



GONG ANNUAL REPORT

2004

1. ELECTION PROGRAM

A. ELECTION MONITORING

Repeated and additional elections for the councils and representatives of national minorities in local and regional self-government units, and additional elections for the representatives of national minorities and the Croatian people to representative bodies of local and regional self-government units, as well as a number of local by-elections and town/municipality neighborhood council elections were held in 2004. These elections were monitored by the total of **258 observers**.

- **Elections for the councils and representatives of national minorities and additional elections for the representatives of national minorities and the Croatian people for local and regional self-government (February 15, 2004)**

The elections were called in 413 local and regional self-government units, but they were held in a total of 162 units (39.22% of the units), due to the lack of candidates. Election rules and regulations were respected, and polling committees were professional in their work. However, the turnout was very low. GONG issued an Election Report which also consisted of recommendations for improving election process and election legislation regarding these elections. 99 GONG observers divided into 48 mobile observer teams monitored the elections and visited 395, out of 415 polling stations.

- **Re-run and repeated re-run local elections (11):** Kamanje, Osjecko-Baranjska County, Sibenik, Biograd n/m, Bale, Perusic, Orebic, Primorski Dolac, Pozega, Metkovic and Barilovic.

These local elections were monitored by 149 observers. In almost every town/municipality GONG activists distributed brochures about local elections.

- **Elections for Town/Municipality Neighborhood Councils (11):** Kutina, Grubisno Polje, Novi Vinodolski, Senj, Pula, Benkovac, Umag, Viskovo, Donji Srb, Orahovica and Porec.

GONG activists distributed brochures and posters in almost all towns/municipalities. In 5 towns and municipalities, 10 observers monitored elections.

- **Presidential elections 2005**

Presidential elections were announced in late November to be held on January 2, 2005. However, GONG launched its educational campaign at the beginning of December 2005, and made preparations for election monitoring. At the end of December, we sent the data about 2014 observers to the State Election Commission to obtain accreditations for them.

- **Elections in other countries:**

Presidential elections in the Ukraine, November and December 2004

▶ GONG was one of the 16 NGO from Central and Eastern Europe, and former USSR, which deployed its observers to Presidential elections monitoring mission to the Ukraine within ENEMO Mission (European Network of Election Monitoring Organizations). GONG deployed 60 observers for second round and 58 observers for repeated second round of elections in Odessa and Mykolaiv.

B. EDUCATING AND INFORMING THE CITIZENS

- **Elections for councils and representatives of national minorities and additional elections for the representatives of national minorities and of the Croatian people for local and regional self-government**

GONG conducted several campaign activities in order to educate and inform citizens:

- ▶ Educational brochure detailing all aspects of elections was produced in 400,000 copies and distributed via one national and four local daily newspapers as an supplement, as well as through cooperation with minority NGOs, election authorities and radio stations.
- ▶ One video and audio clips were produced and broadcasted in national radio and TV station, as well as, in numerous local media.
- ▶ 19 “Citizens' Hours” were held as open radio talk shows with GONG and election committees’ representatives on 19 radio stations.
- ▶ Web site www.izbori-info.hr was set up containing information regarding elections.
- ▶ 060 info line was set up and more than 400 questions on towns and municipalities where elections were held, on locations of polling stations, and on minority groups for which elections were being held, were answered.

• **Presidential elections 2005**

Even though Presidential elections were held in January 2005, GONG launched an educational campaign in December 2004. The following activities were conducted:

- ▶ 2 video and 2 audio clips were produced and free of charge broadcasted on 8 TV station and free of charge or with discounts on 40 radio stations all over Croatia.
- ▶ 27 “Citizens' Hours” were organized and held as open radio talk shows on 25 radio stations with GONG and election committees’ representatives.
- ▶ Web site www.izbori-info.hr was enhanced containing information regarding Presidential elections.
- ▶ 060 info line was set up and more than 550 questions about voters’ lists, voting in hospitals and retirement homes, and partisan members in polling stations’ committees, were answered.

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.

Fifth season of the project for school year 2004/2005 was carried out in the form of interactive workshops held by teams of 42 trainers, usually young unemployed lawyers, political scientists, sociologists or senior students from those faculties.

In the first terms of 2004/05 school year, 815 workshops were conducted in 217 high schools for more than 24,000 students.

! In the five years of the implementation of the project in all parts of Croatia total of 82,000 high school seniors took part in 2904 workshops. Out of 365 high schools, 272 high schools took part in the project, which comes to 75% of the total number of all 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.

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

210 citizens attended Parliament's sessions and 3,728 citizens visited Parliament during *Parliament Tours*. Most of them were students from 78 high schools from all around Croatia. Meetings with 160 members of Parliament (many of them accepted our invitation several times) were organized for high school students outside Zagreb. Since March 2003, GONG interns guide Parliamentary tours.

! From the start of the project (spring 2000) a total of 906 citizens attended Parliamentary sessions and 11,212 citizens visited Parliament during Parliament Tours.

!! From the start of the project, a total of 134 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 the local and national level.

During 2004, 195 "*Citizens' Hours*" were organized - 126 radio talk shows and 69 panel discussions. 489 guests (members of Parliament, town council members, ministers, town and municipality mayors, county prefects, experts, activists, etc) participated in "*Citizens' Hours*". 3,228 citizens attended panel discussions and 373 citizens asked questions during radio talk shows.

