direct target groups engaged: 80 policymakers, municipal representatives, SMEs, and CSOs through the conference which served as a platform for dialogue on waste management, circular economy, and sustainability in the Western Balkans among other topics. Key discussions included climate change and circular economy solutions, legal frameworks and policy gaps, green entrepreneurship and investment opportunities.
- The Manifesto of Collaboration was signed with an aim to foster cooperation on circular economy practices between WB and V4 countries.
- Promotional Campaign on Circular Economy to raise awareness of circular economy principles, featuring infographics & case studies and a podcast on circular economy and just transition with experts from Poland & Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Funded by: International Visegrad Fund

•  Visegrad Fund



CIBIOGO – Citizen Participation in Biodiversity Governance

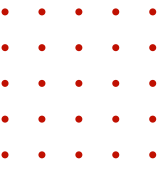
The project duration is four years and brings together nine European partners, from Italy, Romania, Spain, Latvia, Slovenia, Hungary, Belgium, Bosna and Herzegovina and CRPM is a discovery partner in observer status around the theme of citizen participation in biodiversity governance. We see this as a great opportunity to learn from leading experts with extensive experience in both biodiversity governance and citizen engagement, not only in policy-making but also in biodiversity protection and preservation. Our journey will consist of several Peer-Review Meetings, where we will share our case studies and perspectives and will learn and network with our fellow partners.

In the course of 2024, we participated in Peer Review Meeting in Bohinj, Slovenia which focused on resolving user conflicts in biodiversity governance; the second Peer Review Meeting was held in Vidzeme, Latvia and focused on enhancing citizen participation in biodiversity governance through communication campaigns and citizen science.



Funded by:





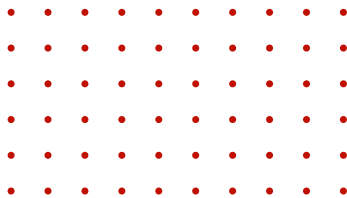
BeALert – AI-Powered Early Warning System For Improving Local Risk Management Related To Climate Change

In 2024, we proudly launched the BEALERT project, our first initiative within the framework of Interreg Adrion program. This interregional cooperation project brings together partners from Italy, Croatia, Slovenia, Montenegro, Albania, and Macedonia to enhance the preparedness of local communities and risk managers for climate change impacts.

BEALERT focuses on reducing climate change risk exposure, particularly in IPA Adrion inner areas, by integrating artificial intelligence (AI) and big data into an early warning system. The project aims to establish a platform for efficient risk management that includes AI-powered interactive maps and real-time warning message dissemination. It targets local authorities, civil society organizations, and risk managers while also engaging the broader public through awareness campaigns. In 2024 under the project we organized a kick off meeting in Slovenia and have started the inception phase of the project.



Funded by:   Co-funded by the European Union 





Articulation of demographic challenges of aging and socio-economic context in the WB

In late 2024, CRPM launched the project Articulation of demographic challenges of ageing and socio-economic context in the WB, our first project funded by Agence Française de Développement (AFD) program. The implementation of the project in the three Western Balkan countries (N Macedonia, Albania, and Bosnia and Herzegovina) covers the demographic challenges, particularly the effects of the population aging process and climate change on the socio-economic and sustainable perspectives of these countries. Western Balkans is characterized by the advancement of demographic changes in recent decades and represents the most prominent depopulation zone in Europe with low birth rates and higher emigration than immigration. These trends, driven by longer life expectancy and lower birth rates as well as the prevalent trend of emigration mean more and more pressure on social security systems, especially the challenges for financial sustainability of the pension system; healthcare, and social protection but also to changes of labor market conditions and spatial development and finally to maintaining of the sustainable development in these three Western Balkan countries.

