



GONG ANNUAL REPORT

2003

1. ELECTION PROGRAM

A. ELECTION MONITORING

Parliamentary elections and a number of local by-elections and town/municipality neighborhood council elections were held in 2003. In addition, elections for representatives and members of the national minority councils in units of local and regional self-government were held in Croatia for the first time. Elections were monitored by the total of **3,257 observers**.

- **Parliamentary Elections (November 23, 2003)**

Elections were conducted at 6,795 polling stations in Croatia and 155 polling stations abroad and were monitored by 3,000 GONG observers. In its final report, GONG assessed that the elections were carried out in accordance with the election regulations, although there were some problems with the voting of members of national minorities, voters' lists and violations of election silence. It was stressed out, in the case if election legislation remains the same, positive assessment for future elections will not be possible, regardless of the quality and the atmosphere of democracy surrounding the elections.

- **Elections for Representatives and Members of National Minority Councils (May 18, 2003)**

Under The Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities and the Government's decision, members of national minorities in Croatia had the right to vote for members of 471 minority councils and 141 minority representatives in 872 polling stations. GONG's 21 mobile teams visited 418 polling stations and monitored elections. The elections were carried out in accordance with the law and the mandatory instructions issued by the State Election Commission (SEC).

- **Re-run and repeated re-run local elections (16):** Viskovci, Virovitica, Orahovica, Slavonski Samac, Fuzine, Lokve, Novigrad, Klis, Kijevo, Stubicke Toplice, Gvozd, Lobar, Radoboj, Tounj, Galovac, Vojnic, Kolan.

These local elections (except in Novigrad, Klis and Galovac) were monitored by 31 observers. In almost every town/municipality GONG activists distributed brochures about local elections.

- **Elections for Town/Municipality Neighbourhood Councils:** Vinkovci, Nova Bukovica, Lipik, Slatina, Pozega, Porec, Dramalj, Opatija, Cabar, Pula, Kraljevica, Rijeka, Pazin, Labin, Opatija, Matulji, Pula, Korcula, Policnik, Stari Grad, Knin, Konavle, Zuljane, Samobor, Ljubescica, Novska, Klinca Sela, Varazdin, Karlovac, Sisak, Krapinske Toplice, Cakovec, Beretinec, Dvor, Veliko Trgovisce, Novi Marof, Sv. Ilija, Klostar Ivanic, Kriz, Krapina, Vidovec.

Except in Cakovec, Zuljane, Krapina, Vidovec, Klostar Ivanic and Cabar, GONG activists distributed brochures and posters in all towns/municipalities. In 18 towns and municipalities, 52 observers monitored elections.

- **Local referendums:** Komiza (on maritime culture production and its impact on environment) and Senj (on status within the Licko-Senjska County).

Local referendum in Komiza (Island of Vis) was monitored by 2 observers.

- **Elections in other countries:**

- **Presidential elections in Armenia, February 2003**

- ▶ Upon invitation from the Croatian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Suzana Jasic joined the OSCE/ODIHR election-monitoring mission in Armenia as a short-term observer.

- **Parliamentary elections in Georgia, November 2003**

- ▶ Six GONG representatives, five interns and one volunteer, through OSI funds, participated in OSCE/ODIHR Election Monitoring Mission for Georgian Parliamentary elections as short-term observers.

B. EDUCATING AND INFORMING THE CITIZENS

▪ Parliamentary Elections

During October and November, GONG conducted numerous campaign activities in order to educate and inform the citizens.

- ▶ 800,000 educational brochures were produced, containing information about the elections. Almost 650,000 brochures were inserted into daily newspapers and into a number of local newspapers. 60,000 leaflets inviting citizens to monitor the elections were printed and distributed by GONG activists.

- ▶ Educational posters were printed in cooperation with the State Election Committee and were distributed as a part of election material to polling stations.

- ▶ 4 video and audio clips were produced and broadcasted on 5 TV and 49 radio stations. All TV stations and many radio stations provided free of charge broadcasting.

- ▶ Additional web site www.izbori-info.hr was set up containing information regarding elections.

- ▶ 060 info line was set up and more than 13,000 questions were answered.

- ▶ 30 “Citizens’ Hours” with the subject of elections and election campaign were broadcasted on radio stations around the country.

- ▶ 16 press conferences were held and 30 press releases were issued in connection with campaign, elections and election procedure.

▪ Elections for Representatives and Members of National Minority Councils

Since this was the first time that this type of elections took place in Croatia, GONG carried out an educational campaign, encouraged by the OSCE Mission to Croatia.

- ▶ “A Guide to Elections” was created and distributed to all interested parties. It was also put up on GONG’s web site.

- ▶ 30,000 copies of educational brochures were produced and distributed to national minorities’ associations, the media and to local electoral bodies.

- ▶ 22 “Citizens’ Hours” were broadcasted on radio stations with the subject of elections.

- ▶ A video clip was produced and broadcasted free of charge on Croatian National Television (HRT) and one local TV station (OTV).

- ▶ A flow of information on election process was provided via 060 info line to citizens, candidates, national and international institutions and the media.

! This was the first systematic cooperation with electoral bodies in connection with the educational material distribution. GONG educational brochures could have been found on many polling stations in Croatia and polling committees found them quite useful. As a result, the cooperation continued for the Parliamentary Elections when educational posters for voters were put up at polling stations.

C. I VOTE FOR THE FIRST TIME

The project “I Vote for the First Time”, created in 2001, was extended and enhanced with the aim of encouraging young people to take a more active role in Croatia’s political life. Having in mind that high school seniors acquire their right to vote when they turn 18, GONG was determined to help them understand their election rights and duties and get involved in democratization processes.