! From the start of the project, total of 638 "Citizens' Hours" were organized all over Croatia.

C. GETTING TO KNOW LOCAL REPRESENTATIVE BODIES

Following the model of *opening* Croatian Parliament to the citizens, in October 2000 GONG started the activity 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, the staff and volunteers of GONG regional offices attended 21 sessions of various local representative bodies.

D. INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

The total of 20 students volunteered in 2004 on different levels of government. One student left the program due to the removal. 11 new interns entered the program in March 2004. In late 2004, 4 new interns were trained in order to start volunteering in January 2005.

In April 2004 GONG organized three-day seminar where new interns were trained and all interns shared experience, knowledge and recommendations.

► 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 work as volunteers for MPs. During 2004, 18 students volunteered in Croatian Parliament for 16 MPs and parliamentary party caucuses.

On May 28, 2004 we organized "graduation" ceremony for the first generation of interns in Parliament. We invited all former interns and MPs who participated in the Program, as well as all new MPs and their interns. Former interns received their diplomas signed and issued by GONG and the Parliament's Secretary, and small models of Parliament building, financed by NDI, as a token of their internship.

▶ The Croatian Government

One intern volunteered in Croatian Government's Office for Social Partnership in 2004.

▶ Local level

During 2004, one intern volunteered at Zagreb City Council.

! From the start of the Program, 58 students and young professionals volunteered for 34 MPs and in 9 government offices and local government bodies.

E. CARDS 2002 - Sustainable Development in Return Areas - Civil Society Project

In May 2004, CARE International, GONG and ZaMirNet started joint implementation of a 18 months long project called the *Sustainable Development in Return Areas - Civil Society Project*, which is a part of the European Union CARDS 2002 national program. The project is carried out in the Zadar and Sibensko-Kninska Counties (in Benkovac, Obrovac, Gracac, Knin, Sibenik and Zadar) 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.

During 2004, a total of 35 "Citizens' Hours" were held, hosting 42 different representatives of local and regional self-government, various government offices and institutions and members of Parliament. Total of 815 citizens took part in these "Citizens' Hours". 261 citizens, mostly high school student, visited the Croatian Parliament within the "Open Parliament" program and 5 different members of Parliament met with them. 103 "I Vote for the First Time" workshops took place in 2004 within CARDS 2002 project in 28 high schools in the Zadarska and Sibensko-Kninska Counties.

! Croatian president, Mr. Stjepan Mesic was our guest on "Citizens' Hours" in Donji Srb, Gracac and Obrovac in July 2004.

F. ADVOCACY INITIATIVES

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

▶ **Initiative for rules that regulate Transparency of Work of Croatian Parliament**

Although the idea for creating rules that regulate transparency of work of Croatian Parliament first emerged in December 2002, when the Secretary General approached GONG with the draft rules and asked for cooperation, GONG was once again approached with the draft rules, by MP Dragutin Lesar, member of the Committee on the Constitution, Standing Orders and Political System, requesting our inputs on draft rules. At the session of the Committee in January, he proposed the adoption of these rules that included our inputs, to the Committee. In February, GONG representatives held a meeting with the President of the Parliament and requested his support for the Rules of Transparency of Work. In autumn, the Committee delivered amended Draft of the Rules on which GONG again gave inputs and suggestions and referred it to the Committee and Parliamentary caucuses. However, by the end of 2004, the Rules were still awaiting a final decision of the Parliamentary Committee.

▶ **Initiative for amending the Standing Orders of Croatian Parliament**

In April 2004, Croatian Parliament decided to amend the Standing Orders regarding Question time. In addition, three organizations, B.a.B.e., GONG and Green Action requested from the Committee on the Constitution, Standing Orders and Political System to amend Standing Orders concerning outside members in Parliament committees. NGOs proposed that Standing Orders should prescribe that all committees have outside members (out of 25, only 11 of them have that

possibility at the moment) or prescribe which committees have them and why. Also, Standing Orders should proscribe detailed and concrete regulation about the procedure for nomination and election of these Committee members. The same request was sent to Parliament in autumn but the Standing Orders were not amended by the end of 2004.

▶ **An open session of the Committee for Constitution, Standing Orders and Political System with the topic 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. Despite GONG's repeated requests for a public session on annual financial reports of parliamentary political parties, Parliamentary Committee on Constitution, Standing Orders and Political System allocated yearly amount of budget funds for 2004 to parliamentary political parties without discussion.

GONG requested an insight into every financial report ever received by the Committee from political parties and after we publicly stated in a TV interview in September 2004 that we were waiting for Committee's response for more than 6 months, we received the permission to take the copies of the reports from 2001 onwards. In November and December, we collected and summarized all data on the financing of political parties for the year 2003 which will serve as the base for a case study on financing political parties.

Other GONG's advocacy initiatives:

▶ **Initiative for amending election legislation**

In early 2004, GONG made an action plan for advocating election legislation changes. Priorities for 2004 were: amending of the Law on Voters' Lists, adopting the Law on State Election Commission as a Permanent Body and adopting the Law on Election Campaign Financing. During the entire year, we were contacting MPs and Parliament caucuses, OSCE representatives and the media with the goal of bringing the issue of election legislation in the focus of decision makers.

In November, GONG was invited to take part in OSCE's round table debate "Electoral Legislation and Procedures in Croatia" where Vanja Skoric, GONG legal advisor, gave presentation on "Harmonization of Election Laws with Constitutional Court decisions".

