



GONG ANNUAL REPORT

2005

ELECTION PROGRAM

1. Election Monitoring

Presidential election, nationwide local election, several re-run and repeated local election, as well as a number of elections for neighborhood councils were held during 2005. Elections were monitored by **2,259 observers** deployed to polling stations all over Croatia.

- **Presidential Election 2005**

At the election held on 2 January 2005 citizens of the Republic of Croatia were electing the president of the Republic of Croatia. Since none of the candidates received 50% + 1 vote at the election, in the second round of the election held on 16 January 2005 they were electing the president of the Republic of Croatia between two candidates. Election was conducted in the total of 6,731 polling stations in the first round and 6,724 in the second, 155 of which were located abroad.

Both rounds of the election for the president of the Republic of Croatia were monitored by **1,000 GONG observers**. They were deployed to polling stations and to 61 mobile teams that visited additional 803 polling stations in the first round and 79 mobile teams that visited additional 1,180 polling stations in the second round. Election Day in the first round of the election was monitored in diplomatic and consular offices of the Republic of Croatia in Graz, Vienna, Stuttgart, Berlin, Livno, Siroki Brijeg, Paris and The Hague, and in the second round in Graz, Vienna, Paris, London, Stuttgart, Zurich, The Hague, Orasje and Mostar. Parallel Vote Tabulation (PVT) was conducted from the sample of 5% of all polling stations in Croatia and in the second round in 15 polling stations in Bosnia-Herzegovina and diplomatic and consular offices abroad. PVT results, announced before the announcement of the State Election Commission, confirmed the official election results.

GONG's general assessment is that the election, with the exception of some polling stations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, were conducted in accordance with the election legislation. The conduct of the election on polling stations in Bosnia and Herzegovina that GONG was able to observe or inspect during or after the first round was unsatisfactory due to the serious violations of election rules and regulations such as ballot stuffing, partisan polling commissions or voting on behalf of several different persons.

- **Nation Wide Local Election 2005**

At the election of members to representative bodies of local and regional self-government units, held on 15 May 2005 citizens of the Republic of Croatia were electing the members of 426 municipal and 123 city councils and the members of 20 county assemblies as well as the Assembly of the City of Zagreb at 3,914 polling stations in the Republic of Croatia. The election was held for the total of 8,377 members of councils and assemblies and 63,717 candidates were listed in 3,914 candidacy lists.

The election of members to representative bodies of local and regional self-government units was monitored by **1000 GONG observers** deployed to the same number of polling stations and **105 mobile teams** that visited additional 1,500 polling stations, which covered in total around 40% of all polling stations in Croatia.

The election was conducted in accordance with the election legislation although due to lack of regulations that govern election campaign financing, election process was not completely transparent, and due to a number of imprecise provisions of the election law, there was no legal security of candidates at the election.

- **Re-run and Early Local Elections (16)**

Re-run and early local elections were monitored in Krapina (County of Krapina-Zagorje), Vir (County of Zadar), Dvor and Sunja (County of Sisak-Moslavina), Bilje (County of Osijek-Baranya), Sibenik (County of Sibenik-Knin), Davor, Donji Andrijevići, Stara Gradiska and Slavonski Samac (County of Slavonski Brod-Posavina), Stari Mikanovci, Lovas, Nijemci, Tovarnik, Borovo and Trpinja (County of Vukovar-Srijem).

- **Elections for Neighborhood Councils (9)**

Election for neighborhood councils were monitored in Orahovica (County of Virovitica-Podravina), Porec and Pula (County of Istria), Rijeka, Malinska and Vrbnik (County of Primorje-Gorski Kotar), Velika Gorica (County of Zagreb), Senj (County of Lika-Senj) and in the City of Zagreb.

- **Elections Abroad**

- **Kyrgyzstan:** ENEMO (European Network of Election Monitoring Organizations) deployed 29 international short-term observers from 14 organizations from CEE and NIS for Kyrgyzstan Parliamentary election held on 27 February 2005. GONG participated with one STO observer, Ariana Vela.

- **West Bank and Gaza Strip:** On 1-8 May 2005, Dragan Zelic participated in NDI Election Monitoring Mission to West Bank and Gaza Strip for Palestinian local elections. Dragan was one of 25 international observers deployed to West Bank and Gaza Strip.

- **Bulgaria:** Vanja Skoric participated as Election Expert in OSCE/ODIHR Election Assessment Mission to Bulgarian Parliamentary Election held on 25 June 2005.

- **Albania:** GONG led an international ENEMO (European Network of Election Monitoring Organizations) monitoring mission for Albanian Parliamentary election that took place on 3 July 2005. Total of 60 observers from 13 NGOs coming from 11 countries took part in the ENEMO mission. All preparations for arrival, trainings and stationing of observers were executed by five ENEMO representatives who arrived in Albania 14 days prior to Election Day as long-term observers. Two of them came from GONG, Suzana Jasic as Head of the Monitoring Mission and Igor Pavlekovic as Coordinator for Logistics. The mission also included 10 short time observers from Croatia.

- **Kyrgyzstan:** Two GONG representatives, Milan Svalm and Mihael Rukavina participated in ENEMO (European Network of Election Monitoring Organizations) international monitoring mission in Kyrgyzstan for Kyrgyz early Presidential election held on 10 July 2005.

2. Education Campaigns

During 2005, **two major nationwide education campaigns** were conducted (Presidential election and Local election). All repeated local elections and elections for neighborhood councils were accompanied by local educational actions (leaflets, posters, brochures, etc.) to inform the citizens about election process.

In addition, in October 2005, in cooperation with Rijeka City Government, GONG created posters and 4,000 flyers that were distributed in order to educate citizens of Rijeka for Rijeka neighborhood council election held on 23 October 2005.

- **Presidential Election 2005**

GONG already in December 2004 started its education campaign for Presidential election held in January 2005. Following activities aimed at educating and informing the citizens:

- **Three video and two audio clips** were produced and broadcasted more than 2,300 times on 9 TV and 40 radio stations all over Croatia. 18 radio stations and all TV stations broadcasted the clips free of charge

- GONG re-organized and updated additional **web site** www.izbori-info.hr with all relevant information about Presidential elections

- **Info line** 060/20-20-20 was set up, through which answers were given to more than 1,000 citizens' inquiries in connection with election rights, voters' lists, polling stations etc.

- Several documents on election issues were created and uploaded to our web site: **Guide to Voters' Lists, Guide to Presidential Elections, Instructions for voting at home, Instructions for voting with certificate, and Request for voting out of place of residence**

- **27 "Citizens' Hours"** about elections were broadcasted on radio stations around the country for the first and the second round of elections

- **4 press conferences** were held and **13 press releases** were issued in connection with voters' lists, election process, election irregularities, Central state office for administration, GONG activities, etc.

- GONG appeared in the media around several thousand times in December and January, media were contacting GONG on daily base and GONG representatives took part in most popular TV and radio shows and news

▪ **Nation Wide Local Election 2005**

At the beginning of April, we informed the public and Croatian Government that Local Election Law has been changed and that there was no education campaign in plan for informing the citizens about the changes. Having in mind our intention to conduct such campaign, we have requested the Government to financially support campaign activities. The answer to this request was never received. Nevertheless, with financial support received from foreign donors, we have conducted following activities:

- **Three video and three audio clips** were produced and broadcast on TV and radio stations that granted free broadcasts or discounts. TV clips were broadcast more than 500 times in total on all 10 TV stations, and audio clips were broadcast around 3,300 times on 20 radio stations that granted free of charge broadcasts and 29 radio stations that aired the clips with discounts

- **550,000 copies of educational brochures** about the election and local and regional self-government were produced. The brochures were distributed all over Croatia as add-ins in six daily newspapers (Jutarnji list, Vecernji list, Glas Slavonije, Slobodna Dalmacija, Novi list and Glas Istre) and by GONG volunteers

- Education and provision of information was conducted also on GONG **web site** covering the election: www.izbori-hr.info. On this site, which was updated on a daily basis, one could find daily news about the election as well as all legal regulation, deadlines, a list of polling stations and a list of general administration offices. In order to enhance the awareness of these issues we wrote the *Guide to Voters' Lists* and the *Guide to Local Election*, as well as a booklet *Frequently Asked Questions on Local Community Self-Government* since in some municipalities elections for local community self-government units were being conducted simultaneously with the local election

- More than 700 citizens' inquiries concerning the right to vote, voters' lists, election silence, etc. were answered in April and May via **info line** 060/20-20-20 and **e-mail** address gong@gong.hr

- Late in April, **5 "Citizens' Hours"** with the topic of local election and election campaign took place on radio stations in Knin, Osijek, Sibenik, Sisak and Zadar

- During the campaign, we provided all necessary information to journalists who contacted us on a daily basis and who wrote articles and features on topics in connection with elections. **5 press conferences** about activities in the election campaign were held and **10 statements** related to election were issued

3. Election Initiatives

We carry out comparative analyses of election legislation, encourage public debates, and actively advocate for amendments and improvements of election legislation in Croatia in order to reach the standards of western democratic countries.