At the beginning of 2003, activities had continued with the school year 2002/03 project and in autumn, the fourth project season started for the school year 2003/04. The project, officially recommended by the Ministry of Education and Sports, was carried out in the form of interactive

workshops held by teams of 38 trainers, usually young unemployed lawyers, political scientists, sociologists or senior students from those faculties.

The overall goal of the project for the 2002/03 school year was to conduct 600 educative workshops all over Croatia, but total number increased to 711 due to great interest from the schools. As a result, **21,000 students** from 197 schools took part in the workshop.

In 2003/04 school year, workshops were conducted in 219 high schools. All 818 workshops were held in the first term, from October to December 2003 by 46 trainers. More than **21,500 students** attended the workshops, which is 45% of the total number of high school seniors in Croatia.

! Since the beginning of the project and the first workshops that were conducted around the same time as the local elections in May 2001, to this day, four seasons of the project have been carried out and total of 58,000 students participated in 2,089 workshops. Out of 365 high schools in Croatia, 255 of them joined the project, which makes 70% of the total number of high schools in Croatia.

"I Vote for the First Time" workshops supplemented the existing high school curriculum, and since they are based on more informal methods of transferring information, students' positive evaluation of the project was one of the most important reasons for continuing the project.

D. ELECTION PACKAGE

"Election Package" project started in the spring of 2002, after the Delegation of European Commission in Zagreb agreed to support the project and it was finished in 2003. The aim of the project was to organize public debates and create recommendations for amending and/or passing five laws that regulate election process: *Voters' Lists, Political Parties, Election Law, State Election Committee as a Permanent Body, and Election Campaign Financing*. In line with the aim of the project, the last round-table debate was organized in this report period: The Law on financing Election Campaigns, in April 2003.

Before every roundtable, expert debate workgroups were formed in order to prepare working material for the debates. Response from political parties and the media was satisfactory and some of the topics became the centre of media attention as the elections drew near.

After each roundtable debate, recommendations were sent to all political parties and institutions such as the Croatian Parliament, the Government, various ministries, and to independent experts and the media. After the project ended, a publication containing all recommendations adopted in this project was published and sent to 300-odd institutions and individuals in Croatia. Mr. Nenad Zakosek, professor at the Zagreb Faculty of Political Sciences, presented the publication to the Croatian Parliament. The recommendations will be used in future GONG activities, because Croatia is yet to undergo a serious reform of its election legislation.

2. PARLIAMENT PROGRAM

The "Parliament Program", with its main aims - increasing citizens' confidence in democratic institutions and their representatives by introducing the citizens to their work, encouraging communication between voters and their elected representatives and transparency of state bodies - made significant results and is still developing.

A. OPEN PARLIAMENT

229 citizens attended Parliament's sessions and **3,000 citizens** visited Parliament within *Monday Tours*. Most of them were students from 56 high schools from all around Croatia. Meetings with 83 members of Parliament (many of them accepted our invitation several times) were organized for

high school students outside Zagreb.

! In the beginning of 2003, it was agreed with the Parliamentary Staff Service that Parliament interns would guide educational tours instead of the Public Relations Department staff. After completing a training course, interns successfully started guiding the tours in March.

!! From the start of the project (spring 2000) a total of 602 citizens attended Parliamentary sessions and 6,617 citizens visited Parliament as a part of Monday Tours.

!!! From the start of the project, a total of 83 schools visited Croatian Parliament one or more times.

B. CITIZENS' HOUR

“Citizens’ Hour” project started in November 2000 with the aim of organizing meetings of citizens and their elected representatives at local and national level.

During this report period **173 “Citizens’ Hours”** were organized - 111 radio talk shows and 62 panel discussions. **509 guests** (members of Parliament, town council members, ministers, town and municipality mayors, county mayors, experts, activists, etc) participated in “Citizens’ Hours”. More than **3,375 citizens** attended panel discussions, and 272 citizens asked questions during radio talk shows.

! From the start of the project, total of 444 “Citizens’ Hours” were organized.

C. GETTING TO KNOW LOCAL REPRESENTATIVE BODIES

Following the model of *opening* Croatian Parliament to the citizens, in October 2000 GONG started the project of informing citizens about their right to attend sessions of local representative bodies and organizing attendance for those who were interested.

In the period covered by this report, GONG regional offices staff and volunteers attended **11 sessions** of different local representative bodies.

D. INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

During 2003, 9 new interns entered the Program, and after having finished the training, started their volunteer work. 22 students left – most of them successfully finished Internship Program when Parliament dissolved in October 2003, or they found a job or they had other academic obligations. The total of **36 students** volunteered in 2003 on different levels of government. At the beginning of 2003, a mailing list for interns was set up in order to make it easier for them to communicate and share experiences.

▶ The Croatian Parliament

The Presidency of the Parliament officially recognized internship program in Croatian Parliament on April 10, 2001, which enabled students and young professionals to volunteer for MPs. Since then, 32 students took part in the Program and worked as volunteers for 26 MPs.

During 2003, 27 students volunteered in Croatian Parliament for 21 MPs and parliamentary party caucuses. 8 students will continue their internship in the new Parliament.

▶ The Croatian Government

At the end of 2001, students begun to volunteer in several Croatian Government departments upon their demand. During 2003, 2 students volunteered in the Office for Social Partnership and 4 started internship in Prime Minister's Office. Since the beginning of the project, total of 8 students volunteered in Government departments.

▸ Local level

During 2003, 5 interns volunteered at the local level in Primorsko-Goranska County Government, Zagreb City Council and Zadar City Government.