In October and November we tried to get in contact with the Central State Administrative Office regarding the open issues of voters' lists and Presidential elections, but without success. After sending an official note requesting answers from the State Office, we received an answer with a-month-and-a-half delay. However, we had a very important meeting with members of State Election Commission in October regarding local elections, on which occasion the SEC accepted GONG's recommendations regarding providing information to voters, instructions for lower election bodies in connection with locations of polling stations, candidates' financial reporting forms, etc.

In November, we completed a research that compared voters' lists and national census data. The research indicated that there were 350,000 citizens more registered in voter's lists than there were citizens of Croatia over 18 years of age! This problem was presented to the public on a press conference at the beginning of December and it made journalists and the public very interested in the issue. For the first time, the problem of voters' lists was thrust into the public eye and was one of the crucial topics in the period before the Election Day.

▶ **Initiative for making the entire content of the Croatian Official Gazette ("Narodne Novine") available on the Internet**

In March 2004, GONG started an initiative to make the entire content of Croatian Official Gazette ("Narodne Novine") available on the Internet. We addressed the Official Gazette with this issue and received a reply that financial restrictions do not allow them to put all available content to the Internet web site. E-petition for making the entire content of the Croatian Official Gazette available on the Internet was put up on GONG web site until May 12, 2004 when we presented it to the Government through State Office for E-Croatia. A total of 1,725 individuals and 99 organizations signed the petition. Official Gazette decided to display the entire content of the Official Gazette on its web site free of charge as of January 1, 2005!

► **Initiative for increasing the protection of voters' rights in the election process**

Thanks to GONG's initiative starting in November 2002, Constitutional Court in spring 2004 annulled provisions of the two different Election Laws (regulating local and presidential elections), which referred to the protection of voters' rights in the election process, namely, the right to petition. The provisions were found unconstitutional by the Court because they granted less right to petition in election process than the Constitutional Law. They were annulled after a-year-and-a-half long review process.

► **Initiative on VAT exemption – “Erased” and “Worth 22% Less” actions**

In May 2004, Ministry of Finance changed the decree that provided VAT exemption to all NGOs. Under the Law on VAT, only humanitarian, health, educational, cultural, scientific, religious and social institutions are exempted from customs tariffs and VAT on international donations, which is unfair toward other NGOs.

Three Croatian NGOs, GONG, B.a.B.e. and Zelena akcija, protested against the decision because it undermined the efforts of civil society to establish favorable rules for their financing. We held a meeting with Minister of the finance, but except the Minister's offer to return VAT to these NGOs, which they refused, nothing was solved. NGOs suggested joint working group of representatives of the Ministry and Taxation office, civil society (unions, NGOs, National Foundation for Civil Society Development) and donors, which was accepted, but only one meeting was held due to the opposite concepts of problem solution.

Two press conferences were held and, except media, representatives of the international community, Government at NGOs were kept informed. However, there was no good faith on the part of the Ministry and Government and the issue has not been resolved, despite the protests of civil society and international community. We believe that foreign currency financial inspection that came to GONG on the day of our press conference was a response of state institutions to our initiative!

In addition, during Parliamentary session on which the Law on VAT's changes were discussed, GONG representatives were expelled from the Parliament gallery for having orange T-shirts saying “Worth 22% Less” and “Erased”.

We cooperated with several MPs in order to amend the Law on VAT and include VAT exemption on foreign donations for all NGOs (not only humanitarian, sports, religious and educational) but, since those MPs were opposition MPs, their draft amendments did not pass. After several months, we repeated the initiative with one MP and one party caucus and, by the end of the year, the amendments entered parliamentary procedure.

► **Initiative regarding Law on Presidential Election Campaign Financing**

In July 2004, Draft Law on Presidential Election Campaign Financing was sent into urgent parliamentary procedure by the Government. Since its matter did not regulate the issue satisfactory, GONG has delivered a series of comments and suggestions to parliamentary caucuses and Committee on Constitution, Standing Orders and Political System. Several MPs, Committee's members, supported our proposals, and even though 5 amendments were incorporated into the final version of the Law, GONG still found it unsatisfactory, since it did not regulate any sanctions, anonymous donations, limits to donations, etc.

G. LEGAL ADVISING

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 66 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.

▶ **Consultation on Parliament program for NDI Bosnia-Herzegovina**

NDI representative from Bosnia-Herzegovina, Mr. Darko Loncar visited GONG in March. He was interested in and consulted on all aspects of GONG Open Parliament program and he participated in one of the tours of the Parliament. His visit was initial contact with our program in order for NDI to initiate a similar activity in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

▶ **World Learning – Study Exchange Visit**

Masa Kovacevic, Ivna Bajsic and Vanja Skoric presented Parliament program and other activities to six students from the USA who were on a study exchange in Croatia via World Learning. Students were highly interested in Internship program in the Croatian Parliament.

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

GONG representative Aleksandra Kuratko worked for two weeks as a consultant of ISFED, Georgian NGO that organized election monitoring campaign for parliamentary elections on March 28, 2004. Aleksandra helped in all aspects of the campaign, especially in Parallel Vote Tabulation project.

▶ **Organizational support mission for ISFED, Georgia**

In April Aleksandra Kuratko was invited by the NDI to support Georgian election monitoring NGO, ISFED from May 1, 2004. Aleksandra provided full time support and consultations to ISFED members on post-election activities, organizational development and strategic planning.