Presidential Election 2005

After irregularities that occurred during the Presidential election (partisan polling station committees, double voting, „deceased person voting“, voting in the name of other persons, etc.) we have sent a **Motion to the Constitutional Court to undertake relevant measures of control over the constitutionality and legality of the elections**. Our motion, signed by legally required 100 citizens, mainly concerned collision of the Obligatory Instruction no. VII issued by the State Election Commission with other legal and constitutional regulation proscribing the rule one voter equals one vote, disputable practice of polling station committees' members related to universal and equal suffrage, and illegal nomination of polling station committees' members. The motion also stated the fact that GONG found deceased voters marked in the voters' lists as if they had voted. By the end of 2005, the motion was still in Constitutional Court procedure.

Since we discovered irregularities that occurred during the Presidential election (cases of „deceased persons voting“, double voting and voters who claimed they did not vote in Bosnia-Herzegovina but were marked as if they had voted), we filed a **Motion for criminal charges** and invited state institutions to investigate other possibilities of similar irregularities. Moreover, a journalist from Jutarnji list newspaper confirmed our warnings that double voting (in both Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina) is easily possible. We have contacted the State Attorney's office in Zagreb several times to follow up on the motion.

In March, State Election Commission made the statement discovering 71 cases of double voting. They announced opening of the criminal case at the State Attorney's office and filed a motion for criminal charges, 40 days after GONG.

Local Election 2005

In February, we analyzed the changes in the Law on Election of Representatives in Local and Regional Self-government Bodies (Local Election Law), the Constitutional Law on Minority Rights and the Croatian Constitution. We submitted a **Motion to the Constitutional Court for review of the coherence of the Local Election Law, Amendments and Changes of the Local Election Law with the Constitutional Law on Minority Rights and the Croatian Constitution**. An additional voting right on local election not mentioned in the Constitution, obligation for voters to decide between general lists and minority lists being contrary to the Constitution, double voting in the case of by-elections, and potential discrimination of actors in the election process whose candidacies were not regulated, were major issues in the motion.

Soon after that, at the beginning of March, the Government proposed a Draft Election Law Changes on the Local Election Law. However, this Draft did not address any of the inconsistencies and issues mentioned in our analysis and motion. Moreover, some of the proposed provisions were even discriminatory for citizens. We strongly objected to the proposed amendments and informed the President of the Republic, OSCE Mission to Croatia, all MPs, Central State office for Administration and several embassies in Zagreb about the problem. The Law and our initiative were explained to the media on a press conference. Joint action of advocating and public pressure resulted in Government withdrawing the Draft Law from Parliament procedure. A week after, the Government proposed a new Draft Law Changes which included several of our inputs and issues we were protesting against.

We again produced a **written analysis of the Local Election Law**, proposed changes and submitted the analysis to several Parliamentary committees and all parliamentary caucuses inviting them to amend the Draft Election Law Changes in order to avoid confusion during election process. In addition to the complaints sent to the Constitutional Court, we had several technical complaints: the Law was not clear about voters lists used for elections, incorrect method for transferring votes into mandates, non-partisan members of polling committees, lack of provisions regarding election campaigning and its financing, incompatibility of candidacies and membership in election commissions, protection of voting right and announcement of election results. Most of this was considered and adopted immediately by the Committee for Constitution, Standing Orders and Political System. However, we kept sending our amendments to the final Draft Law Changes, and at the end only minor technical issues were not included in the Law.

Voters' Lists

After several years of GONG pointing out the problem of voters' lists in Croatia, soon after the irregularities during Presidential election (double voting and deceased person voting in Bosnia and Herzegovina), the problem of voters' lists in Diaspora became one of the top issues. President of the Croatian Parliament and other state officials finally publicly stated that the problem of voters' lists should be finally resolved. During April, we met the Head of Central State Office for Administration and discussed the upcoming local election and the voters' lists issue. The Central State Office for Administration announced overall election legal framework reform including voter's lists and voting of voters who have double residence and invited GONG to contribute to it.

Minority Representation

In October, we produced and submitted to the procedure of the Constitutional Court a **Motion for review of constitutionality of Government's decision regarding minority participation in representative bodies on local and regional level**. The consequence of Government's decision was under-representation of national minority representatives in representative bodies on local and regional level. Along with that, we conducted a research regarding the number of national minority voters showing significant increase of number of national minority voters through years that was not reflected in local representative bodies.

Election Campaign Financing

After the **comparative research** in January, GONG recommended to the State Election Commission several types of financial report forms for Presidential election candidates. The forms were accepted by the SEC and used in reporting for Presidential election campaigns. GONG's representative in the Program Council of Croatian Television (HRT) requested from the HRT to publicly state amounts spent on presidential election

campaign on HRT, which were after initial refusal finally made public. We also reminded the public and the Government that issue of campaign financing was still not regulated for the local election.

In late 2005, we have obtained and produced **several papers regarding election campaign financing** which consisted of comparative analysis of election campaign financing and plan for producing several models of control on campaign financing issues. All financial annual reports from political parties in the Parliament for the year 2004 were obtained, analyzed, and published on the web site, and comparative table of all Croatian elections was created in form of "screening" of election campaign financing in Croatia (legislative framework and practice). We disseminated the papers to the interested media, Central State Office for Administration and published it on the GONG web site.

Modes of cooperation and GONG assistance on drafting the law on election campaign financing were agreed with law experts from the Central State Office for Administration.

State Election Commission as a Permanent Body

In early April, Draft Law on State Election Commission (SEC) as a Permanent Body, with GONG inputs and comments, entered Parliamentary procedure. However, it did not acquire sufficient support from the MPs.

Shortly after that, we produced and disseminated to the Central State Office for Administration a **comparative analysis on provisions about SEC work and legal background in European countries**, and gave **inputs on the draft Law** on State Election Commission as a Permanent Body that entered the Parliamentary procedure in September 2005.

Electoral Code

Part of our advocacy program is adoption of a single Electoral Code – in July, we have more than once publicly protested against partial changes in election legislation. The idea was presented to the Parliament's Committee for the Constitution, Standing Orders and Political System and to the Central State Office for Administration as one of the best options for unifying and conciliating the entire election legislation. The examples of European practice and a comparative analysis of other countries' codes were also presented. In Parliament's discussions and on several round table debates the advantages of such practice were emphasized and Central State Office for Administration has accepted the idea as a final step of consolidating the election legislation.

4. 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 Croatian youth 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.

In 2005, the sixth season of the project was held. During the first semester of the school year 2005/2006, 25 educated trainers/lecturers conducted **800 "I vote for the first time" workshops** in 196 high schools all over Croatia with **23,000 participating high school students**. Two workshops were organized for the protégés of the "Turopolje" juvenile correctional institution. More than 50,000 educational brochures about elections and the right to vote, advocacy initiatives and citizens' participation in local decision making process were distributed to students.

After six years of project implementation, **105,000 high school students participated in 3,704 workshops** held the total of 277 high schools, which makes the 75% of all high schools in Croatia.

! In October, GONG applied to Council of Europe's "Young Active Citizens" Award Contest with "I vote for the first time" project. The meeting of the international jury of the Council of Europe Award took place in Strasbourg on 5 December 2005, and selected five winners – GONG's "I vote for the first time" project" won the award as the second best project of all received applications from all over Europe!

PARLIAMENT PROGRAM

The Parliament Program aims at increasing citizens' confidence in democratic institutions and their representatives by introducing citizens to the work of national and local representative bodies and state institutions, encouraging communication between citizens and their elected representatives and promoting accountability and transparency in the work of state institutions. Created in 2000, it made significant impact so far.

1. Citizens' Hour

The "Citizens' Hour" is a meeting between citizens and their elected representatives on both local and national levels, during which the citizens ask various questions, commend and criticize, and suggest possible solutions to current problems. These meetings are organized with a purpose of encouraging the communication between voters and their (present or future) representatives during their term.

Since the autumn of 2000, "Citizen's Hours" have been organized throughout Croatia in the form of public meetings and radio shows. Depending on the interest and the topic, we invite to these meetings besides the elected representatives (parliamentary representatives, councilors etc.), also the representatives from the government, local executive authorities, independent experts and all those who can answer the countless questions our citizens may ask.

During 2005, **151 Citizens' Hours** were organized – 70 in the form of radio talk show and 81 in a form of a public meeting. 427 guests (members of Parliament, town council members, ministers, town and municipality mayors, county prefects, experts, activists, etc) participated in Citizens' Hours. **3,145 citizens** attended public meetings and 158 citizens asked questions during radio talk shows.

! From the start of the project, total of 786 Citizens' Hours were organized all over Croatia with 2,710 participating guests. All together, 14,461 citizens present in public meetings and 1,978 citizens raising questions in radio talk shows.