! Since November 2002, several interesting guests from Croatian politics, media or civil society have been hosted during interns' regular weekly meetings. During 2003, interns met with minister Mrs. Gordana Sobol, journalists reporting on Parliament (Mr. Mislav Bago, Mr. Zlatko Crncec and Mr. Krunoslav Vidic), deputy chief editor of Jutarnji List Mr. Davor Butkovic, and Nenad Bakic, the owner of www.mojposao.net web site and headhunting agency Selectio. In Autumn, MP Mr. Tonci Tadic, and than Prime Minister Mr. Ivica Racan were hosted.

E. CARDS 2001 - Sustainable Return of Refugees and Displaced Persons - Civil Society Project

In November 2002, CARE International, GONG and ZaMirNet started joint implementation of a one-year-long project called the Sustainable Return of Refugees and Displaced Persons - Civil Society Project, which is a part of the European Union CARDS 2001 national program. The project was carried out in Knin, Gracac, Dvor and Glina with the aim of supporting the rehabilitation of the social structure and the strengthening of democratic standards. As an integral part of the project, GONG conducted more intensively its "Open Parliament", "Citizens' Hour" and "I Vote for the First Time" projects in these towns and municipalities.

A total of 51 "Citizens' Hours" were held, hosting 147 different representatives of local and regional self-government, various government offices and institutions and members of parliament. *Citizens' Hours* usually dealt with local issues (more than 150 people gathered at the discussion in Gracac municipality). Total of 936 citizens took part in CARDS "Citizens' Hours". More than 1,000 citizens visited the Croatian Parliament within the "Open Parliament" program and 27 members of parliament received them.

Since the project officially ended in November 2003, a research on the possibility of continuing and spreading the project to other cities and municipalities was launched – all partners agreed on a new project proposal for 2004/2005.

! Croatian president, Mr. Stjepan Mesic was a guest on "Citizens' Hours" in Glina and Dvor.

F. AD HOC INITIATIVES

As a part of GONG's cooperation with the Croatian Parliament, GONG suggested several initiatives with the aim of making the work of members of Parliament easier and facilitating their and citizens' access to information:

▸ **The content of the official web site of the Croatian Parliament**

Ever since the year 2000, GONG has been suggesting improvements to the web site of Croatian Parliament. GONG closely cooperated with the Committee on Information, IT and the Media, which was in charge of editing the contents of the future web site of the Parliament, by attending Committee's sessions on the issue. The Committee formed a working group for editing the content of the web site that consisted of representatives of the Parliaments' expert services and representatives of NGOs. While the new web site was in creation, GONG suggested that the existing web site should be improved by adding the daily schedule for plenary sessions. The suggestion was accepted and a new link, *Today in Parliament*, was added, on which citizens could find information about the daily schedule for the plenary session.

New Parliamentary web site was set up in May 2003 and it is regularly improved and updated. On the presentation of the new web site, Parliament's Public Relations Department commended GONG's contribution to it.

▸ **An open session of the Committee for Constitution, Standing Orders and Political System with the subject of parliamentary parties' annual financial reports**

Under the Law on Political Parties, parliamentary parties, which had received funds from the state budget, have the obligation to submit annual financial reports for the previous financial year to the Committee. GONG once again launched an initiative in February 2003 for an open session of the Committee for Constitution, Standing orders and Political System on which the financial reports of the parties would be discussed. A session of the Committee was held in February 2003 discussing the distribution of funds to parliamentary parties for the year 2003. GONG used this opportunity and distributed a leaflet with several fundamental questions about the financing of political parties to the media and to the members of the Committee. One external member of the Committee asked that the Committee reach the conclusion to hold a special session on the received financial reports. The chairman of the Committee supported the initiative but the session has not been held to date.

Other GONG's advocacy initiatives:

▶ Initiative for enabling GONG to become an organization opens to civil military servants

After the adoption of the Law on Civil Service GONG was included into the Register of Institutions and Organizations Open to Civil Military Servants. In July 2003, one civil military servant started his service in GONG regional office Zadar.

▶ Initiative for amending election legislation

Since all political parties agreed to make only minimal changes in the election legislation, only a small number of GONG's recommendations from the "Election Package" project were included in amendments. Moreover, before the parliamentary discussion about the amendments to the Law took place, it was uncertain whether the provisions that could improve the conducting of the elections would be introduced. Four GONG's amendments were adopted in April 2003 in the amended Election Law - shortening election silence period from midnight to 7pm on the Election Day; determining the rights and obligations of all electronic media with national concession when covering elections; the use of exact D'Hondt method for counting votes and harmonizing the provisions on the protection of the right to vote with the Constitutional Law on the Constitutional Court which granted the right of appeal to a group of 100 voters or 5% of voters of a constituency. In amending the Election Law, Croatian Parliament followed GONG's initiative and adopted conclusions that obliged the government to draft the Law on the State Election Committee and amend the Law on Voters' Lists.

▶ Initiative for creating a draft bill of the Law on the State Election Committee as a Permanent Body

At the same time when the amendments to the Election Law were being passed, the Parliament obliged the Government to draw up a draft bill of the Law on the SEC. After the deadline for making the draft expired (June 2003) GONG contacted the Ministry of Justice, Administration and Local Self-Government and offered help, which was accepted. First draft bill of the law was delivered to experts for their opinion at the end of August 2003, and more than 90% of GONG recommendations from the "Election Package" project were accepted.

G. LEGAL AID SERVICES

Citizens can make use of legal aid services by visiting the office in person, or via phone, email or fax. GONG answers their questions directly, and if their questions refer to issues outside our competence, we encourage them to turn to state institutions (e.g. Government Office for Human Rights, Office of the Ombudsman, etc.) or nongovernmental organizations that should be able to help them.