▶ **Montenegro NGO Study Visit**

Organized by ORT, six members of NGOs from Montenegro (Expedicio, Centre for regional development and Natura) were on a one-day study visit to GONG on May 5, 2004. Ivna Bajsic and Suzana Jasic introduced GONG organizational structure and activities to them.

▶ **Voter education and mobilization training – the Ukraine**

GONG Regional office Zadar assistant coordinator Alina Jurjevic, upon invitation by Freedom House Ukraine, held trainings in Mykolaiv, Odessa and Kirovograd from May 17 to May 24, 2004. She trained representatives of more than 30 Ukrainian NGOs on voter education and mobilization.

▶ **FAIR Fund research visit**

Kirsten Jelic, Research associate in FAIR Fund, visited GONG on June 4, 2004, upon recommendation from the Croatian Embassy in Washington. She was conducting a research on elections, election NGOs and the youth. Masa Kovacevic and Vlatka Svedruzic presented GONG's activities, especially GONG election campaigns and election material.

▶ **MPs from Bosnia and Herzegovina in Croatian Parliament**

Sandra Pernar, invited by Croatian Parliament's PR Office, met a representative of OSCE Mission to Bosnia-Herzegovina and informed her on GONG activities in Parliament. In December 2004, a delegation of Bosnian Parliamentarians visited the Croatian Parliament. Sandra made them familiar with the Open Parliament program and the tours of the Parliament organized by GONG.

B. PROJECT AND PROGRAM COOPERATION WITH INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

- ▶ Network of Europeans for Electoral and Democracy Support (NEEDS) and Electoral Reform International Services (ERIS) contacted GONG with a cooperation request to take part in the compilation of a "Handbook for Domestic Election Observers". GONG was one of the 20 civil society organizations from Europe, Africa, Asia and Latin America invited to participate in the project by submitting written contributions. GONG gave its contribution with article "Assessing the Legal Framework and Advocating for a Change".
- ▶ Maureen Taylor, Associate Professor and Public Relations Course Coordinator at the Department of Communication of Rutgers University in New Brunswick, contacted GONG with a proposal for cooperation on media surveys in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia. This was the third time GONG cooperated in such an activity. Within one month we collected 1100 questionnaires from Sarajevo, Banja Luka and Zagreb, and provided results to Ms. Taylor.
- ▶ Suzana Jasic, GONG President, participated in a working group organized by USAID for delivering civil society index for Croatia. Besides GONG, 8 representatives of other NGOs in Croatia participated.
- ▶ GONG was chosen by the NDI as one of the few organizations in the world to provide further experience sharing and trainings to other NGOs in Europe. A three-day workshop was organized in July and facilitated by NDI representatives, Mr. Aaron Azelton and Mr. David Larson, in order to deliver GONG's best practices and lessons learned and to create a training toolkit that will be used for future trainings and consultations provided by GONG.
- ▶ GONG's legal advisor Vanja Skoric participated in the OSCE/ODIHR one-month monitoring mission in Macedonia during a referendum held on November 7, 2004. Vanja worked with the core team of experts as a Legal Analyst.

C. INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES, SEMINARS AND VISITS

- ▶ *April 2004* - Vlatka Svedruzic, representing GONG (DARE member), took part in DARE seminar and Annual Assembly in Budapest. The seminar gathered 29 representatives of DARE members. Participants discussed education for democracy and human rights strategies and possibilities of E-learning and E-democracy, as well as presented their organizations' activities.
- ▶ *April 2004* - Suzana Jasic was invited to take part in FH Democracy Forum – Balkan Strategies for Euro-Atlantic Integration held in Belgrade and to participate in a focus group discussion on the FH Regional Networking Project and FH's strategies for regional projects. Suzana held a presentation about citizens' perception of NGOs in Croatia and its evolution over the years.
- ▶ *May 2004* - Vlatka Svedruzic took part as a guest speaker in OSCE's "Ideas for a Change – New Generation Initiative" seminar in Banja Luka in Bosnia-Herzegovina. She presented all GONG activities, election campaigns, ways of including youth in GONG activities, and gave ideas on projects that could be implemented in Bosnia-Herzegovina to 30 seminar participants – NGO representatives and youth activists .
- ▶ *July 2003* - GONG's representative Vanja Skoric participated at a supplementary Human Dimension Meeting of OSCE/ODHIR in Vienna with this year's topic "Electoral Standards and Commitments". Participants from all member states discussed existing commitments for democratic elections in OSCE participating states and the need for better implementation of the OSCE/ODIHR recommendations. Side meeting of the regional domestic observer's groups was also held.
- ▶ *September 2004* - GONG President, Suzana Jasic, participated in "Election Support: Achievements and Challenges" conference held in Brussels. The European Commission organized

the conference, which gathered 100-odd participants. Suzana took part in the "Follow up to election observation" workgroup.

▶ *September 2004* – Sandra Pernar, as GONG representative, participated in "Research and Analysis as Practical Tools of Influencing Policy Process on National and Regional Levels" conference held in Opatija. The conference was organized by Freedom House and USAID.