The project focuses on the relationship between population aging and climate change challenges as well as the depopulation context in particular for the three Western Balkans countries. The project aims to investigate population structure and dynamics (fertility and mortality rates, migration trends, and age structure of population) and its interaction with the socioeconomic circumstances in three countries of the Western Balkans; Macedonia, Albania, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Additionally, the project aims to take into research consideration as well as to examine in a much deeper perspective the demographic changes in these countries regarding the spatial distribution of population, shortages of the labor force and the conditions with the labor market and economic policies; elderly population; and the shifts in family dynamics as well as to identify gender equality issues as one of the essential matters related to demographic trends. The project targets local stakeholders,

academia, experts, policy-makers, and civil society organizations, while also engaging the broader public through information on project activities. A key output is to encourage collaboration and provide support and validation of research results and outcomes through regional cooperation and appropriate dissemination of research results.

Funded by:



2.3. Human Development

Increasing Employment Opportunities for Seasonal Workers in the SEE Region

In 2024, the CRPM made significant progress in implementing the "Better Employment Opportunities for Seasonal Workers" project, supported by GIZ GmbH. Early in the year, the team successfully advocated for the adoption of a law on simplified work engagement in Parliament. This included meetings with political parties, the National Federation of Farmers, trade unions, employer organizations, and key public institutions to address disagreements in the drafting process.



However, the Parliamentary elections in May 2024 brought political changes which effected the adoption pace. Despite these setbacks, the team worked on preparing the necessary groundwork, revising stakeholder analyses and action plans to align with the project's goals. The new Minister and Deputy Minister for Economy and Labour supported the law, and efforts to adapt the electronic system for implementation began. This required further adjustments due to changes in government structures and the shared responsibilities between the Public Revenue Office and the Employment Service Agency. The Ministry of Economy and Labour emphasized the reform as a high priority and worked with GIZ to establish the information system needed to complete the process.

The Macedonian approach to regulating seasonal work was presented at the Core Days Conference held in Belgrade. CRPM also focused on increasing the public awareness on the issue and opened public discussion on national broadcast TV stations on the need for formalization of the informal labour and the Ministry of Economy and Labour's efforts to propose the law and complete the process.



Funded by:  **german cooperation**
DEUTSCHE ZUSAMMENARBEIT

Implemented by: **giz**
German Development Cooperation
Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit


BETTER EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS
FOR SEASONAL WORKERS IN
NORTH MACEDONIA

Young Men's Initiative

In the second phase of implementation of this project the scope was extended from the two pilot to nine municipalities and five youth non-governmental organization were selected to implement the Young Men Initiative in their local communities. Early in the year we have delivered a Training of Trainers in Veles, Macedonia, in partnership with CARE International and SIT – Center for Counseling, Social Services and Research, for peer-educators from the partner organizations.



The project successfully established cooperation with high schools in the selected municipalities through close collaboration with partner organizations and municipal representatives. Productive communication with school pedagogical services facilitated meaningful meetings and agreements, enabling smooth implementation of activities. In total, at least 20 boys from each municipality were mobilized to join the program. Agreements with school staff ensured the effective execution of monthly workshops, while parental consent forms were obtained to authorize student participation. Comprehensive participant lists were provided to schools for their records.

As a result, cooperation was established with 13 high schools and 2 primary schools nationwide. In several municipalities, including Kavadarci and Shtip, students from multiple schools participated in the workshops for Program M and Program Y, highlighting the program's broad reach and inclusivity.



Finally, a total of 100 high-quality copies of the manual were printed, including 80 in Macedonian and 20 in Albanian, and made available to youth workers, youth organizations, and other relevant stakeholders. These manuals were strategically distributed to youth organizations and peer educators, providing them with essential tools and knowledge to enhance their activities. By delivering these resources, the project has significantly strengthened the capacity of peer educators and youth organizations to implement impactful programs and interventions, fostering meaningful and sustainable change across the high schools that were implementing the Program Y.

Funded by:



Kingdom of the Netherlands



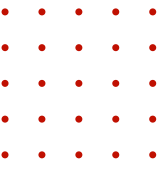
Gender Budget Watchdog Network (GBWN)

GBWN continues to fulfill and contributes to strengthening of visibility and internationally recognition of the work of the Gender Budget Watchdog Network; increasing of CSO capacities to use GRB tools watchdogging climate change policy and financing as well as improving CSOs' participation in policy and budgeting processes by using gender budget watchdog tools for increased government accountability, particularly in resilience response, climate change financing and gender responsiveness of the climate change policy framework.