2. Open Parliament

The first public tours of the Croatian Parliament were organized in response to GONG's initiative in the beginning of 2000. Since then, such tours have become a practice and are arranged in the cooperation of GONG and the Parliament. Also, in 2000 we have called upon the Parliament to open a gallery for all those citizens wishing to attend parliamentary sessions. Since then, all interested citizens can attend parliamentary sessions. Since 2001, we have been arranging tours of the Croatian Parliament for high schools with huge response coming from the schools. For the schools from other towns of Croatia, our interns, who since 2003 guide the tours, manage meetings between students and the representatives of their constituency.

In 2005, **44 citizens attended Parliament's sessions** and **3,904 citizens visited Parliament** during "Parliament Tours". Most of them were students from 70 high schools from all over Croatia. Meetings with 65 members of Parliament (many of them accepted our invitation several times) were organized for high school students out of Zagreb.

*! From the start of the project (spring 2000) **950 citizens attended Parliamentary sessions and 16,066 citizens and students visited Parliament** during Parliament Tours.*

! From the start of the project, a total of 283 schools visited Croatian Parliament on one or more occasions.

! For pupils from Dvor elementary school, who besides the Parliament visited the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration, we organized a visit to the movies – a donation of Broadway Cinemas in Zagreb. It was their first movie in a theatre made them very happy and excited. In addition to that, "Vecernji list" - national daily paper, gave them a donation of books, CDs, DVDs and other useful material for the school library.

3. Internship program

The Internship program is a volunteer program for students and young professionals within state bodies for the purpose of providing additional education, since the existing educational program in Croatia does not offer opportunities for acquiring such practical experience.

We launched the Internship Program in the Croatian Parliament in 2001 when the first 10 law and political science students started volunteering for the members of Parliament. Apart from the valuable experience that the young people acquire through this program, it should be pointed out that such a help is more than welcome in the everyday work of MPs.

During 2005, **24 students** volunteered in 2005 on different levels of government - 22 students volunteered in Croatian Parliament for 22 MPs and parliamentary party caucuses, 1 intern volunteered in Croatian Government's Office for Social Partnership and 1 intern volunteered in Zagreb City Council. Interns in Croatian Government and Zagreb City Council successfully finished their internships in May 2005.

Seven new interns entered the program in October 2005. In December, we organized a three-day orientation seminar for new interns where all interns shared their experiences, knowledge and gave recommendations for program's further improvement.

On 5 December 2005, the International Volunteer Day, a promotion of the second generation of volunteers in the Croatian Parliament was organized in the Parliament. Students who successfully finished the program in 2004 were given the official Certificate on participation in the program, signed by the Secretary of the Parliament and the GONG President. They also received small models of the Parliament's building, handed out to them by "their" MPs, in memory of the time they spent working there.

*! From the start of the Program until the end of 2005, **62 students and young professionals volunteered** for 34 MPs and parliamentary caucuses, in 9 government offices and in local government bodies.*

4. Initiatives

Since the activities of state institutions should be public and serve to all citizens as the citizens are the ones keeping those institutions in existence (by paying the taxes) and since they actually exist because of the citizens (without the citizens there would be no state institutions), we carry out advocacy initiatives, we react and advocate in an effort to make this a practice in Croatia. Also, being one of the most visible organizations in Croatia, GONG constantly works on creating conditions for overall civil society development.

Transparent Work of the Parliament

GONG was for the last several years active in initiating adoption of the Rules that regulates transparency of Parliament's work. In early 2005, we submitted **inputs and comments on the Draft rules and on the Final Draft Rules** that were finally adopted in May 2005. Most of our comments and suggestions were adopted. During autumn, we have begun monitoring the implementation of the Rules during GONG's Parliamentary tours for students and citizens.

Transparent Work of Local Government

In July, Zagreb City Government decided to close its sessions for representatives of the media, providing them only with session materials, decisions and comments but not with access to discussions. Along with media representatives, GONG publicly protested against this decision calling on democratic principles as well as existing regulation about publicity of local body's work and requesting reopening of sessions.

Freedom of Public Gatherings

In June, the Government proposed amendments of Law on Public Gatherings, requesting a ban on gatherings in front of Croatian Parliament and Government buildings. We publicly requested Parliamentary Committee for Human Rights to review arguments regarding the proposal and prepared a short analysis of these regulations in other European countries supporting the arguments against the ban.

Also, GONG was invited and participated in civil initiative "Matija Gubec" protesting on restrictions for public gatherings. An open statement of the initiative to the Prime Minister was co-signed. Moreover, Vanja Skoric, GONG Legal Advisor gave legal inputs on legal background for the protest and initiative's motion to the Constitutional Court. On OSCE Annual Human Dimension Implementation Meeting in Warsaw, Suzana Jasic intervened with a statement regarding the introduced restrictions in the Law.

Freedom of Information Act

In November, we started a **research on implementation of Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)** in Croatia. 23 persons were selected to send 105 written inquiries to more than 100 state institutions listed as the institutions that are obliged to answer to all received questions coming from the citizens. The results and final analysis will be presented to the public during 2006.

Urgent Procedures in the Parliament

During 2005, plenty of proposed legislation was sent to Parliamentary urgent procedure by the Government, breaking Standing Orders of the Croatian Parliament. In late 2005, we collected and created a data base of all urgent procedures, showing more laws being adopted in urgent procedure than it should be according to the Standing Orders. Detailed analysis of the research will be finished in 2006.

Law of VAT

Non-profit organizations were subject to VAT exemption on foreign donation since 2001, however, only by Rules on VAT. After the Ministry of Finance abolished the rule in May 2004, with help of several MPs, we tried to **introduce changes into the Law on VAT**. After months of waiting, in early 2005 the Parliamentary Committee for Finances issued negative opinion on proposed changes of the Law and discussion on plenary session showed that ruling party MPs stated very negative opinion on NGOs that promote constitutional values such as human rights, environment, etc. Parliament did not pass the Law and GONG issued a letter of protest to all parliamentary caucuses.

Law on Voluntarism

Vanja Skoric, GONG Legal Advisor, was invited to take part in the work group for drafting the Law on Voluntarism. Three meetings were organized during 2005 within the National Committee for Development of Voluntarism and Vanja submitted GONG proposals for improving the Draft Law as well as facilitated one of the workshops during the public discussion on Draft Law organized by the Ministry of Family Affairs, War Veterans and Intergeneration Solidarity. On 15 December 2005 members of the work group met the President Mr. Mesic, informed him about their work and asked him for support when the law will be introduced.

Civil Society Forum

Many NGOs, unsatisfied with explanations of results and procedural mistakes in funding tender of National Foundation for Development of Civil Society (FDCS), formed the Civil Society Forum as a way to coordinate and explore standpoints regarding it. Media showed great interest considering the fact that many well-known and influential NGOs in Croatia did not get institutional support from the FDCS. FDCS had to explain the lack of transparency in the tender process and the criteria for the distribution of funds, lack of communication with NGOs and conflict of interest of the Board members who are members of NGOs that did receive funds. A meeting with representatives of the Forum and the FDCS was held in February, members of the Forum wrote a shadow report about the work of the FDCS, and the Parliament Committee for Human Rights held a session about the FDCS. Along with that, a public discussion with representatives of NGOs and the FDCS was held in the Centre for Human Rights where both parties presented their expectations and wishes for increasing and enhancing future communication. In October 2005, after several joint actions, we formalized the cooperation within the Forum by signing the "Civil Society Forum" Charter.

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 more than 1200 various inquiries for legal help about repeated local elections, right to access information, finding election archive materials, obtaining free legal help, conflict of interest in exercising public tenure, dissolution of associations, etc.

In June, citizens association SDF from Zagreb requested help from GONG in reviewing their **Draft Law on Free Legal Help**. During the year, GONG's representatives were giving inputs and comments on the draft law and submitting them back to SDF.

A group of citizens from Zagreb city neighborhood Travno addressed GONG seeking advice and legal help. GONG was providing advices and inputs on initiative of the citizens from the Travno neighborhood in obtaining information and documentation from Zagreb City Office regarding General Urban Plan (GUP). GONG also co-drafted and co-signed a **Motion to the Constitutional Court for review of constitutionality** submitted by several NGOs in December, representing and supporting citizens of Travno.

5. Activities in War Affected Areas

CARDS Sustainable Development in Return Areas – Civil Society Project

From 15 May 2004 to 15 November 2005, in partnership with CARE International and ZaMirNET, GONG has implemented a civil society project supported by the European Commission within CARDS 2002 Programme. The project was implemented in the **Zadar and Sibenik-Knin counties** with goal to support local citizens' groups and local government, encourage citizens' participation in political processes, and raise citizens' awareness on local community development.

During 2005, 63 Citizens' Hours were organized with 1699 participating citizens, 68 "I vote for the first time" workshops for 1,700 students were held, 292 citizens and students from target counties visited the Parliament in 8 Parliament tours, 4 series of 3 interactive advocacy workshops were held in 4 towns/municipalities, and Europe Day celebrations were organized in 5 towns/municipalities in the Zadar and Sibenik-Knin counties. In September, a meeting with Croatian President Mr. Mesic was organized for advocacy workshops participants where they informed him about their activities in local community and achievements.