▶ *October 2004* - Organized by Freedom House, NDI and IRI, Warsaw meeting, held on October 1 2004, gathered all representatives from ENEMO (European Network of Election Monitoring Organizations) members including representatives of election monitoring NGOs from Poland, Caucasus states, Central Asia, Belarus and Russia. The main goal of the meeting was initial agreement and preparations for ENEMO monitoring mission for Presidential elections in the Ukraine scheduled for November 21, 2004. GONG was represented by Suzana Jasic.

▶ *December 2004* - The new International Commission on the Balkans visited Croatia on its third study tour. GONG representatives Suzana Jasic and Damir Azenic were invited to meet with the Commission representatives, the former Presidents of Germany Richard von Weizsäcker, foreign minister of Serbia and Montenegro, Goran Svilanovic, and former minister of EU integrations of Croatia, Neven Mimica.

4. ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A. COOPERATION WITH INSTITUTIONS IN CROATIA AND PRESENTING GONG

a) Project Cooperation with Institutions, Organizations and NGOs in Croatia

▶ Initiated by the Academy for Educational Development (AED), GONG created 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.

▶ Rijeka Mayor invited GONG Regional Office Rijeka in early 2004 to continue participating in NGO meetings on the amendment of the proposed Chart for the cooperation between the City of Rijeka and non-governmental and non-profit sector on the local level. The Chart is an initial step to deliver a Local Program of Cooperation for the City of Rijeka. In 2004, 3 meetings were held. In December 2004, the Chart was accepted by the Rijeka city authorities.

▶ Suzana Jasic participated in an evaluation group for projects of NGOs from northern Croatia and western Slavonija that applied for AED's financial support under the CroNGO program. The group ended its work in early 2004.

▶ OSCE Field Office Zadar approached GONG with cooperation on creating an NGO Guide for Sibensko-Kninska and Zadarska counties. Alina Jurjevic wrote the Introduction on civil society, NGOs and volunteerism. The Guide was published in December 2004.

▶ GONG's representative Vanja Skoric was invited to participate in the working group for drafting the Law on Volunteering in Croatia. This included facilitating workshops on Law on Volunteering and drafting amendments and remarks during four NGO Forums held in Split, Osijek, Opatija and Zagreb during March and April. Final Draft Law together with remarks was distributed to Government's Office for NGO's and all participants of the forums. It was submitted to the Government for adoption as well.

▶ Regional office Zadar was invited in March 2004 to become a member of a newly founded Forum gathering 25 NGOs from Zadarska County within the Regional Partnership /Regional development program supported by the EU development program. GONG Regional office was one

of the founders of the Forum and created a Work Policy for the Forum. Hrvoje Rancic, Regional Office Zadar Field Coordinator, was chosen as the GONG representative and will act as one of three NGOs' representatives in Regional Partnership committee in Zadarska County.

▶ NGO "Potrosac" (Consumer) that started the initiative for public signing of the lawsuit against Croatian Telecom and the Republic of Croatia for illegal charging of phone services, in September 2004 asked GONG for help and cooperation. GONG helped by having its regional offices organize info desks in Rijeka, Porec, Pozega, Sisak, Slavonski Brod and Zadar where citizens were able to get information and obtain authorization forms allowing "Potrosac" to represent them in the case in order to reimburse the damage caused by irregular phone service charges and tariff system.

▶ Hrvoje Rancic, GONG Regional office Zadar coordinator, participated in OSCE's round table debate on "Voter registration – national minorities" in November in Zadar. Hrvoje gave a one-hour presentation on recommendations for improvement of voters' lists regarding national minorities' representatives, and answered questions about representation of minorities in local bodies.

▶ Invited by Brodsko-Posavska County officials, Biljana Jelinic-Lakusic was a civil society member in the working group for delivering Regional Operative Plan for Brodsko-Posavska County.

▶ Suzana Jasic, the GONG President, participated on the National Forum on EU accession organized in November by the Ministry of European Integrations in Opatija. Suzana took part in debate about recommendations on informing citizens about EU topics and emphasized the true implementation of EU standards in Croatia, regardless the date of Croatian accession to EU.

▶ OSCE Field office Vinkovci organized "Voter registration – national minorities" round table debate for the region of Slavonija and Baranya in December 2004. Biljana Jelinic-Lakusic, the GONG Regional office Slavonski Brod coordinator, held a presentation on the recommendations for improvement of voters' lists regarding national minorities' representatives.

▶ Aleksandra Vinkerlic, GONG Regional office Rijeka coordinator, participated in OSCE's round table debate on "Roma in Voters' Lists" held in December in Perusic in Licko-Senjska County. The issue of Roma population and its representation in local government was emphasized within general discussion of national minorities' representatives.

▶ In 2004, GONG representatives were active in the Council for Civil Society Development (Igor Bajok) and in the Croatian National Television (HRT) Program Council (Suzana Jasic).

b) Conferences, seminars and public events

▶ *April 2004* - Mihaela Rajic and Sanja Beslic, GONG Regional office Slavonski Brod representatives, participated in "Regional NGO fair" organized by NGO "PUZ" from Slavonski Brod. The Fair included a round table debate on cooperation between youth NGOs and local community. Mihaela and Sanja organized an info desk about GONG and agreed on further cooperation with other NGOs in the region.

▶ *April 2004* - Regional office Rijeka took part in "NGO fair" in Rijeka and round table debate on informal education in Croatia. Aleksandra Vinkerlic and Izidora Tomljanovic presented GONG and set up an info desk.