In 2024 all the GBWN project partners analyzed the national budgets and submitted budget commentaries. The paper "Illuminating the Issues: Multilaterals' External Financing: Delivering on Gender Equality Commitments," was prepared and presented at number of significant events and conferences including in the [European Conference for Gender Budgeting](#) organized by the Cyprus Gender Budgeting Platform on 21-23 March, 2024 in Nicosia, at a side event during the United Nations (UN) Commission on the Status of Women (CSW68) in New York on 22 March 2024 and at the 32nd International Association for Feminist Economics (IAFFE) Annual Conference, in Rome, 3-5 July 2024 and also part of the team went to Brussels for the advocacy meetings and coalition building for influencing Multiannual-financial framework of EU in relation to gender programs.



In the sub-granting scheme, 20 CSOs received training and individual mentoring sessions in the field of advocacy in GRB and 16 sub-grants in watchdogging the resilience response were completed. 16 new grants for monitoring climate finance were awarded to CSOs and GRB Watchdogging of Climate Change Financing Training for CSOs took place in Tirana, Albania for the selected sub-grantees. GBWN completed the quantitative research on Transport impact on gender and climate change and produced 6 national reports.



The Network finalized and adopted the Network Development Strategy for GBWN based on the 2024 [in-person workshop with the network members in Macedonia](#) and second online consultation with the GBWN member CSOs, which took place on 31st of July 2024. Final Network Strategy was presented and voted for at the [Annual Meeting in December 2024](#) taking place in Veles, Macedonia.



GBWN also finalized and adopted the methodology for a gender analysis of the transportation sector towards gender and climate-responsive policy solutions and completed research for transportation from gender and climate change perspective. [GRB podcasts are now available also on Spotify.](#)



Funded by:  Austrian Development Agency



Through Gender Lenses – Appraising Budgets and Policies; Watchdogging Local Action Plans for Gender Equality Implementation

With overall objective through structured networking and cooperation with local governments to shape local policies and budgets to respond to needs of women and men, the EU funded project Through gender lenses was closed in mid 2024. The results achieved within the year are the following:

End-line research survey to determine change in needs and attitudes, perceptions on gender equality, participation and decision-making

At the end of the project, an end-line research survey was conducted to assess changes in needs, attitudes, and perceptions regarding gender equality, participation, and decision-making. The methodology replicated that of the baseline study, allowing for a direct comparison of results. CRPM employed appropriate data collection methods and instruments, including a comprehensive questionnaire covering key dimensions such as 1) perceptions and attitudes, 2) needs, and 3) participation in the decision-making process, alongside semi-structured interview questions. This approach ensured consistency and accuracy in measuring the project's impact. A total of 733 respondents (363 women and 370 men) including CSO representatives, municipal administration and citizens from the targeted municipalities were mobilized.

Community of practice

The community of practice, focused on the theme "Gender-Responsive Budgeting: Between Desired and Successful Practices of Redistribution of Public Finances at Local, National, and Regional Levels for the Needs of Women and Men" Was organized on May 30–31, 2024 at AUE-FON University in Skopje. The community of practice was organized as a closing event under the project "Through gender lenses: appraising budgets and policies, watchdogging local action plans for gender equality implementation" funded by the European Union. It brought together more than 90 professionals, academics and activists from 15 countries at the GRB community of practice. The community of practice's program was developed through a call for papers. In total, we have received 16 abstracts and 1 workshop proposal, showcasing a diverse range of topics and insights.

Funded by:



The Project is funded
by the European Union



Closing the Gender Gap: Building Financial Literacy for Girls

The project's goal is to enhance financial literacy among young women and youth, empowering them with the skills and confidence to make informed financial decisions, manage budgets, and strengthen their roles in decision-making and community involvement, ultimately promoting social and economic inclusion. It was implemented in the following municipalities: Gostivar, Tetovo, Struga and Ohrid.