! Supported by the President's office, 30 pupils from Donji Srb elementary school visited Plitvice Lakes National Park (being their first school visit ever!), and as a token of appreciation for successful cooperation with schools from target counties, we have donated copies of the European dictionary and "EU Integration Policy" book to 16 school libraries.

Civic political/economic education and civic participation encouragement

Supported by the OSCE Mission to Croatia, we implemented civic political/economic education and civic participation encouragement projects in **Sisak-Moslavina and Karlovac counties**, and in **3 counties of western Slavonia**. Within the Locomotive program supported by the DFID of UK Embassy, small-scale civic participation project was implemented in **Lika-Senj County**.

From 15 March to 30 November 2005, GONG Regional office Zagreb organized 18 Citizens' Hours, 7 Parliament tours, 7 "I vote for the first time" workshops and 4 Europe Day celebrations in 4 towns/municipalities of Sisak-Moslavina and Karlovac counties.

GONG Regional office Rijeka has from March to October 2005 organized 2 Citizens' Hours, a round table discussion and a series of advocacy workshops in was affected municipality of Udbina (Lika-Senj County) aiming at improving communication and cooperation of citizens and Udbina municipality officials.

From 15 August to 21 December 2005, GONG Regional office Slavonski Brod organized 18 Citizens' Hours, 6 Parliament tours and 9 public advocacy workshops for 74 representatives of 59 organizations in the Slavonski Brod-Posavina, Virovitica-Podravina and Bjelovar-Bilogora counties.

! Motivated by difficult conditions that most of the citizens in war affected areas live in, we humbly contributed to the local "Red Cross" organizations in Dvor and Vojnic. GONG employees, friends and supporters collected mainly clothes and toys for children. As a sign of gratitude, GONG received The Letter of Thanks from "Red Cross" in Vojnic.

6. Lost and Found – Booklet about State Institutions and Public Administration

In September 2004, GONG started the implementation of the project “Booklet about State Institutions and Public Administration” funded by the Delegation of the EC to the Republic of Croatia. The aim of the project was to improve the understanding of Croatian citizens about the role and tasks of state institutions and public administration in Croatia and their rights to access information and assistance in the enormity of the system. In 28 thematic chapters some of the most frequent questions and problems that citizens encounter in everyday life have been collected and addressed – containing instructions on whom and how to contact as well as the lists of laws providing more detailed information.

During 2005, after thorough research, **the booklet “Izgubljen-nadjen” (“Lost & found”)** was finished and **12,000 copies** of the booklet were printed in August. It was distributed free of charge to all interested citizens, NGOs and institutions. In addition, an on-line version of the booklet was set up on a special GONG web site. Citizens welcomed the project, hundreds of copies were ordered by the citizens on-line and the booklet was marked as very useful by the citizens.

In December 2005, preparations for the second edition of the booklet started.

7. Local Government Reform Project

In order to obtain broader input into policy statements of the Union of Association of Cities and Association of Municipalities, to raise awareness among local governments and public at large regarding specific issues and instruct representatives of local governments to advocate for local government issues with unified voice across the party lines, introduced by the USAID, GONG agreed to prepare and conduct a series of round table debates about these issues, starting from 1 September 2005.

During 2005, **6 round table discussions** were organized in Zagreb, Osijek, Zadar and Rijeka, which served as advocacy forums by bringing together local officials, parliamentarians and government representatives to discuss specific policy and legislative issues.

In November 2005, GONG has begun working on preparing news alerts and overviews of Parliament activities related to local and regional self-government for the beneficiaries of the Local government reform project. We monitor Parliament’s plenary sessions, Parliamentary committees’ work, Official Gazette’s editions and the media with the purpose of issuing comprehensive reports and summaries on legislative activities relevant to the local/regional government.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. Training Courses, Consultations and Visits

Strengthening Network Capacity Training for MOST – Skopje, Macedonia

Invited by MOST, NGO from Macedonia, Sandra Pernar, GONG Parliament program Coordinator and Marko Canovic, Director of CDT (NGO from Montenegro), held the training on network capacity and communication improvement for MOST staff on 25-26 February 2005.

Training for BH Parliamentary Assembly Representatives and OIA – Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina

GONG Parliament Program Coordinator, Sandra Pernar, held the training on GONG parliament program activities for Bosnia-Herzegovina Parliamentary Assembly representatives and OIA NGO (Omladinska informativna agencija) in Sarajevo on 4 March 2005. The training was held upon the invitation from OSCE BH and Bosnia-Herzegovina Parliamentary Assembly, whose representatives visited the Croatian Parliament and also met with GONG representatives at the end of 2004, on which occasion they showed interest for implementing the same project in their Parliamentary Assembly in cooperation with OIA.

Training Bulgarian, Georgian and Romanian NGOs on Organizational Development – Zagreb, Croatia

Following the workshop supported by the NDI and held in July 2004, when GONG organizational development toolkit was developed, GONG organized the training on organizational development to NGO representatives from Bulgaria (*Association of Parents of Children with Cerebral Palsy and Children with Congenital and Hereditary Disabilities*), Georgia (*International Society for Free Elections and Democracy*) and Romania (*Asociatia Romana Anti-Sida*). 9 representatives participated in a week long training held in

Zagreb on 14-18 March 2005. Participants attended all GONG activities during that week (Parliamentary tour, Citizens' Hour, etc.) and a meeting with the Mayor of the City of Rijeka, Rijeka Government officials and NGO representatives from Rijeka during their visit to GONG Regional office Rijeka was organized.

Training of IYC Trainers – Yerevan, Armenia

National Democratic Institute and "Its Your Choice" (Armenian election monitoring NGO) announced request for four trainers to train a core of 250 long term observers and trainers (the trainees would train over 3,500 observers for a constitutional referendum and local elections later in 2005) during the election monitor training program scheduled in April 2005. Dragan Zelic, GONG representative, was in Armenia on 1-18 April 2005 and trained four groups of trainees on election procedure, observers' responsibilities, irregularities, reporting and most importantly, how to train the observers.

Iraqi Political Party and CSO Representatives Study Visit Program – Zagreb, Croatia

Within NDI's study visit program for Iraqi political party and NGO representatives, held in Zagreb from 22 April to 22 May 2005, GONG hosted two participants for a two-week study visit, on 1-15 May. According to the study visit plan, two participants were engaged in all GONG activities during preparations of GONG local election campaign. On Election Day, they have monitored the election process on polling stations in Zagreb. In addition, GONG provided presentation to all program participants about political situation, election related issues and GONG election activities, as well as provided technical support to NDI staff in Zagreb.

"Community communication and education house" Study Visit – Zagreb, Croatia

On 31 August 2005, representatives of "Community communication and education house", organization from Albania, within their one week study visit in Croatia visited GONG and were introduced with GONG activities with special stress on encouraging communication between citizens and elected officials, educating youth and opening Croatian Parliament to citizens.

"Research then advocate" Project Expert Meeting – Zagreb, Croatia

Introduced by Freedom House Budapest, GONG was contacted by Alena Ob'ezdchikova from Youth Human Rights Network (YHRM) Russia in May 2005, with aim to initiate cooperation within YHRM's project "Research then advocate". Third phase of the project implementation was to organize an expert meeting of partner organizations involved in the project in order to discuss the project development and internships of Russian NGO representatives in host organizations in Bulgaria, Croatia and Poland, including GONG. The organization was accredited to GONG and the meeting took place in Zagreb on 30 September – 1 October 2005. Alexander Sokolov, GOLOS representative, was designated to participate in internship program in GONG in early 2006.

Hamburg University - Academic Network SEE – Zagreb, Croatia

Students of the Institute for the Peace research and Security Policy of Hamburg University and members of the Academic Network of Southeast Europe, who participated in study visit to Croatia, visited GONG on 26 November 2005 and participated in presentation of GONG activities, followed by discussion about current situation in Croatia. Important elements of Institute's research are OSCE activities in the region as well as election process. Students were mostly interested in development of election process in Croatia from the non-governmental perspective, but also in GONG activities regarding election monitoring campaigns and voluntarism.

Fulbright Grantee Study Visit – Zagreb, Croatia

Fulbright grantee Renee Brown visited GONG on 12 December 2005 as a part of her research on the sustainability of refugee return in Croatia with focus on the role of local-level dynamics. Dragan Zelic presented her with GONG findings, reports and analysis on local election process relevant for her research.

2. Project and Program Cooperation with International Organizations

ENEMO Assembly in Bratislava

Suzana Jasic represented GONG in ENEMO (European Network of Election Monitoring Organization) meeting in Bratislava on 11-13 February 2005. ENEMO Assembly was attended by 9 members and 6 applicants for membership, out of which 5 were accepted (Golos, Russia; ISFED, Georgia; EMC, Azerbaijan; It's your choice, Armenia and Republic Network of Independent Monitors, Kazakhstan). Slovakian Obcianske Oko was elected as ENEMO Secretary for the second mandate. Suzana Jasic held the presentation on GONG initiatives and advocacy efforts in connection with Presidential election in Croatia.