▶ *April 2004* - On the occasion of Europe Day celebration, Council for European integration of Brodsko-Posavska County organized "International Semi-Marathon". GONG Regional office Slavonski Brod representatives Mihaela Rajic and Sanja Beslic, together with volunteers, took part in the marathon and organized an info desk with leaflets and brochures about GONG.

▶ *April 2004* - Regional office Zadar was invited to take part in "Regional NGO fair" in Sibenik. Alina Jurjevic and Hrvoje Rancic presented GONG and its activities and took part in open panel discussion on the National Youth Program.

▶ *May 2004* - GONG Regional office Zadar presented its activities on "Volunteer Days" in Split organized by MI NGO. More than 60 NGOs from Split region were present there. GONG set up an info desk, took part in round table discussion, and distributed brochures to visitors and participants.

- ▶ *May 2004* - GONG Regional office Slavonski Brod representatives Mihaela Rajic and Sanja Beslic took part in "NGO fair" in Slavonski Brod. The Fair was organized by Administrative Department for Social Activities of the City of Slavonski Brod. Mihaela, Sanja and several volunteers set up an info desk and presented GONG activities.
- ▶ *May 2004* – GONG Regional office Zagreb organized educational info desks in Dvor, Hrvatska Kostajnica, Vojnic and Topusko celebrating Europe Day. Promotional material and information on EU countries were distributed, and information on the process of Croatia's accession to the EU was provided. In addition, in cooperation with Austrian Cultural Institute, GONG organized a delivery of collected books to libraries in those towns.
- ▶ *May 2004* - Hrvoje Rancic, the CARDS coordinator of the GONG Regional office Zadar, participated in a round table debate in Gracac organized by OSCE Field Office Zadar. Hrvoje presented the implementation of new CARDS project GONG (with partners) conducts in the region, informed on "Citizens' Hours" in plan and other activities of GONG Regional office Zadar.
- ▶ *May 2004* - Vanja Skoric, GONG legal advisor, participated in the congress "National Minorities in a Democratic Society" organized by Zagreb Faculty of Political Sciences and Centre for international studies in Begovo Razdolje. Vanja elaborated on GONG experience from Minority elections held in February, and problems and challenges of electing minority representatives under the legislation in force.
- ▶ *June 2004* - As a follow up to congress on "National minorities in democratic society", Vanja presented GONG recommendations regarding Minority elections to the National Minority Council.
- ▶ *June 2004* – Association of "Nasa Djeca" Organizations organized a three-day seminar on communication skills and PR for the Union's members in Crikvenica. Dragan Zelic, Regional office Zagreb coordinator, was invited to give lecture on NGO communication with the media, media strategy and calendar, and communication with local media. He presented GONG media outreach and organized one "Citizens' Hour" simulation.
- ▶ *June 2004* – GONG Regional office Zagreb organized an info desk during the "NGO Week" organized by Office for Health, Labor and Social Care of the City of Zagreb.
- ▶ *June 2004* - Upon invitation by Croatian Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, Hrvoje Rancic, the GONG Regional office Zadar CARDS coordinator, and Tatjana Basic Kostadinovic, a GONG volunteer and trainer, participated in the Summer School on Human Rights for high school students on the Island of Dugi Otok. Hrvoje and Tatjana organized workshops on advocacy campaigns and presented GONG programs, especially "I Vote for the First Time" project.
- ▶ *September 2004* - Vlatka Svedruzic hosted 12 representatives (beneficiaries in CARDS SDRA project) from National Minority Councils and Neighborhood Councils from Knin, Skradin, Benkovac, Graca and Sibenik. Vlatka presented GONG activities, and invited them to take part in all activities in Zadarska and Sibensko-Kninska counties.
- ▶ *September 2004* - Masa Kovacevic presented GONG activities to members of Rotaray Club Zagreb. She explained the development of Internship program in Croatian Parliament and her experience from Rotary Group Study Exchange program in USA in which she took part in April 2004.
- ▶ *September 2004* - Vanja Skoric, as a GONG representative, held the workshop "Law on Volunteerism" at the first National Conference on Volunteerism that was held in Cavtat. After that, she participated on a session of the National Committee for Volunteerism and International VolontEurope conference that also took place in Cavtat.
- ▶ *October 2004* - GONG Regional office Rijeka presented all GONG activities in the medical school in Rijeka. This school regularly issues its yearbook featuring one topic and this year it was NGOs. They published an article about GONG and asked if Aleksandra Vinkerlic and Izidora Tomljanovic could present GONG at the School Day celebration.
- ▶ *November 2004* - Vanja Skoric, GONG legal advisor, represented GONG in "Roundtable Debate on Electoral Legislation and Procedures in Croatia" organized by OSCE Mission to Croatia on November 18-19, 2004. Besides Vanja, who spoke on the harmonization of election laws with Constitutional Court decisions, and international standards on protecting voters' rights, Dragan Zelic and Sandra Pernar also participated in discussions.
- ▶ *December 2004* – GONG Regional office Zadar organized an info desk in Zadar City Library during "Human Rights Day" organized by OSCE Field Office Zadar.

c) 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, NGOs, and other institutions.

We introduced Internship program to the new President of the Parliament, Mr. Vladimir Seks and General Secretary, Mr. Josip Sesar, and agreed on cooperation for the next group of interns in the Parliament.