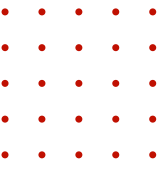
Within 2024 six (6) financial literacy modules were developed and made available in Macedonian and Albanian language and four (4) peer educators were trained, which further implemented the financial literacy workshops in three secondary schools including "Josip Broz Tito" Struga, SOSU "Cyril and Methodius" in Ohrid and in the high school "7th of March" Tetovo. The workshops in the municipalities of Gostivar were implemented in the Youth and Community Center in Gostivar.



These workshops were delivered through interactive group activities and discussions, real-life case studies, and examples tailored for youth understanding, using multimedia and technology to engage participants. This resulted with forty (40) young women and youth, acquire knowledge and skills for making informed financial decisions. Finally, a brief policy analysis on the impact of financial literacy in reducing the gender gap in the domain of money was produced and a policy brief published.

Funded by:  **UK International Development**
Partnership | Progress | Prosperity


British Embassy Skopje



Guardian Shield: Operationalization of the referral mechanism, strengthening resilience against radicalization and extremism in North Macedonia

The initial contact with the National Coordinator for Countering Violent Extremism and Terrorism (NCCVET) was established at the beginning of the project but due to the parliamentary elections in the country significant delays occurred, which hindered the early organization of planned meetings. After the new Coordinator was appointed the CRPM team started collaboration with NCCVET and key stakeholders from the municipalities of Kumanovo, Štip and Gostivar where the action is implemented. Agreements for cooperation have been successfully signed with Gostivar, Kumanovo and Štip. These municipalities were chosen based on their alignment with the project's criteria and the willingness of local stakeholders to engage in the initiative.

Capacity building sessions aim were held ensuring alignment with the National Strategy for Countering Violent Extremism (2023-2027), further advancing the project's goals. In the same time a refresher training for front-line workers to acquire skills to detect early signs of radicalization was held.



Implemented in partnership with



Funded by:



The Project is funded
by the European Union



3. CRPM Events

CRPM Conference – The Undeclared: Political, Economic And Sustainable Future Of Western Balkans



The Conference was organized to mark the twentieth anniversary of CRPM's foundation. The topic was "The Undeclared: Political, Economic And Sustainable Future Of Western Balkans". It featured four panels and two workshop discussions. It gathered over 100 participants from 30 countries and debated the issues with which the Western Balkan region will struggle in the next five years, as well as offered policy approaches towards sustainable solution. The Conference was opened by the first female Macedonian President Prof. Dr. Gordana Siljanovska Davkova.

The End of EU's Normative Power?! How can EU Enhance the Effectiveness of Democracies in the Western Balkans?

This panel discussed what is the biggest challenge and biggest potential for regional integration and the EU enlargement process of the WB6 in the EU. Twenty years of after the biggest EU enlargement, when the EU enlarged for 10 new member states, the process has been stalled regarding the Western Balkans. EU is losing its normative power and corruption is increasing, the convergence is decreasing and so does the effectiveness of democracies. It is urgent that the EU adapt its strategy of engagement with the region. This should include a more balanced and nuanced approach in which to prioritize promotion of democratic principles, rule of law and democratic institutions, together with security matters. EU should introduce tangible incentives for progress while maintaining clear drawbacks for any backsliding should be part of the conditionality principle implementation: credible, clear and assertive in relation with rule of law and democratic institutions. The EU growth plan being a priority at the moment might be an offering of the best of both worlds which is the EEA or the 'Norway model' for Western Balkans.



Towards a Just Circular Economy Transition

This panel provided a platform to discuss the tackling challenges on just transition through policy solutions and exchange of best practices in the field of circular economy solutions, introducing innovation in waste management, new technologies and effective and barrier-free circular economy supply chain measures and possibilities. It also served to inform the audience of the waste to energy possibilities, regenerative production practices in businesses, and how we should support young entrepreneurs in creating circular solutions. The panel highlighted a regional know-how exchange to promote a shift towards a just circular economy transition and sustainable use of natural resources. In sectors as diverse as plastics, bio waste, food, or textiles and with the strong engagement of both public and business sectors





Stability and Security - Does No War Mean Peace?