EU Support for Improvement in Governance and Management

SIGMA (Support for Improvement in Governance and Management), a joint initiative of the OECD and the EU was gathering information on assessment of civil service and administrative framework, and on assessment of anticorruption integrity system. Since GONG has been identified as an interlocutor in the context of assessment of anticorruption integrity system (in terms of financing political parties and election campaigns), GONG President Suzana Jasic and GONG Legal advisor Vanja Skoric met SIGMA representatives on 5 May 2005 and provided expertise and written analysis, stressing once again the importance of adopting new and adequate regulation on these issues.

European Governance Network

In May, GONG became national coordinator for Croatia within EGN – European Governance Network, a project that intends to create a new international network among partners from all over Europe on European Governance. The network consists of 45 associations/institutions from 21 European countries.

ENEMO Meeting, Kiev

GONG Project Coordinator Dragan Zelic took part in the ENEMO (European Network of Election Monitoring Organization) meeting held on 24-25 September 2005 in Kiev, Ukraine. The purpose of the meeting was to plan new ENEMO monitoring missions for 2006. The representatives of ENEMO member organizations also discussed issues concerning further cooperation and election monitoring.

POLITIEA Seminar, Amsterdam

Sandra Pernar, GONG Program Coordinator, participated in the work of Politeia seminar on 9-11 December 2005 in Amsterdam. The seminar was organized by Dutch Instituut voor Publiek en Politiek, with representatives of organizations from Ireland, Czech Republic, Romania, Poland, Italy, Bulgaria and Germany. Participants discussed the possibilities and agreed on cooperation through the “Politeia” network consisting of organizations that deal with issues regarding the European citizenship, civil society and democracy through education and participation. A newsletter will be produced and joint “Politeia” web site will be administrated.

3. International Conferences, Seminars and Visits

Challenges of Election Technologies and Procedures – Vienna, Austria

Vanja Skoric, GONG legal Advisor, participated in Supplementary human dimension meeting about challenges of election technologies and procedures held on 21-22 April 2005 in Vienna. The conference was organized by the OSCE and gathered more than 300 state officials from all OSCE member states including NGO representatives. Vanja held a presentation during “Enhancing Election Processes through Election Observation” session of the conference.

Activism Festival conference "Fast Forward: Activism and Beyond" – Tirana, Albania

GONG's representatives Aleksandra Vinkerlic and Vanja Skoric participated on Tirana Activism Festival conference "Fast Forward: Activism and Beyond", held on 3-5 June 2005. Conference themes included: existing role of activists groups in Eastern and Central Europe / Central Asia; relationship between civil activism, civil society and democracy; role of civil society agenda in shaping public policy; and challenges and benefits of youth activism. Vanja and Sandra also presented GONG activities to other participants.

“Sustainability of civil society Organizations in Post-accession central and Eastern Europe, the CIS, the Balkans and Turkey” Forum – Bratislava, Slovakia

Alina Jurjevic participated on the Third Forum of Civil Society Organizations, governments and foundations – “Sustainability of civil society Organizations in Post-accession central and Eastern Europe, the CIS, the Balkans and Turkey” organized by ECA NGO working Group that took place in Bratislava, Slovakia on 9–11 June 2005, under the auspices of the World Bank and the Slovak Government. Apart from participating in panel discussions of the event GONG also presented “I Vote for the First Time” project at the section of the Forum called “Knowledge Forum” intended for organizational knowledge exchange.

Olof Palme International Center Conference for Balkans – Igalo, Montenegro

Alina Jurjevic represented GONG in the Olof Palme International Center Conference for Balkans that took place in Igalo, Montenegro, on 20-22 June 2005. She presented the participants of the conference (mostly OPIC grantees) with “I vote for the First Time” project and participated in several needs assessment and county analysis groups during the conference.

OSCE/ODIHR Copenhagen Plus Meeting – Warsaw, Poland

On 5-8 September 2005, Vanja Skoric, GONG Legal Advisor, participated in OSCE / ODIHR working group of experts in drafting Copenhagen Plus document in Warsaw. This meeting was convened in response to the request of the OSCE Chairmanship and to discuss draft text to be presented to the participating States at the Permanent Council. Representatives of the EC, Venice Commission, Russian Election Commission and NDI have also participated.

OSCE/ODIHR Annual Human Dimension Meeting – Warsaw, Poland

GONG President Suzana Jasic took part in the OSCE/ODIHR (Organization for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights) Annual Human Dimension meeting held on 17-18 September 2005 in Warsaw. The meeting covered election issues, regulations on public gathering and regulations on public media in OSCE member states.

UN-HABITAT Regional CSO Meeting – Skopje, Macedonia

GONG representative Sandra Pernar participated in the UN-HABITAT Meeting for Civil Society Organizations for the Regional Capacity Building Programme for Urban Development and Housing in South-Eastern Europe, held in Skopje on 5-6 October 2005. The purpose of the meeting was to present concept of the regional capacity building program for urban development and housing to civil society organizations, to identify the issues of primary interest for civil society organizations in the context of local development planning and to identify interest of civil society organizations for their active participation in the local development planning in the region.

OSCE/ODIHR Expert Meeting on Election Observation – Moscow, Russia

GONG President Suzana Jasic participated in the OSCE/ODIHR (Organization for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights) expert meeting on election observation held on 22-23 November 2005 in Moscow, Russia. The main objective of the meeting was to provide an opportunity for practitioners involved in the field of election observation in the OSCE region to exchange their experience and views on election observation methodologies. Suzana gave a presentation on methodology in domestic election monitoring missions, following GONG example and experiences.

OSCE Forum on political parties and democratic development – Skopje, Macedonia

Vanja Skoric, GONG Legal advisor held Presentation of the European standards and best practice models for campaign financing on „Forum on political parties and democratic development" that was held in Skopje on 29-30 November 2005. The Forum was organized by OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Macedonia and was divided into three working sessions, one of which was dedicated to discussion about the role of political parties in the elections.

ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

1. Cooperation with Institutions in Croatia and Presenting GONG

A. Cooperation with Institutions, Organizations and NGOs in Croatia

- ▶ Dragan Zelic, GONG representative, participated on 28 February 2005 in initial meeting organized by Independent Croatian Union. The goal was to discuss potential areas of cooperation between the Union and Croatian NGOs, possible joint applications to EU funds and improvement of CSR in Croatia.
- ▶ Invited by Governmental Office for Human Rights, Vlatka Svedruzic was GONG representative in the work group which task was to evaluate project/program proposals received by the office following the call for proposals announced on 14 January 2005. The work group reached final decision in May 2005.
- ▶ Suzana Jasic in 2005 continued with participation in Croatian National Television Program Council's sessions. In October 2005, she was re-elected by the Parliament for the second mandate in the Council.
- ▶ OSCE Field office Zadar approached GONG with request for cooperation in implementation of OSCE project about local election issues – organization of 6 open panel discussions for minority groups in County of Zadar in early April. Hrvoje Rancic, Regional office Zadar Coordinator, gave presentations on election issues.