In addition, many international organizations visited GONG. Among others, GONG representatives met with representatives of the EC Delegation to Croatia, Mr. Alfons Peeters, and his colleagues, USAID representatives, Mr. Bill Jeffers, Mr. Chuck Howell and Ms. Sanja Vukotic Hodzic, Canadian Embassy Consul, Mr. Sven Jurschewsky, OSCE Mission in Croatia and other OSCE representatives, Mr. Peter Semneby, Ms. Emma Morgan, Ms. Mary Wyckof, Ms. Ankica Kuna and Ms. Suzana Salopek, the NDI senior advisor for citizen participation, Mr. Aaron Azelton, the NDI Regional Director for CEE, Mr. Roberto Benjamin, a British Embassy representative, Mr. Edward Mason, the EU Enlargement Team Leader, Mr. Charles Garrett, ambassadors of Australia, Belgium and Turkey, and other representatives of OSCE, MOTT Foundation, National Democratic Institute, Freedom House, Olof Palme International Centre, CARE International, etc.

B. MANAGING THE ORGANIZATION

a) GONG Assembly, Managing and Supervisory Board

GONG's eighth regular Assembly, held in September 2004, was attended by 46 members. The Assembly adopted GONG's annual report provided by the Managing Board.

Assembly elected new members of Managing board for the next one-year mandate: Suzana Jasic, Igor Pavlekovic and Vanja Skoric. Suzana Jasic became president and Vanja Skoric vice-president of Managing board.

Assembly elected three new members of the Supervisory board: Jelena Berkovic (a radio journalist), Albina Dlacic (a lawyer) and Zdravko Petak (a professor at Political Sciences Faculty). Lelija Pavlicevic and Snjezana Vasiljevic entered the second year of their mandate. On the first, constitutional session of the Supervisory Board, Lelija Pavlicevic was elected president and Snjezana Vasiljevic vice-president of the Supervisory Board. Jelena Berkovic represents Supervisory Board in GONG Employment Commission.

Managing (later Supervisory) board held 6 sessions- 5 regular and the constitutive session.

b) Staff

18 full-time employees work in GONG - 10 in the Head Office, and two in each of the 4 regional offices. Due to the extensive work on the preparation on the campaign for the presidential elections in late 2004, 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 15 decisions - 5 about employment, 5 decisions on position transfer, and 5 on the termination of employment.

Self-education

▶ *February 2004* - Jasmina Vukas, Regional office Zagreb Coordinator, was invited to join a 5-month internship program in German Parliament. The German Parliament in cooperation with Humboldt University supported the program.

▶ *April – November 2004* - Alina Jurjevic, Regional office Zadar assistant coordinator, took part in the "Training Program for the Development and Community Work" organized by NGO "Odratz". Training program included 6 seminars and it was attended by 19 representatives of the local community, NGOs and business sector. Topics were: cooperation between civil and

local/business sectors, needs assessment within the community, strategic planning and citizens' participation in decision-making process, writing project proposals, partnership building, participative planning, presentation, facilitation, lobbying and advocacy.

▶ *April 2004* - An introductory three-day seminar for new interns in Internship Program was held in Trakoscan with MPs and Parliament staff as guests.

▶ *May 2004* - Igor Pavlekovic, GONG CT officer, participated on CISCO regional seminar on office network security.

▶ *May 2004* - Damir Azenic participated in the initial seminar within the Council of Europe's "Democratic Leadership Program" in Strasbourg. The goal was to educate and strengthen young people from NGOs, political parties, media and other organization to create networks and broaden cooperation channels.

▶ *May 2004* - Hrvoje Rancic, GONG Regional office Zadar CARDS coordinator, took part in a seminar on how to write proposals for EU Grant Schemes organized by the Office of EU consultants for regional policy in Zadar.

▶ *June 2004* - Upon invitation by Election Canada, the institution that organizes and conducts Canadian elections, GONG President Suzana Jasic participated in an international 7-day study visit program during the 38th Federal General Elections that took place on June 28, 2004. Participants were introduced to major elements of election planning, organization and implementation and visited Canadian Parliament as well as several polling stations to observe the counting of votes.

▶ *June 2004* - Vanja Skoric participated in the European Union Visitor's Programme in Brussels, which acquaints young experts with the functioning of EU institutions.

▶ *October 2004* - Damir Azenic participated in the second seminar of Council of Europe's "Democratic Leadership Program" on leadership skills.

▶ *October 2004* Aleksandra Vinkerlic, the GONG Regional Office Rijeka coordinator, and Hrvoje Rancic, the GONG Regional office Zadar coordinator, participated in DIM's (Demokratska inicijativa mladih) "Democracy School" in Krapinske Toplice. Together with 20 representatives from other NGOs and political parties, they took part in workshops on public speech, policies, political campaigning in Croatia and media presentations.

▶ *November 2004* - Igor Pavlekovic won the contest of Croatia's leading IT magazine Mreza and IT education institution Algebra and has received support for participation in Microsoft Certified System Administrator Academy on Microsoft Windows Server 2003. This program included attendance in six Microsoft Official Curricula and four vouchers for the exams required to achieve certification of MCSA degree.

▶ *November 2004* - Organized by the Welcomeurope, Damir Azenic attended a training course "How to get EU funds?" The course covered the organization of the European Commission, its funding programs, creating an application and budget, submission procedure, partnerships and reporting.

c) Volunteers

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

▶ 57 volunteers met the conditions for membership

▶ There are 5,190 volunteers in the GONG database

▶ Database recorded 12,472 hours of citizens' volunteer work within a year

d) Technical development

Development of the new financial application started and we have developed and implemented an enhanced system for tracking employees' working hours.