In the period covered by this report, GONG dealt with **62** various **inquiries** for legal help.

3. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

A. TRAINING COURSES AND CONSULTATIONS

GONG trainers conducted several training courses and consultations and organized educational programs for organizations from Eastern Europe and former Soviet Union countries. Apart from providing training on election monitoring and campaign management, most organizations asked us to provide them with information about "Parliament Program" and other GONG's activities, as well as organizational development and management.

▶ **Assesment of ISFED Georgia**

Following an invitation by the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), Suzana Jasic visited Georgian ISFED (International Society for Free Elections and Democracy) in March with the aim of evaluating organizational development and needs. After her return, the report was submitted to the NDI and it served to provide GONG further engagement in Georgia.

▶ **Educational training for Partnership in Kiev**

In May, GONG representative Selena Sainovic conducted an educational training seminar about the responsibility of institutions and volunteer animation. The seminar was organized by NDI for representatives of Partnership from Belarus on the forthcoming elections in Belarus. Colleagues from other NGOs from different East European countries and the countries of the former USSR also shared their experiences.

▶ **Educational seminar for representatives of ISFED in Georgia**

The World Learning organization invited GONG to Georgia to conduct a seven-day-long training seminar on all aspects of election campaign. The seminar was conducted by Suzana Jasic, Masa Kovacevic, Aleksandra Kuratko and Vanja Skoric. 36 ISFED representatives from the head office and regional offices, as well as local coordinators, attended the seminar.

▶ **Consultations for representatives of the ISFED in Georgia**

In October, a four-day-long follow up training seminar for ISFED was organized in Tbilisi and Kutaisi, where consultations on action plan and final preparations for Georgian Parliamentary elections took place.

B. INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES, SEMINARS AND VISITS

▶ *January 2003* - Invited by the French Embassy, Aleksandra Kuratko participated in a two-day visit of the delegation of Croatian journalists, scientists and NGO representatives to NATO Headquarter in Belgium. The purpose of the visit was to be acquainted with the structure of NATO and to exchange views with the high representatives of the Organization.

▶ *April 2003* - GONG representative Aleksandra Kuratko was invited by the World Bank Zagreb Office to give a presentation about GONG to the World Bank staff that deals with NGOs. Several other NGOs also gave presentations.

▶ *April 2003* - Vlatka Svedruzic attended the *Monitoring and Evaluation* seminar organized by CARE International in Vienna. CARE representatives from 11 countries attended the seminar and GONG was invited as a representative of one of CARE's partner organizations. Apart from participating in the seminar, Vlatka also presented GONG's activities.

▶ *May 2003* - Vanja Skoric participated in the international conference *Election Legislation-Comparative Analysis* organized by the ABA/CEELI office in Minsk and the Independent Organization for Legal Research. After the conference, Vanja worked with Belarusian legal experts on drawing up practical recommendations for amendments to the election legislation.

- ▶ *June 2003* - Igor Pavlekovic participated in the three-day conference in Sarajevo *The Second Communication University in South Eastern Europe* organized by Media Plan Institute in Sarajevo and the International Network of Communication Universities in Bordeaux. Igor held a presentation titled *Non-Governmental Sector in Information Society- GONG case study*

- ▶ *June 2003* - GONG was the logistics coordinator of the big international conference of domestic non-partisan observers that was held in Zagreb on June 25-29. The conference was jointly organized by the NEEDS Network and OSCE/ODIHR and it hosted more than 30 NGO representatives from all around Europe and Central Asia, and 5 representatives from Africa, Latin America, Asia and USA. Representatives of EU and NDI also attended the conference. Croatian Foreign minister Picula delivered welcome address and the conference resulted in the adoption of the Declaration that confirmed the importance of domestic election monitoring for the development of democracy, and it attempted to develop a standard of monitoring common to all organizations. Vanja Skoric and Aleksandra Kuratko attended the conference on behalf of GONG.

- ▶ *June 2003* - the first assembly of DARE (Democracy and Rights Education in Europe) was held in Antwerp. GONG became a member of DARE in the beginning of 2003 on the initiative of the Ministry of Education and Sports. The seminar *Perceptions, perspectives and challenges of human rights education and education for democratic citizenship* hosted representatives of 27 member organizations and institutions from 19 countries. Suzana Jasic represented GONG.

- ▶ *July 2003* - Sandra Pernar participated in the international conference *Minority Integration in the Balkans and Baltic*, organized by the Institute for International Relations and the OSCE Mission to Croatia and held in Zagreb. President Stipe Mesic and Foreign minister Tonino Picula opened the conference and Elizabeth Rehn, Carl Bildt and Peter Semneby were among those who addressed the conference.

- ▶ *July 2003* - Sandra Pernar held a presentation about GONG educational activities at the international conference *Elections Monitoring: Experiences of CIS and Eastern European Countries* in Baku, Azerbaijan. The conference was organized by several local organizations and Open Society's EastEast program, and it was supported by NDI and IFES.

- ▶ *July 2003* - Interns Marina Naletelic and Sinisa Paic participated in the international seminar *Belgrade School of Democracy* in Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

- ▶ *September 2003* - GONG's representative Vanja Skoric participated in 5th Annual Meeting of Anti-Corruption Network for Transition Economies in Istanbul, where over 100 representatives of governments, civil society and international organizations exchanged experience on anti-corruption measures and regional activities.