The panel provided a comprehensive examination of the multifaceted security challenges facing the Western Balkans, emphasizing the intricate interplay between global geopolitical dynamics and regional stability. Secretary-General António Guterres's assessment of the heightened and complex global security threats served as a backdrop, highlighting the paralysis and divided stances within the UN Security Council on crucial human rights and security issues.



GBWN Community of Practice

The Community of Practice took place in Skopje. The conference gathered Gender Budget Watchdog Network (GBWN) partners, regional experts, and international scholars to discuss the role of GRB in ensuring equitable public finance distribution. The event emphasized the importance of civil society organizations (CSOs), policymakers, media, and local practitioners working together to enhance gender-responsive policies. Key discussions highlighted the importance of linking CSOs with academia and public sector practitioners to create synergies in advancing GRB. The conference explored international development trends, challenges in implementation, and best practices in applying GRB tools. Experts pointed out that while GRB is essential for aligning financial planning with the needs of both men and women, its implementation remains limited due to institutional resistance, lack of prioritization, and a need for a fundamental shift in mindset.

Case studies from Croatia, Italy, Spain, and Turkey showcased practical applications of GRB, including tax policy analysis, gender-inclusive infrastructure planning, and the impact of public spending on women's well-being. Discussions also emphasized that GRB does not necessarily require additional funding but rather a reallocation of existing resources to better address gender disparities. The event concluded with a focus on the EU's role in promoting GRB practices in recipient countries, such as the Western Balkans and the Republic of Moldova. Participants underscored the need for the EU to integrate GRB into its financial systems, setting a precedent for its implementation at all levels of governance.



GO Circular

In partnership with GIZ, we organized the final conference titled "Sustainability in Grape and Wine Production in the Tikvesh Region" at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel in Skopje. This event marked the culmination of our two-year project, "Development of an Organic Waste Management System in Grapes and Wine Production in the Tikvesh Region".



The conference aimed to promote the integration of circular economy principles into the wine production process in the Tikvesh Region, focusing on the reduction and reuse of bio-waste, as well as emphasizing sustainability and quality standards in winemaking, particularly concerning geographical indications.

The conference featured two engaging panel discussions: "Development of an Organic Waste Management System in Grapes and Wine Production in the Tikvesh Region" and "Sustainability and Quality in Wine Production" and a mini-fair where participants could explore innovative circular economy products derived from wine and vine production bio-waste. These sessions provided a platform for knowledge exchange among experts, government representatives, business leaders, and professional associations. This achievement underscores the power of sustainable practices in the wine industry, and we are committed to continuing our efforts by sharing our success and actively seeking out new, innovative solutions for a more sustainable future.

Skopje – Sharing is Caring

In the framework of the EU Mobility Week, CRPM organized an event that took the form of a guided exploration through Skopje's Old Town, aligning with that year's theme – "Shared Public Spaces". The event provided participants with an opportunity to explore the city's shared urban spaces and immerse themselves in the rich traditional architecture of Skopje's historic heart.

The tour was guided by Ksenija Putilin, a CRPM colleague, alongside MP Velika Stojkova Serafimova, who shared their insights on the cultural, environmental and the importance of urban mobility regarding these shared spaces.

The tour began at the top of the hill, where the Museum of Modern Art is located, and proceeded through the charming, shaded streets of the Old Bazaar. Participants explored not only the traditional architecture but also the climate-resilient features of these structures, which have withstood the test of time. The significance of public spaces within the context of sustainability and urban mobility was emphasized throughout the event.



The event was attended by 30 participants, including the Deputy Ambassador of the German Embassy, representatives from the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning (MOEPP), Karposh Municipality, and various NGOs, all of whom contributed to the lively discussions surrounding sustainable urban mobility and the preservation of Skopje's historic spaces.