- ▶ GONG representative, Dragan Zelic, was invited to participate in discussion on election legislation organized by US Embassy Deputy Ambassador on 24 February 2005. Besides GONG, representatives of USAID, OSCE, Croatian Helsinki Committee, Serbian Minority Council and other US Embassy representatives participated.
- ▶ Suzana Jasic participated in Ministry of European Integration work group assembled for selection of a slogan for Croatia's EU accession process.
- ▶ Nominated by GONG, Igor Bajok was chosen on a Fifth NGO Forum to be a member of the Coordination committee, a newly founded body created based on recently adopted Chart of cooperation between the City of Rijeka and Rijeka civil sector.
- ▶ Hrvoje Rancic, Regional office Zadar Coordinator, continued in 2005 with his engagement in Regional Partnership within Regional Operative Plan initiative for County of Zadar under EC support.
- ▶ We have supported Zagreb Volunteer Centre in their initiative aimed at the Zagreb City Government for provision of permanent premises for the Centre.
- ▶ In April 2005, following GONG initiative, HINA (Croatian News Agency) agreed to enable us free of charge access to their online news service. A formal relationship was arranged which made possible announcement of selected relevant HINA news on GONG web sites.
- ▶ GONG Regional office Rijeka engaged in activities of newly established Council for Development of Volunteerism in the County of Primorje – Gorski Kotar initiated by SMART NGO. The goal is to bring the principles of volunteerism closer to citizens and to set up a database of all volunteers in the County.
- ▶ Croatian Political Science Association was collecting data for catalogue of NGOs that are dealing with educational programs and activities. We sent "I vote for the first time", Internship program and Election civic education summaries to be included in the catalogue.
- ▶ Igor Bajok represented GONG in the sessions of Council for Civil Society Development where activities on delivering Strategy for Civil Society Development and supporting civil society were discussed. In November 2005, after misconducts in the work of the Council and serious accusations on Croatian NGO coming from the Head of the Government Office for NGOs, Mrs. Jadranka Cigelj, Igor resigned to his position in the Council.
- ▶ Representatives of historical museum of Istria have contacted us in May with request for sending them all GONG material produced during election campaigns, including audio and video clips. Shortly after that, we have received similar request from the Municipality of Omisalj (on the Island of Krk) which opened two info centers for youth. Municipality representatives have seen the I Vote for the First Time brochures and asked if we can send them more for interested high school and elementary school students. Brochures with general information on GONG were also sent to Omisalj.
- ▶ Alina Jurjevic was invited by the AED to be GONG representative in the work group which task was to evaluate project proposals received by the AED following the call for proposals within NGO Visibility Programme.
- ▶ The county assembly adopted "Strategic Guidelines 2005-2009" of Primorje – Gorski Kotar County in September 2005. Partnership with GONG is one of the guidelines' highlights as part of the county's cooperation with civil society organizations.
- ▶ Invited by Croatian Institute for Education (Ministry of Science, Education and Sports) and Research-Educational Centre for Human Rights and Citizenship, GONG participated in initial meeting where possibilities of implementing Institute's AGORA project nation wide were discussed. GONG participated in the meeting due to its extensive experience in implementing a similar project (I Vote for the First Time), providing example for communication with stakeholders and achieving results.
- ▶ Vanja Skoric, GONG Legal Advisor, on 4 October 2005 gave a presentation on work and experiences of a person with a law degree working in an NGO in Croatia. The presentation was held within Zagreb Law faculty orientation program for freshmen.

▶ In October, GONG formalized the cooperation with several other major NGOs in Croatia by signing the "Civil Society Forum" Charter. The Forum gathers Croatian organizations that contribute to development and promotion of social ethics, the culture on peace, environment protection, sustainable development and community of active citizens. Member organizations directly work on fulfillment of the highest values of the society stated in the Article 3 of Croatian Constitution. By the end of 2005, the Forum conducted several actions relevant to the overall civil society development in Croatia.

▶ Dragan Zelic participated on Forum of non-governmental organizations that provide free legal help organized on 4 November 2005. The meeting gathered representatives of NGOs, OSCE, UNHCR, the Delegation of the European Commission in Zagreb and other law experts. The goal was to provide inputs for legal regulation of status of free legal help providers in Croatia.

▶ Aleksandra Vinkerlic, GONG Regional office Rijeka Coordinator participated in regional round table debate on Draft Strategy for Civil Society Development held in Gospic on 3 October 2005, and organized by the Governmental Office for NGOs.

▶ On 18 November 2005, Vanja Skoric took part in USAID meeting on assessing the NGO Sustainability Index in Croatia.

▶ Jasmina Vukas, GONG Regional office Zagreb Coordinator participated on 14-15 November 2005 in advisory meetings organized by the National Foundation for Civil Society Development and MAP Consultancy with goal to obtain suggestions and define needs from NGOs from the City of Zagreb in order to enhance regional development and decentralization of financial support.

▶ GONG Regional office Slavonski Brod joined the initiative of NGOs from Slavonia to formalize their cooperation and on 1-2 December 2005 Sanja Beslic participated in creation of the Strategy and Cooperation modes within the NGO Forum of Slavonia.

▶ Sanja Beslic, GONG Regional office Slavonski Brod Coordinator participated in the first Assembly of the "Volunteer Center Osijek" that took place in Osijek on 5 December 2005 – the International Volunteer Day.

▶ In December 2005, GONG actively engaged in Good Governance Coordination Meetings initiated by and regularly taking place in the OSCE Field office Sisak. Damir Azenic represented GONG in the initial meeting on 14 December 2005 where the information about programs and projects on Good Governance in the area of Central Croatia and Western Slavonia were exchanged and future ways of co-operation between donors and NGOs were discussed.

B. Conferences, seminars and public events

▶ *March 2005* - GONG representative, Sandra Pernar, participated in open panel discussion on "Youth and Politics" issue in Karlovac Youth Library. Sandra and other guests from Zagreb Faculty of Political Science and local parties' youth representatives, contributed to the discussion that attracted many interested students.

▶ *March 2005* - GONG was invited to take part in round table discussion on local election legislation organized by the Social Democrat Party. It gathered political parties' representatives, OSCE representatives, Head of State Office for Administration and several local officials. Dragan Zelic represented GONG.

▶ *March 2005* - GONG produced new general brochure on all GONG programs and projects. Several thousands of copies of the brochure were printed in three languages: Croatian, English and Russian.

▶ *April 2005* - Sandra Pernar represented GONG in the workshop on delivering Civil Society Index in Croatia, organized by CIVICUS and its partner in Croatia, CERANEO. The goal was to engage civil society representatives in delivering the final report of the research.

▶ *April 2005* – Organized by ZUM NGO from Pula, GONG Regional office Rijeka participated in "Entrepreneurs meeting young experts" meeting with presentation about GONG and a Citizens' Hour on about youth and their engagement in Croatian elections.

- ▶ *May 2005* - GONG Regional office Rijeka organized several events within the "Europe Festival" in Rijeka. Posters and flyers about European Union were distributed, info desk was set up, and Citizens' Hour and graffiti jam session were organized.
- ▶ *May 2005* - GONG Regional office Slavonski Brod representatives Sanja Beslic and Mihael Rukavina took part in "NGO fair" in Slavonski Brod. The Fair was organized by Administrative Department for Social Activities of the City of Slavonski Brod. Sanja, Mihael and several volunteers set up an info desk and presented GONG activities.
- ▶ *May 2005* - Sandra Pernar participated on "Social Responsibility – in Croatia and abroad" seminar that was organized by the Zagrebacka Bank and International Center for Education of Journalists (ICEJ). The purpose was to introduce and strengthen the concept of CSR in Croatia.
- ▶ *June 2005* - Sanja Beslic, GONG Regional office Slavonski Brod Coordinator attended constitutional sessions of Slavonski Brod-Posavina County Assembly and Slavonski Brod Town Council.
- ▶ *June 2005* – Invited by Croatian Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, Hrvoje Rancic (GONG Regional office Zadar coordinator) and Tatjana Basic Kostadinovic (GONG volunteer and trainer) participated for the second time on "Summer school for democracy" for high school students, taking place in Bozava 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", "Citizens' Hour" and "Internship program".
- ▶ *July 2005* – Regional office Rijeka was invited to take part in activities of Students Union of Faculty of Engineering in Rijeka in their "Prtecac" gallery. The exhibition was fully dedicated to GONG and its activities during which Aleksandra Vinkerlic and Izidora Tomljanovic presented GONG, all GONG material, manuals, brochures, posters, etc. The exhibition was open to all citizens of Rijeka on 7-20 July 2005.
- ▶ *September 2005* – Damir Azenic participated in the International Conference "EU and Croatia: Strengthening Civil Society Dialogue" held in Zagreb and organized by the National Foundation for Civil Society Development in cooperation with the European Citizens Action Service from Brussels. About 100 participants attended the conference, including representatives of the Croatian Government, civil society organizations and EU institutions, discussing the expectations of Croatian civil society organizations related to joining the EU, and on their possibility of becoming actively involved in the monitoring of pre-accession negotiations.
- ▶ *September 2005* – Sanja Beslic, GONG Regional office Slavonski Brod Coordinator participated in a panel discussion "NGOs in pre-accession period and the EU" organized by IPC from Slavonski Brod. Experience of Slovenian NGOs and their fundraising within EU funds was presented.
- ▶ *September 2005* – Dragan Zelic participated in a round table debate "New Election Model for Parliamentary Election – Initiative by MP Ivo Banac". The debate gathered MPs, legal experts and experts from the Faculty of Political Science.
- ▶ *October 2005* – A first review of the implementation of the Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities was the focus of the OSCE Croatia conference held in Zagreb. The conference was attended by some 100 leading representatives of the different minorities living in Croatia, as well as of State institutions, political parties, civil society and international organizations. GONG was represented by Suzana Jasic and Vanja Skoric.
- ▶ *October 2005* – Alina Jurjevic presented GONG's Booklet about State Institutions and Public Administration to the members of the Network that consists of private, public and non-profit sector representatives who finished Odras's "Training Program for the Development and Community Work".
- ▶ *October 2005* – Suzana Jasic gave a presentation on experiences and challenges in cooperation between NGOs and HINA (Croatian News Agency) during the celebration of the 15 years of HINA's work.
- ▶ *November 2005* – Central State Office for e-Croatia and the Ministry of Sea, Tourism, Transport and Development organized a joint presentation on "Croatia on its way to ICT society" within the INFO 2005 Fair. The goal was to present ICT development of state administration, public institutions, private sector and civil society organizations. GONG was asked to take part in the presentation as a representative of civil society organizations – the "Lost & Found" booklet was the focus of GONG contribution to the Fair's presentations.