- ▶ *October 2003* - Vanja Skoric participated in OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting in Warsaw. During the meeting, she gave a presentation on European Domestic Election Observers Forum - Strengthening the Capacity of Domestic Election Observation in the European Region that took place in Zagreb in June. She also met with Mr. Gerald Michel and Mr. Andy Bruce from OSCE/ODHIR regarding the Zagreb Forum follow-up.

- ▶ *October 2003* - OESS/ODIHR Human Dimension Regional Seminar assembled OSCE Mission members from the South-Eastern Europe that discussed issues related to elections, trafficking, human rights, etc. GONG representative Aleksandra Kuratko took part at Out-of-Country Voting session at which concrete problems and practices were discussed regarding Croatian parliamentary elections.

- ▶ *November 2003* - GONG representative Masa Kovacevic participated at UNDP Community of Democracies NGO Forum held on 14-15 November 2003 in Bucharest. The Forum convened over 100 participants including governmental representatives, donors and NGOs who exchanged experiences and took part in different workshops regarding cooperation improvement between NGO and government sectors.

▶ *December 2003* - GONG's representative Vanja Skoric participated at Open Society Justice Initiative Campaign Finance Monitoring Workshop held on December 5-6, 2003 in Budapest, Hungary. Participants discussed best models of legal provisions for disclosure rules of campaign financing and monitoring methods in transition countries in CEE.

4. ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A. COOPERATION WITH INSTITUTIONS IN CROATIA AND PRESENTING GONG

a) Conferences, seminars and public events

▶ *January 2003* - Regional office Zadar was the main coordinator of the NGO Fair where 40 NGOs from Zadar presented their activities. The event was initiated by the OSCE and regional office Zadar received numerous commendations for its organization of the fair and for coordination of NGOs. Commendations came from the OSCE, USAID, the British Embassy, and Government Office for Cooperation with NGOs, the local media and NGOs.

▶ *February 2003* - NGO Fair was held in Zagreb and the Head office and the regional office Zagreb presented their activities.

▶ *February 2003* - Regional office Zadar organized a two-day workshop for four NGOs from Zadar (Zvuk, Z.A.F., Antifjaka, Prijatelji zivotinja) under the title *Organizational Development and Self-Sustainability*. The workshop was encouraged by CARE's workshops and the interest of NGO's from Zadar.

▶ *March 2003* - Regional office Slavonski Brod and several volunteers participated in environmental action EKO 2003- cleaning the picnic site Ljeskova voda.

▶ *March 2003* - Biljana Jelinic Lakusic, Slavonski Brod regional office coordinator, presented GONG on the roundtable debate of the Women's Social and Democratic Forum and participated in the debate on the Draft Bill of the Law on the Gender Equality.

▶ *March 2003* - Representatives of the regional office Slavonski Brod took part in the roundtable debate *Participation of the Young in the Community 1*, organized by PUZ and CMS.

▶ *May 2003* - regional office Zadar and several volunteers participated in the environmental action *You Can't Be Wrong- a Flower Makes the World a Nicer Place*, whose aim was to clean the Bijela river.

▶ *May 2003* - Vanja Skoric participated in the seminar organized by the Government Office for Cooperation with NGOs in Moscenicka Draga where the representatives on NGOs, ministries, and donors discussed the Draft Law on Volunteer Work, written by Zvonimir Mataga.

▶ *May 2003* - Regional office Rijeka participated in the plenary session of the City of Rijeka's NGOs where the Charter on the Cooperation between the Local Government and the nongovernmental sector was adopted. This is first document of this kind in Croatia and GONG was one of the five NGOs from Rijeka that participated in the drafting of the Charter.

▶ *May 2003* - Regional offices Zadar and Zagreb set up info desks in Glina, Dvor, Knin and Gracac in celebration of the Europe Day. Following GONG's invitation, 13 embassies donated material from their countries, and the Austrian Embassy donated books for libraries.

▶ *May 2003* - Regional office Slavonski Brod participated in the NGO Fair in Slavonski Brod and presented GONG's activities. The Fair gathered almost all NGOs from Slavonski Brod that presented their activities to the large number of citizens.

▶ *May 2003* - GONG representative Aleksandra Kuratko participated in the round-table debate on the elections of representatives and members of national minority councils in the units of local and regional self-government. The debate was organized by the Centre for Human Rights. 50 representatives of national minorities' organizations, the Government of the Republic of Croatia and the ministries, and international organizations attended the debate.

▶ *May 2003* - GONG regional office Slavonski Brod coordinator Biljana Jelinic Lakusic participated in a roundtable discussion organized by Nansen Dialogue Centre from Osijek. The title of the discussion was *Who Will University Students Vote For* and youth organizations of political parties

presented themselves. Regional office Slavonski Brod put up an info desk with GONG's promotional material.

▶ *May 2003* - In cooperation with the organization MI from Split, the regional office Zadar organized a workshop for a dozen NGOs from Zadar dealing with writing project proposals. Participants worked on project proposals for two projects: Citizen participation in decision-making processes- communication and cooperation with the local government, and renovating a park.

▶ *May 2003* - UN Office for Projects and the European Commission invited the regional office Zadar to participate in the *Civil Society* workgroup. The workgroup is one of the groups that were set up to develop a regional plan of development of Zadarska County. The workgroup started its operation in the end of May and Alina Jurjevic represented GONG.

▶ *May 2003* - Representatives of the regional office Slavonski Brod participated in the round-table discussion *Participation of Young People in the Community* organized by PUZ and the Centre for International Studies.

▶ *June 2003*- Masa Kovacevic and Zvonimir Mataga presented GONG's activities to a delegation of young activists from Russia who came to Croatia in cooperation with the Youth Democratic Initiative.