World Forum for Democracy

From 6-8th of November 2024, a delegation from the CRPM School of Public Policy Mother Theresa participated at the World Forum for Democracy at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, France . The topic of the Forum was "Democracy and Diversity - Can we transcend the divides?" In a year during which around one half of the world's population has been called to the polls, the 2024 edition of the World Forum for Democracy addressed the following topics: the critical threats posed by disinformation and divisive political narratives around diversity, including in the context of election campaigns.



The Forum featured inspirational talks by thought leaders. Analytical labs challenged proposed new solutions and identified ideas worth spreading. Moreover, the Forum fostered the creation of networks and communities of practice, serving as incubators for turning ideas into action. Our delegation visited the Macedonian Mission to the Council, and the European Court on Human Rights, where we listened to a presentation by Judge Jovan Ilievski.



Young Man's Initiative Community of Practice

Educators, youth workers, representatives from the Ministry of Education, and NGO leaders from across the Balkans gathered for this two-day event organized in Veles, Macedonia. This Regional Community of Practice aimed at sharing experiences and best practices for integrating Program Y and M into school and community settings. Participants collaborated, exchanged ideas, and discussed effective strategies to enhance youth engagement and promote gender equality, nonviolence, and healthy lifestyles within educational environments. The event aimed to foster a supportive network that empowers educators to implement Life Skills Education programming effectively, ultimately benefiting students and their communities.



Keynote speakers highlighted success stories from Program M and Y, emphasizing their impact on youth development and the promotion of nonviolence. In-depth discussions explored N. Macedonia's achievements, with local organizations presenting their efforts to engage young people through initiatives like Be a Man clubs and educational workshops. Interactive sessions, such as World Café discussions, allowed participants to brainstorm ways to tailor life skills programs to vulnerable youth, utilize youth clubs for engagement, and position schools as community hubs for promoting gender equality and nonviolence. These discussions yielded actionable strategies for overcoming challenges, including addressing parental prejudices and securing policy support.

The participation of the Ministry of Education added significant value to the event. Their presence underscored the importance of institutional support in integrating life skills education and provided valuable insights into aligning these initiatives with national education policies.



Smart Balkans Tirana Think Tank Forum

In November 2024 CRPM co-organized the Tirana Think Tank Forum on the topic “Think Tanks in the Time of Hybrid Regimes – Challenges to Impact, Integrity, and Independence”. The event served as an invaluable platform for engaging discussions and actionable insights on the evolving role of think tanks in shaping evidence-based policies and fostering democratic governance.



The CRPM team actively participated in all the panels and discussions, while our Founder Dr. Risteska contributed as both a panelist and moderator exemplifying our ongoing commitment to advancing impactful policy research and ensuring Think-Tank independence in increasingly complex environments.

These discussions offered practical strategies for maintaining relevance and integrity while responding to the pressing challenges of hybrid regimes.



4. CRPM Publications

Policy Briefs

Policy Brief: Gender gap in finance

Brief analysis of gender gaps in long-term strategy for climate action with an Action Plan (Macedonian)

Policy Studies

Regional report – Towards regional circular supply chains: Knowledge exchange from Visegrad countries (V4) to Western Balkans (WB)

Circular Waste Management & Circular Economy Case Studies

Circular waste management & circular economy in Poland

Circular Waste Management & Circular Economy in Albania

Circular waste management & circular economy in Slovakia

Circular waste management & circular economy in North Macedonia

Circular waste management & circular economy in Serbia

Circular waste management & circular economy in Hungary

Gap analysis of the legal and policy framework determining needs for development of circular economy model in Tikvesh region

Study for analysis of the organic waste created with wine production and the potentials of vine treatment in Tikvesh region wineries (Macedonian)



Policy Initiatives

Addressing Gender Responsive Budget Implementation

Proposed policies for development of a circular economy model in the Tikvesh region (Macedonian)

Guides



Youth – Innovative Approaches in GBV Prevention and Healthy Promotion for Young Men and Women

Guidebook on Advocacy and Lobbying for Gender Responsive Budgeting and Climate Change

Guidebook for Gender Budget Watchdogging in Climate Change Financing

Guidebook on Gender Impact Assessments for Budgets

Guidebook on Gender Budget Analysis

Guidebook on cost-benefit/cost-effectiveness assessment

Compass for biodiversity management (Macedonian)