- ▶ *November 2005* – GONG Regional office Rijeka representatives participated in the First Lika-Senj County NGO Fair held in Senj. The Fair gathered 40 odd NGOs working in the County.
- ▶ *November 2005* – Dragan Zelic participated in round table debate on “Participation of national minorities’ representatives in Croatian politics and public affairs, with accent on a problem of getting the information about ethnicity/nationality” organized by the OSCE Croatia and the Coalition for promotion and protection of human rights.
- ▶ *November 2005* – The Institute for International Relations, National Foundation for Civil Society Development and UNDP Croatia organized a round table debate “Civil Society and the State: Partners in EU Accession Process?”. Damir Azenic participated in the debate.
- ▶ *December 2005* – GONG regional offices organized the celebration of the International Volunteer Day (December 5) in Osijek, Rijeka, Split and Zagreb. Info desks were set up, volunteers were engaged and educational material and brochures were distributed to the citizens (“Lost & Found” booklet, “Citizens and local government” brochure, GONG brochures and material, etc.).
- ▶ *December 2005* – Mihael Rukavina, Assistant Coordinator in GONG Regional office Slavonski Brod, participated in the First National Conference on Peace Building held in Vukovar. The conference was a result of joint work of NGOs and local governments in Croatia and aimed at developing and promotion of the “Peace building platform” in Croatia.
- ▶ *December 2005* – GONG Regional office Rijeka representatives took part in the International round table debate “Education for Local Sustainable Development” organized by the County of Primorje – Gorski Kotar.
- ▶ *December 2005* – Sandra Pernar participated in the conference “NGOs in the Public Eye – Perception, Challenges, and Opportunities” organized by the Academy for Educational Development. The aim was to present the results of a comprehensive survey of public attitudes, perception and understanding of NGOs and stimulate discussion on how NGOs can improve public understanding of and involvement in their work. According to the survey results, GONG is the most known NGO in Croatia in the field of i) political organizations and campaigns, ii) civil society development and iii) education.
- ▶ *December 2005* – Round table debate on legal framework of the State Election Commission being formed as a permanent state body took place in Croatian parliament, organized by the Croatian Government and the OSCE Mission to Croatia. Suzana Jasic and Vanja Skoric participated in the discussion, and Suzana gave a presentation – comparative analysis of SEC legal frameworks in the EU and North America.

2. Managing the Organization

A. Assembly, Managing and Supervisory boards

On 24 September 2005, 9th GONG Annual Assembly was held where members gathered in Zagreb to discuss Managing and Advisory boards’ reports on GONG activities since the last meeting. According to the GONG Statute, new members of the Managing board were elected. Suzana Jasic, Igor Pavlekovic and Sandra Pernar became members of the new Managing board, with Suzana as President of the board (and the President of the association) and Sandra as Deputy President.

Assembly re-elected two members of the Supervisory board for their second two-year mandate: Lelija Pavlicevic and Snjezana Vasiljevic. Jelena Berkovic, Albina Dlacic and Zdravko Petak entered the second year of their mandate. On the first, constitutional session of the Supervisory Board, Lelija Pavlicevic was re-elected president and Snjezana Vasiljevic vice-president of the Supervisory Board. Jelena Berkovic represents Supervisory Board in GONG Employment Commission.

Supervisory board held 5 sessions - 4 regular and the constitutive session. The meetings of the Managing board were held regularly as weekly meetings of all GONG staff.

B. Staff

During 2005, 18 full-time employees worked in GONG - 10 in the Head Office, and two in each of the 4 regional offices. Apart from full time employees, GONG also cooperated with a number of external associates on different projects - trainers, expert group members, etc. Employment Commission reached 6 decisions - 3 about employment and 3 on the termination of employment.

During 2005, we had two interns volunteering in GONG. Ariana Vela was working as an intern for 2.5 months during the period when Vanja Skoric's Chevening Fellowships Programme in the UK. Also, for the first time we had a foreign intern - Chris Taylor, former intern in OSCE Field office in Osijek was volunteering in GONG till June 2005, investigating EU funding opportunities.

C. Self-education

▶ Alina Jurjevic, GONG project assistant, participated in "Corporate social responsibility" seminar organized by "ODRAZ" NGO on 21 January 2004. The workshop on relationship with local community in terms of CSR and possibilities of NGO work within was held as a part of the seminar.

▶ Organized by British Foreign Commonwealth Office, Vanja Skoric, GONG Legal advisor, was accepted in Chevening Fellowships Programme which aimed to provide fellows with an experience of the UK and a relevant professional development opportunity through a 3-month course in the UK with a challenging program of academic, practical, policy and political exposure. Vanja stayed in Birmingham from 15 January to 8 April 2005 working on "Preserving Security and the Rule of Law/Democracy" issue.

▶ Igor Pavlekovic has won Microsoft Certified Systems Administrator on Microsoft Windows Server 2003 Academy, following the contest of Croatia's leading IT magazine Mreza and leading IT education institution Algebra. This program, starting from December 2004, included attendance to six Microsoft Official Courses and four vouchers for the exams required to achieve certification of MCSA degree.

▶ Vlasta Prohaska, Regional office Zagreb Assistant Coordinator, and Mihael Rukavina Regional office Slavonski Brod Assistant Coordinator, participated in "Fourth School of Democracy" on 17-20 February 2005, organized by "DIM" NGO in Krapinske Toplice. The seminar covered lectures on civil society, tolerance in politics, political system and election campaign, and workshops on public speeches and media outreach.

▶ Damir Azenic, GONG Administration Manager, participated in the series of three workshops on Financial Viability and Income Generation Training Series organized by Academy for Educational Development and conducted by NESsT.

▶ Damir Azenic took part in the 10th Central and Eastern European Fundraising workshop held on 7-11 November 2005 in Budapest. The workshop was organized by Hungarian Civil Society Development Foundation and gathered more than hundred participants and speakers from all over Europe and the USA. The focus was on strengthening CSO representatives in developing sustainability options and fundraising strategies – internet fundraising, donor relations, non-profit branding, individual donations, CRS, direct marketing and DM campaigns, etc.

▶ Igor Pavlekovic participated in Microsoft presentation of a new version of the Microsoft application platform. "Ready to Rock the Launch" consisted of presentations of the new versions of MS Visual Studio 2005, MS SQL Server 2005 and MS Biz Talk 2006 Server, which are core technology used in GONG's application platform.

▶ On 24 November 2005, Anela Resanovic, GONG Financial Director, participated in educational seminar on accounting and finance for 2006 and the new financial regulations in Croatia. The seminar was organized by the Croatian Union of Accountants.

▶ Dragan Zelic, Sandra Pernar and Vlatka Svedruzic participated in the advocacy training held in Samobor on 14-15 November 2005, and organized by the AED. The training was conducted by PDCS Slovakia representatives and covered organization of advocacy campaigns, stakeholder identification and coalition building.

▶ On 21 November 2005 Damir Azenic participated in one day training seminar “Building World Class Performance - Developing and leading high performance teams” organized by CBA Business School. Theory and implementation of theory of creating and leading high performance teams were presented by Gavin Wallbridge from the USA.

▶ On 2 December 2005 Damir Azenic participated in the seminar “Accession talks – principles and praxis” organized by the Delegation of the European Commission to Croatia. The representatives of NGOs, the media and unions were informed about the initial steps in negotiation process for the EU accession and the most important obstacles and disbeliefs that were a part of that process in 10 new EU member states. Also, the position of the civil society in Croatian negotiation process was discussed.

D. 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.

In 2005:

- 49 volunteers met the conditions for membership
- 4394 volunteers are in the GONG database
- Database recorded 63,374 hours of citizens’ volunteer work

E. Technical Development

Internet connection in three regional offices was improved during 2005 with faster, cheaper and more reliable solutions, and new versions of two different anti-virus systems were introduced

On GONG election web site (www.izbori-hr.info) we developed an application for turning votes into mandates for local elections and during May 2005 we had over 5,000 calculations with this application.

With the USAID Legacy Programme support, we bought 2 types of software to enhance our IT system - Adobe Acrobat 7 for protection of electronic documents sent via e-mail and Abbyy Fine Reader software that will be used with application that will be developed for managing electronic press-clipping. New application will categorize press-clipping allowing full-text searching, faster press-clipping compiling and printing as well as automatically media reports generating.

Late in 2005, a cost-benefit analysis was made for introducing mobile VPN network for GONG staff. The analysis proved that VPN network implementation would decrease the communication costs (not including the Internet connection) and it was agreed to implement the mobile VPN network for all GONG employees starting from 1 January 2006.

On 1 December 2005, we held a meeting with representatives of Microsoft Croatia with the purpose to define future cooperation between GONG and Microsoft. Informed by Microsoft staff about the options for receiving licenses for Microsoft technology, in late December we requested a donation of Microsoft software / technology worth \$ 42,180.