▶ *June 2003* - Invited by the Centre for International Studies and Friedrich Ebert Foundation from Zagreb, GONG representative Aleksandra Kuratko attended *Stabilization in SE Europe and Conflict Management - The Role of Governments and NGOs* summer school in Sipan. CIS asked Aleksandra to give a presentation with the subject of *the History of Non-partisan Election Monitoring in Europe*, and she organized a joined presentation of activities with the colleagues from CDT (Center for Democratic Transition) and CESID (Centre for Free Election and Democracy). OSCE Ambassador to Croatia Peter Semneby and Deputy Minister of Defense Zlatko Gareljic also attended the seminar.

▶ *June 2003* - With help from its volunteers, regional office Zadar presented its activities at the Sixth Annual Days of Volunteers in Split, organized by the organization MI.

▶ *June 2003* - Among representatives of the civil society in the Republic of Croatia, Suzana Jasic participated in the discussion on the strategy of the Open Society Institute.

▶ *June 2003* - Regional office Rijeka organized a round-table debate under the title *Cooperation of the Civil Sector With Local Self-Government* as a part of the youth festival in Pula. Representatives of the local self-government and local NGOs, as well as representatives of NGOs from Porec, Rijeka, Gornja Stubica and Sisak participated in the debate.

▶ *July 2003* - Igor Pavlekovic participated in the first session of the Council for Development- an independent, non-partisan group of experts from Croatian banks, universities and other institutions. The main goals of the Council are Croatia's membership in the EU and international cooperation.

▶ *August 2003* - Representatives of the Head and the regional office Zagreb, Vanja Skoric and Dragan Zelic, participated in the *Summer School of Democracy 2003* on the island of Obonjan, organized by the Croatian Debate Society. They conducted several workshops for a hundred or so high school students with the subject of election procedures and the right to vote.

▶ *September 2003* - GONG representative Aleksandra Kuratko provided a presentation "Cooperation among the Active Participants of Civil Society in Pre-Election Period" for Young Journalists Club during seminar in Opatija.

▶ *October 2003* - In cooperation with ZaMirNet, GONG partner in CARDS project, a group of representatives of NGOs from Kosovo was hosted. Dragan Zelic, Damir Azenic and Ivna Bajsic presented GONG's programs and activities and answered the questions that the representatives posed.

▶ *November 2003* - Suzana Jasic was invited to participate in a conference organized by Zagreb Political Sciences Society that took place on Faculty of Political Sciences, and gave presentation on citizens' activism and elections.

▶ *November 2003* - Damir Azenic, representing GONG, took part in International Program Week organized by Benedikt Kotruljevic High School and US Center for Civic Education. Presentations and discussions were about the Fundamentals of Democracy and Civic Education for Youth.

▶ *December 2003* - GONG representatives Masa Kovacevic and Damir Azenic presented GONG Internship program and volunteer management during an open panel discussion organized by Volunteer Center as a tribute to International Volunteer Day on December 5. The panel was in Zagreb Cultural Centre (KIC)

▶ *December 2003* - GONG's representative Vanja Skoric participated in workshop "Legal Framework for NGO's" organized by the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL) in Osijek University Law School in December. Workshop provided senior law students with an insight into legal provisions that regulate NGO status and work both in Croatia and in Central and Eastern Europe.

▶ *December 2003* - Regional office Rijeka presented GONG's activities at the fourth forum of NGOs in Rijeka *Furka 2003*, organized by RI centre with the aim of exchanging knowledge, information, and experiences in order to develop civic initiatives by encouraging cooperation between different sectors.

b) Meetings

All GONG offices held a number of meetings with representatives of the Government, Parliament, various ministries, the State and other election committees, local government, international community, political parties, the media, companies, NGOs, and other institutions.

In addition, many international organizations visited GONG. Among others, GONG representatives met with representatives of the European Commission Mr. Leigh and Mr. van Handel, representatives of the American government Mr. Nash, Ambassador Mr. Frank and Mrs. Nardi, former desk officer for Croatia in State Department, and representatives of the British Foreign Office Mr. Templar and Mr. Crampton. In addition, GONG representatives met with Mr. Jeffers, USAID Chief of Mission, Mr. Howell, Mrs. Vukotic-Hozdic, Mr. Epperson and Mr. Hill, representatives of USAID and American Embassy, in order to introduce them to GONG and our activities regarding Parliamentary elections.

GONG also met with representatives of the UN, OSCE, MOTT Foundation, Canadian and British Embassy, National Democratic Institute, National Endowment for Democracy, CARE International etc.

c) Project cooperation

▶ GONG finished a software application system for NGO management in Croatia, *NGOoffice*, in cooperation with Microsoft Croatia and the Government Office for Cooperation with NGOs. As a part of the project, an up-to-dated web site will be put up where one will be able to find information about NGOs, ministries and the persons in charge of NGOs, and legal provisions that refer to NGOs.

▶ Suzana Jasic took part in one of the workgroups set up to evaluate the projects that applied for Government Office for Cooperation with NGOs' financing. She took part in the workgroup of the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare, which started work in November 2002 in order to recommend the distribution of funds to the NGOs that applied under the entry *Social Welfare*. The workgroup finished its work in January 2003.

▶ Suzana Jasic participated in an evaluation group for projects of NGOs from northern Croatia and western Slavonia that applied for AED's financial support under the CroNGO program.

▶ Academy for Educational Development (AED) approached GONG to create a Media Booklet for NGOs and Local Citizens' Initiatives. The purpose of the Media Booklet is to provide CroNGO-supported NGOs and LCIs with practical advice, examples and instructions to ensure media coverage of their activities.

d) Other

▶ GONG nominated Igor Bajok for membership in the Council for the Development of Civil Society within the Croatian Government. The Council is an independent body, made up of the representatives of NGOs from almost all areas of activities that civil society organizations in

Croatia cover. Igor Bajok was elected to the Council as the representative of NGOs working on the democratization of the society, after receiving support from 15 NGOs.