A new version of anti-virus protection for e-mail system was successfully implemented and additional features that were included in it were implemented.

MS ISA server that is responsible for one of our security aspects and access to the internet was upgraded to a newer version. We have developed a new module in our "apli" system for monitoring

Internet usage. This includes monitoring of bandwidth, web-page usage and other statistical data to help us determine the usage of resources.

We have also upgraded our photocopy machine with network interface card. This will enable us to use this machine as a network printer, network scanner and network fax server.

In addition, contact management system was implemented in order to simplify maintenance of GONG web sites. It also enables web sites to be more up-to-date and accurate.

5. AT THE VERY END...

- ▶ Annual narrative and financial report for the year 2003 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.

! We received a letter of gratitude form the Town of Hrvatska Kostajnica in June 2004 for GONG's contribution to the development of the town. GONG has over the last several years conducted its "Citizens' Hour", "Open Parliament" and "I Vote for the First Time" activities.

FINANCIAL REPORT FOR YEAR 2004

Average exchange rate: 1 USD = 5.8 KN

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

<table border="0" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td colspan="2">Balance Sheet (in kn)</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">Assets</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tangible Assets</td> <td style="text-align: right;">233,121</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cash & Cash Equivalents</td> <td style="text-align: right;">1,072,283</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total Assets</td> <td style="text-align: right;">1,305,404</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">Liabilities</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Liabilities</td> <td style="text-align: right;">83,005</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other Sources</td> <td style="text-align: right;">233,121</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Fund Balance</td> <td style="text-align: right;">989,278</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total Liabilities</td> <td style="text-align: right;">1,305,404</td> </tr> </table>	Balance Sheet (in kn)		Assets		Tangible Assets	233,121	Cash & Cash Equivalents	1,072,283	Total Assets	1,305,404	Liabilities		Liabilities	83,005	Other Sources	233,121	Fund Balance	989,278	Total Liabilities	1,305,404	<table border="0" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td colspan="2">Consolidated Statement of Income (in kn)</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">Income</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Grants and Donations</td> <td style="text-align: right;">5,523,157</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Revenues</td> <td style="text-align: right;">148,960</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Income from Membership Fee</td> <td style="text-align: right;">14,272</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Income Earnings</td> <td style="text-align: right;">13,381</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total Income</td> <td style="text-align: right;">5,699,770</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">Expenditure</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Services</td> <td style="text-align: right;">1,840,178</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Depreciation</td> <td style="text-align: right;">63,348</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tangible Costs</td> <td style="text-align: right;">709,829</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Material</td> <td style="text-align: right;">105,333</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Energy</td> <td style="text-align: right;">38,831</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other Costs</td> <td style="text-align: right;">80,598</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Costs for Employees</td> <td style="text-align: right;">1,872,375</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total Expenditure</td> <td style="text-align: right;">4,710,492</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Income over Expenditure</td> <td style="text-align: right;">989,278</td> </tr> </table>	Consolidated Statement of Income (in kn)		Income		Grants and Donations	5,523,157	Revenues	148,960	Income from Membership Fee	14,272	Income Earnings	13,381	Total Income	5,699,770	Expenditure		Services	1,840,178	Depreciation	63,348	Tangible Costs	709,829	Material	105,333	Energy	38,831	Other Costs	80,598	Costs for Employees	1,872,375	Total Expenditure	4,710,492	Income over Expenditure	989,278
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SPECIAL THANKS

GONG is a non-profit organization. We were able to accomplish our goals and tasks thanks to the volunteer work of Croatian citizens and to the generous support and donations received.

Financial support (in kn)

up to 5,000

Electoral Reform International Services

up to 10,000

The City of Zagreb

Norwegian Embassy Zagreb

up to 12,000

GONG (self-financing)

up to 20,000

World Learning, Georgia

ISFED, Georgia

up to 30,000

Ministry of Family, Veterans and Intergenerational Solidarity

Ministry of Science, Education and Sport

up to 65,000

NED – National Endowment for Democracy

up to 85,000

National Endowment for Civil Society

Development, Zagreb

up to 105,000

Netherlands Embassy Zagreb

up to 140,000

AED – Academy for Educational Development

up to 170,000

German Marshal Fund

NDI – National Democratic Institute

up to 260,000

Charles Stewart MOTT Foundation

OSCE Mission to the Republic of Croatia

Olof Palme International Center

up to 360,000

European Commission

ASB Office in the Republic of Croatia

up to 480,000

Freedom House, Budapest

up to 550,000

CARE Austria

up to 1,400,000

British Embassy, Zagreb

In - kind supporters (in kn)

up to 1,000

MC Glas Slavonije

up to 3,500

Glas Istre

Vecernji List

up to 15,000

TV Nova

TV Varazdin

TV Dalmatia

up to 20,000

Local self-government and institutions (premises)

Microsoft Croatia d.o.o.

up to 25,000

Atlantic Trade d.o.o., Zagreb

up to 50,000

NIT – Independent Istrian Television

RI-TV d.o.o.

up to 55,000

TV Jadran d.o.o.

ISKON Internet d.d.

up to 80,000

Local radio stations

up to 85,000

NET Television

up to 140,000

Channel RI, Rijeka

over 12,000,000

Croatian Radio-Television