5. CRPM Financial Report 2024

5.1. Statement of revenue and expenses

in MKD thousands

CATEGORY	AMOUNT (MKD)
Revenues (2024)	
Granted donations and other revenue	57,327
Financial revenues	117
Transferred surpluses from previous years	76,477
Total Revenues	133,921
Expenses	
Material cost and services	7,124
Expenses for employees	14,229
Capital expenses	345
Other operating expenses	64,032
Total Expenses	85,730
Surplus	
Surplus of revenue over expenses before tax	48,024
Income tax	/
Surplus of revenue over expenses after tax	48,024



A 5x5 grid of red dots, totaling 25 dots. The dots are arranged in 5 rows and 5 columns, forming a square pattern.

*61.5 MKD = 1 EUR

A decorative graphic consisting of a horizontal row of twelve triangles pointing to the right. The triangles are colored in a repeating pattern: black, grey, red, yellow, black, grey, red, yellow, black, grey, red, and yellow.

5.2 Balance Sheet

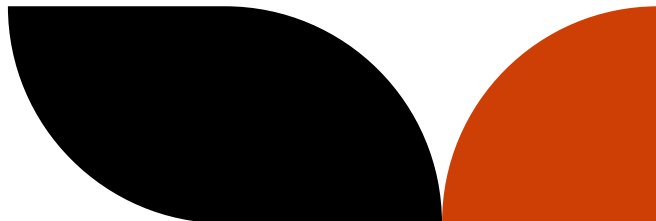
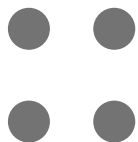
As of 31st of December, 2024 in MKD thousands:

CATEGORY	AMOUNT (MKD)
Current Assets	
Cash and cash equivalents	48,036
Accounts receivables	25
Prepayments	239
Total Current Assets	48,300
Non-Current Assets	
Property, plant, and equipment (net)	1,361
Non-material assets (software, license, patents)	12
Total Non-Current Assets	1,373
TOTAL ASSETS	49,673
Current Liabilities and Operating Funds	
Accounts payables	187
Tax payable	4
Salary payables	/
Other current liabilities	653
Total Current Liabilities	844
Operating fund	1373
Surplus of revenue over expenses after taxation	48,024
Total Operating Fund	48,397
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND FUNDS	50,241

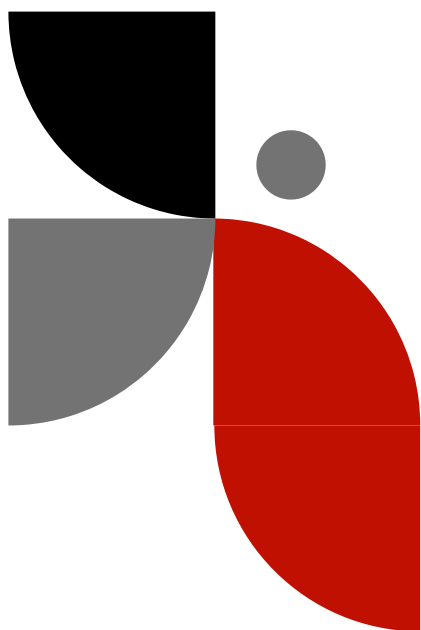
Balance Sheet

As of 31st of December, 2024 in EUR thousands (61.5 MKD = 1 EUR)

CATEGORY	AMOUNT (EUR) - 2024
Current Assets	
Cash and cash equivalents	781
Accounts receivables	0.4
Prepayments	4
Total Current Assets	785
Non-Current Assets:	
Property, plant, and equipment (net)	22
Non-material assets (software, license, patents)	0.2
Total Non-Current Assets	22
TOTAL ASSETS	807
Current Liabilities and Operating Funds	
Accounts payables	3
Tax payable	/
Salary payables	/
Other current liabilities	11
Total Current Liabilities	14
Operating fund	22
Surplus of revenue over expenses after taxation	781
Total Operating Fund	803
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND FUNDS	817



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April, 2025