▶ GONG nominated Suzana Jasic for membership in the Croatian National Television (HRT) Program Council, which was in line with the new HRT Law and call for proposals from Parliaments Media Committee. In October, Suzana Jasic and ten other members Parliament elected to the HRT Council among 145 other candidates.

B. MANAGING THE ORGANIZATION

a) GONG Assembly, Managing and Advisory Board

GONG's seventh regular Assembly, held in September 2003, was attended by 48 out of the total of 63 members. The Assembly adopted GONG's annual report provided by Aleksandra Kuratko, executive director whose mandate was over. The Assembly also adopted new GONG Statute, in which Executive Director's function was replaced by new five-member Managing board, and the old Managing board became Advisory board.

The Assembly elected members of the Managing board: Ivna Bajsic, Suzana Jasic, Masa Kovacevic, Igor Pavlekovic and Vlatka Svedruzic. According to election results, Suzana Jasic became president and Vlatka Svedruzic vice-president of Managing board. Board members are elected on a one-year mandate.

The Assembly elected two new members Lelija Pavlicevic and Snjezana Vasiljevic to join Zvonimir Mataga, Veljko Kukulj and Damir Sabol in Advisory board. In first, constitutional session of Advisory board, Zvonimir Mataga was elected as president and Snjezana Vasiljevic as vice-president of Advisory board. Veljko Kukulj represents Advisory board in GONG Employment commission.

The Managing (later Advisory) board held 7 sessions- 6 regular and the constitutive session.

b) Staff

18 full-time employees work in GONG - 10 in Head office, and two in each of the 4 regional offices. Due to extensive work during Parliamentary elections campaign, 6 field coordinators were temporarily employed. Apart from full time employees, GONG also cooperates with a number of external associates on different projects- trainers, expert group members, etc).

Employment Commission reached 5 decisions - 3 about employment and 2 decisions on position transfer.

Self-education

▶ *January 2003* - Alina Jurjevic attended 5-day CARE seminar under the title *Organizational Development and Sustainability*.

▶ *February 2003* - A three-day evaluation seminar for the *I Vote for the First Time* project was held in Opatija.

▶ *February 2003* - GONG representatives attended a monitoring and evaluation seminar organized as a part of the CARE project.

▶ *March 2003* - Mihaela Raic from the regional office Slavonski Brod attended a workshop on advocacy organized by PUZ.

▶ *March 2003* - Financial director Anela Resanovic attended a two-day workshop on NGO financial management organized by the Government Office for Cooperation with NGOs.

▶ *April 2003* - Nominated by Rotary Club Gradec Zagreb, Masa Kovacevic spent April in the USA within Rotary Club international exchange. The purpose of the visit was to present Croatia and GONG, and to exchange and gather new experiences.

▶ *May 2003* - Dragan Zelic attended the two-day seminar *Legislation of the EU*, organized by the Ministry for European Integrations. Other participants were representatives of the ministries and other government institutions.

- ▶ May 2003 - European Commission Delegation recommended Vanja Skoric to participate in the *European Union Visitors Programme (EUVP)* in 2003/04. The aim of the program is to get to know the institutions and operation of the EU.
- ▶ June 2003 - Evaluation seminar for the *Internship Program* was organized in Rovinj
- ▶ June 2003 - Representatives of the Head and Zagreb offices attended two-day seminars organized by NDI in Samobor and Brod na Kupa with the aim of improving internal communication and teamwork.
- ▶ July 2003 - GONG representatives participated in a workshop in Krapinske Toplice on evaluation and activity planning, organized as a part of the CARDS project.
- ▶ July 2003 - Ivna Bajsic returned from the USA where she participated in the Public Interest Law Initiative /Columbia Law School Fellowship since August 2002.
- ▶ August 2003 - Staff from the Head and Zagreb office attended a presentation and an educational workshop about Microsoft Sharepoint, given by technical director.
- ▶ September 2003 – Igor Pavlekovic and volunteer Dino Mileta took part in Microsoft TechNet conference on security and protection of IT infrastructure.
- ▶ October 2003 - GONG organized a five-day implementation seminar for all employees devoted to the parliamentary elections campaign and “I Vote for the first time” project. Apart from permanent GONG staff, it assembled 46 projects’ staff members as well.
- ▶ December 2003 - Evaluation seminar on Parliamentary elections campaign and “I vote for the first time” project was organized in Krapinske Toplice.

c) Volunteers

Regional offices held meetings with GONG members and volunteers. Greater number of volunteers and members took an active part in GONG numerous activities by distributing material, helping organize presentations of GONG at NGO fairs, and monitoring elections.

- ▶ 74 volunteers met the conditions for membership
- ▶ There are 5,011 volunteers in GONG database
- ▶ Database recorded 91,650 hours of citizens’ volunteer work within a year

On the International Day of Volunteers (December 5), GONG publicly thanked to volunteers for their immense contribution to the organization. In December, several “thank you” parties were organized for volunteers who took part in Parliamentary elections.

d) Technical development

A software application for complete financial and statistical processing of the temporary service contracts was developed, and development of the new financial application started.

Microsoft Croatia donated MSDN Universal package that includes complete software designed by Microsoft.

Both servers were changed to MS Windows 2003 Server platforms. Email platform with MS Exchange 2003 platform were replaced, which enabled system users to use additional functions, such as accessing information via mobile phone.