F. Fundraising

The year 2005 was a very challenging year for us regarding financial resources and support. During the year, 29 project proposals were prepared and sent to different domestic and international donors, such as the European Commission, National Foundation for Civil Society Development, several Croatian ministries, several embassies in Croatia, OSCE Mission to Croatia, USAID, Academy for Educational Development, Balkan Trust for Democracy, Open Society Institute, etc. Although very hard, we managed to close the year without reducing the staff or closing offices.

! 80% of the project proposals sent during 2005 were approved by the donors.

G. 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 had numerous meetings with Croatian state institutions' representatives, MPs, Parliamentary committee's presidents, Head of Central State Office for Administration, State Election Commission President and SEC members.

Many international organizations visited GONG. Among others, GONG representatives met with the Norwegian Ambassador and Embassy representatives, representatives, USAID Mission Director and USAID staff, the Head of the Delegation of the European Commission in Zagreb, the new Head of the OSCE Mission to Croatia, Canadian Ambassador, Swedish Embassy representatives, Olof Palme International Centre representatives, former MP from British Labor party, US State Department representatives from SEED (Support Eastern European Democracies) Department, US embassy Political Advisor and embassy representatives, Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs and Dutch embassy representatives, representatives of Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and First Secretary of the Finnish Embassy in Zagreb, etc.

FINANCIAL REPORT - 2005

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.

Average exchange rate: 1 USD = 6 KN

<p>Balance Sheet (in kn)</p> <p>Assets</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td>Tangible assets</td> <td style="text-align: right;">164,605</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cash & cash equivalents</td> <td style="text-align: right;">253,829</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Prepaid expenses</td> <td style="text-align: right;">8,982</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total Assets</td> <td style="text-align: right;">427,416</td> </tr> </table> <p>Liabilities</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td>Liabilities</td> <td style="text-align: right;">25,393</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Accruals and deferred Income</td> <td style="text-align: right;">600</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other sources</td> <td style="text-align: right;">164,605</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Fund balance</td> <td style="text-align: right;">236,818</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total Liabilities</td> <td style="text-align: right;">427,416</td> </tr> </table>	Tangible assets	164,605	Cash & cash equivalents	253,829	Prepaid expenses	8,982	Total Assets	427,416	Liabilities	25,393	Accruals and deferred Income	600	Other sources	164,605	Fund balance	236,818	Total Liabilities	427,416	<p>Consolidated Statement of Income (in kn)</p> <p>Income</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td>Income from State Budget</td> <td style="text-align: right;">268,405</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Income from membership fees</td> <td style="text-align: right;">2,130</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Income earnings</td> <td style="text-align: right;">12,855</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Grants and donations</td> <td style="text-align: right;">4,593,838</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total Income</td> <td style="text-align: right;">4,877,228</td> </tr> </table> <p>Expenditure</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td>Material</td> <td style="text-align: right;">70,456</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Energy</td> <td style="text-align: right;">40,773</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Services</td> <td style="text-align: right;">1,953,604</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cost for employees</td> <td style="text-align: right;">1,968,190</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Non-material expences</td> <td style="text-align: right;">572,073</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Investment expenditure</td> <td style="text-align: right;">8,700</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other costs</td> <td style="text-align: right;">26,614</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total Expenditure</td> <td style="text-align: right;">4,640,410</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Income over Expenditure</td> <td style="text-align: right;">236,818</td> </tr> </table>	Income from State Budget	268,405	Income from membership fees	2,130	Income earnings	12,855	Grants and donations	4,593,838	Total Income	4,877,228	Material	70,456	Energy	40,773	Services	1,953,604	Cost for employees	1,968,190	Non-material expences	572,073	Investment expenditure	8,700	Other costs	26,614	Total Expenditure	4,640,410	Income over Expenditure	236,818
Tangible assets	164,605																																														
Cash & cash equivalents	253,829																																														
Prepaid expenses	8,982																																														
Total Assets	427,416																																														
Liabilities	25,393																																														
Accruals and deferred Income	600																																														
Other sources	164,605																																														
Fund balance	236,818																																														
Total Liabilities	427,416																																														
Income from State Budget	268,405																																														
Income from membership fees	2,130																																														
Income earnings	12,855																																														
Grants and donations	4,593,838																																														
Total Income	4,877,228																																														
Material	70,456																																														
Energy	40,773																																														
Services	1,953,604																																														
Cost for employees	1,968,190																																														
Non-material expences	572,073																																														
Investment expenditure	8,700																																														
Other costs	26,614																																														
Total Expenditure	4,640,410																																														
Income over Expenditure	236,818																																														
Expenditure by Budget Lines (in kn)																																															
<p>Personnel Expenses</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td>Salaries</td> <td style="text-align: right;">1,156,747</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Taxes from salaries</td> <td style="text-align: right;">811,443</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Honorarium</td> <td style="text-align: right;">74,918</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total Personnel Expenses</td> <td style="text-align: right;">2,043,108</td> </tr> </table>	Salaries	1,156,747	Taxes from salaries	811,443	Honorarium	74,918	Total Personnel Expenses	2,043,108	<p>Other Costs</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td>Accountant services</td> <td style="text-align: right;">46,848</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Office material</td> <td style="text-align: right;">70,456</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Rent</td> <td style="text-align: right;">92,300</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Utilities</td> <td style="text-align: right;">43,958</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Communications</td> <td style="text-align: right;">303,084</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Photocopying</td> <td style="text-align: right;">24,097</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Advertising</td> <td style="text-align: right;">374,734</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Printing costs</td> <td style="text-align: right;">694,888</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Travel costs</td> <td style="text-align: right;">471,305</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Accommodation</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">- seminars and workshops</td> <td style="text-align: right;">148,808</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Student services</td> <td style="text-align: right;">164,644</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other seVICES</td> <td style="text-align: right;">52,230</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other costs</td> <td style="text-align: right;">109,950</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total Other Costs</td> <td style="text-align: right;">2,597,302</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total Expenditures</td> <td style="text-align: right;">4,640,410</td> </tr> </table>	Accountant services	46,848	Office material	70,456	Rent	92,300	Utilities	43,958	Communications	303,084	Photocopying	24,097	Advertising	374,734	Printing costs	694,888	Travel costs	471,305	Accommodation		- seminars and workshops	148,808	Student services	164,644	Other seVICES	52,230	Other costs	109,950	Total Other Costs	2,597,302	Total Expenditures	4,640,410						
Salaries	1,156,747																																														
Taxes from salaries	811,443																																														
Honorarium	74,918																																														
Total Personnel Expenses	2,043,108																																														
Accountant services	46,848																																														
Office material	70,456																																														
Rent	92,300																																														
Utilities	43,958																																														
Communications	303,084																																														
Photocopying	24,097																																														
Advertising	374,734																																														
Printing costs	694,888																																														
Travel costs	471,305																																														
Accommodation																																															
- seminars and workshops	148,808																																														
Student services	164,644																																														
Other seVICES	52,230																																														
Other costs	109,950																																														
Total Other Costs	2,597,302																																														
Total Expenditures	4,640,410																																														

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 2005 (in kn)

up to 500

Governmental Office for NGOs

up to 3,500

County of Primorje-Gorski Kotar

up to 6,000

City of Rijeka

Ministry of European Integration and Foreign Affairs

up to 10,000

ADRA Croatia / British Embassy, Zagreb

up to 14,000

GONG (self-financing)

National Foundation for Civil Society Development

up to 40,000

Open Society Institute, Zagreb

up to 60,000

Embassy of Finland, Zagreb

up to 80,000

Royal Netherlands Embassy, Zagreb

Ministry of Family Affairs, War Veterans and
Intergeneration Solidarity

up to 110,000

National Democratic Institute

up to 150,000

Academy for Educational Development / USAID

Royal Norwegian Embassy, Zagreb

US Embassy, Zagreb

up to 170,000

Freedom House, Budapest / USAID

National Endowment for Democracy

Ministry of Science, Education and Sports

up to 210,000

Charles Stewart Mott Foundation

Olof Palme International Center

up to 275,000

Urban Institute, Zagreb / USAID

up to 370,000

Balkan Trust for Democracy

up to 645,000

European Commission

up to 850,000

OSCE Mission to Croatia

In - kind supporters in 2005 (in kn)

up to 7,000

TV Dalmatia

Microsoft Croatia d.o.o.

CARE International

up to 10,000

City of Rijeka

Local self-government and institutions (premises)

up to 20,000

TV Nova

TV Varazdin

up to 25,000

Atlantic Trade d.o.o., Zagreb

NIT – Independent Istrian Television

RI-TV d.o.o.

up to 30,000

TV Jadran d.o.o.

up to 35,000

ISKON Internet d.d.

up to 60,000

NET TV Kutina

up to 115,000

Channel RI, Rijeka

up to 145,000

Local radio stations

up to 12,000,000

Croatian Radio-Television