Wireless network was set up in the head office. In August, two rooms in the head office were renovated and an air conditioner in the server room was installed. Four new computers, telephone switchboard and a LAN Switch were bought.

5. AT THE VERY END...

- ▶ Annual narrative and financial report for the year 2002 was published.
- ▶ GONG appeared in the media (national and local, TV and radio stations, printed and internet publications) several thousand times.
- ▶ Very fair and constructive relations with government institutions, political parties, NGOs, international organizations and all donors were built and maintained.

«THE GOLDEN COAT OF ARMS» AWARD

The Golden Coat of Arms (Zlatni Grb) is an award conferred by the Croatian Parliament for achievements in the development of parliamentarism, the strengthening of democracy, promotion of tolerance, and the protection of human rights in the Republic of Croatia.

After the proposal by the Libra Parliamentary Caucus, the Croatian Parliament honored GONG with this award for its overall work, and the award (gold coin and plaque) was presented to a senior high school student Dino Mileta, volunteer in GONG's Zagreb office, at a special session of the Croatian Parliament.

GONG also received 100,000.00 kn as a part of the award, which was decided to use in the *Open Parliament* project for paying bus trips to Parliament for students from all around the country. The visits will start after the constitution of the new Croatian Parliament, and students from 20 Croatian towns will visit Parliament.

This award is also an acknowledgement to all citizens of Croatia who helped GONG in any way since 1997 and with whose help GONG managed to become what it is today.

FINANCIAL REPORT FOR YEAR 2003

Average exchange rate: 1 USD = 6 KN

Fiscal year starts January 1 and ends December 31. Financial report includes statement of assets and liabilities, consolidated statement of income and expenditure by budget lines.

Balance Sheet		Consolidated Statement of Income	
Assets		Income	
Tangible Assets	247,574	Grants and Donations	6,797,318
Cash & Cash Equivalents	1,115,392	Revenues	340,999
Total Assets	1,362,966	Income from Membership Fee	2,390
		Income Earnings	651
Liabilities		Total Income	7,141,358
Liabilities	60,554		
Other Sources	247,574	Expenditure	
Fund Balance	1,054,838	Services	3,035,260
Total Liabilities	1,362,966	Depreciation	160,444
		Tangible Costs	201,762
		Other Costs	758,901
		Costs for Employees	1,930,153
		Total Expenditure	6,086,520
		Income over Expenditure	1,054,838
Expenditure by Budget Lines			
Personnel Expenses		Other Costs	
Salaries	1,135,631	Accountant Services	34,404
Taxes from Salaries	794,522	Office Supply	387,377
Honorarium	151,787	Rent	82,900
Total Personnel Expenses	2,081,940	Utilities	18,100
		Communication, Internet and Postage	450,769
		Photocopying	18,983
		Media Activities	857,251
		Material Production and Printing	683,328
		Travel Costs	725,991
		Accommodation	
		- seminars and workshops	168,981
		Other Services (<i>Student service</i>)	431,166
		Other Costs	145,330
		Total Other Costs	4,004,580
		Total Expenditures	6,086,520 kn

SPECIAL THANKS

GONG is a non-profit organization. We were able to accomplish our goals and tasks with volunteer work by over 5,000 Croatian citizens and with all of the generous support and donations received.

Financial support (in kn)

up to 5,000

Open Society Institute Croatia

up to 10,000

GONG (self-financing)

OSCE, Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

up to 50,000

NEEDS, Great Britain

up to 100,000

Open Society Institute Switzerland

Croatian Parliament (*Golden Coat of Arms Award*)

Ministry of Education and Sport

up to 150,000

World Learning, Georgia

up to 200,000

Olof Palme International Centre

Governmental Office for NGOs

up to 250,000

Canadian Embassy in Zagreb

up to 400,000

Charles Stewart Mott Foundation

NED - National Endowment for Democracy

OSCE, Mission to the Republic of Croatia

up to 600,000

CARE, Austria

up to 1,500,000

British Embassy in Zagreb

up to 2,200,000

NDI – National Democratic Institute for Int. Affairs

In - kind supporters (in kn)

up to 500

Karlovacka pivovara - T.P. Zadar

Karlovacka pivovara - T.P. Zagreb

Bavaria Pivo d.o.o.

Tiramisu slastice, Zadar

Kolinska d.o.o., Zadar

Mediator d.o.o., Dubrovnik

Bimbo d.o.o., Slavonski Brod

U.O. Harley bar, Slavonski Brod

Primax d.o.o., Slavonski Brod

Duopromet d.o.o., Zadar

Tvornica kruha Zadar d.d.

Sonik d.o.o., Zadar

Majuris d.o.o., Zadar

Franck d.d., Zagreb

Maraska d.d., Zadar

Jamnica d.d., Zagreb

Atlantic Trade d.d., Zagreb

up to 1,000

Pharos fotokopirnica, Zadar

Studio 1, Zadar

ABC grafika, Zadar

Sveti Rok d.o.o., Lovinac

Vina Bibich p.t.o., Zadar

up to 2,000

Megatrend d.o.o., Zagreb

up to 5,000

Glas Istre

MC Glas Slavonije

Vindija d.d., Varazdin

up to 10,000

Vecernji list

Slobodna Dalmacija

up to 30,000

Local self-government and institutions (premises)

Microsoft Croatia d.o.o.

up to 50,000

Iskon Internet d.d.

ATV, Split

IREX ProMedia

SSL International, Zagreb

up to 100,000

Moslavina Television d.o.o., Kutina

Channel RI, Rijeka

up to 300,000

Local radio stations

up to 600,000

Open Television, Zagreb

over 5,000,000

Croatian Radio-Television