



GONG ANNUAL REPORT

2007

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REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY

The program domain of representative democracy includes GONG election related activities aiming to contribute to reaching higher democratic standards of electoral system, enabling higher transparency and civic participation.

1. Election Monitoring

GONG regularly monitors activities of the bodies responsible for conducting and organizing elections and election campaigns, but also encourages, organizes and educates citizens to monitor elections as non-partisan observers in order to prevent and/or to identify violations of electoral laws and regulations as well as to inform the public and to strengthen its confidence in the electoral process.

In the year 2007 **Parliamentary Elections** were held as well as several **re-run local elections** and a few **city and neighborhood councils elections**. During the year, elections were monitored by **1550 observers** in total, in polling stations throughout Croatia and abroad.

During the entire year GONG successfully cooperated with the State Election Commission and especially monitored their work during the November Parliamentary elections and the elections for councils and representatives of national minorities. Also, GONG successfully cooperated with other authorized bodies for election organization in Croatia and abroad.

- **Parliamentary elections**

Elections to the Croatian Parliament were held on the territory of the Republic of Croatia, on Sunday, November 25, 2007 in 6,707 polling stations. Croatian citizens could also vote abroad in 53 countries in 265 polling stations on Saturday and Sunday, 24 and 25 November 2007. Elections were monitored by 1,500 GONG observers in total, of which 117 were monitoring abroad.

In its final report GONG evaluated that the elections were well organized and were consistent with electoral regulations. Election Day passed off in a democratic and tolerant atmosphere with a small number of noted irregularities in Croatia and a somewhat larger number of irregularities in polling stations in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Some of the voters were denied their right to vote, especially voters located in hospitals, sick and helpless voters at home, national minority voters who were denied their right to choose between ballots and voters who didn't get their certificate which enables them to vote in Bosnia and Herzegovina on time. One of the noted problems was different levels of education and professional conduct of voting committees.

It is GONG's assessment that the this electoral process was more transparent than the previous one and it is because of the work of the institutions which were more open and active in informing the voters and because of the political parties who, although regulations do not oblige, for the first time made their donations and campaign costs public.

Still, it is necessary to keep on improving the electoral process via regulations which will help raise the level of election transparency and also, make it more available to all groups of voters. It is also necessary to educate the voting committees so that Election Day could be carried out in a high professional manner. Institutions which participate in the implementation of elections should be yet more active in the future towards the public and the voters.

- **Re-run and snap local elections (3)**

We monitored re-run and snap local elections in the following cities and counties: Slavonski Brod (Slavonia County), Rogoznica (Zadar County) and Osijek (Osijek – Baranja County).

- **Local self – government elections**

GONG educated the citizens on the importance of local self-government elections in over 30 counties and cities whilst giving out over 7,000 educative leaflets.

▪ **Elections abroad**

- **Ukraine:** ENEMO (European Network of Election Monitoring Organizations) mission was observing the Parliamentary Elections in Ukraine, in September 2007 and 22 GONG observers were a part of the mission. The mission had 400 observers in total coming from 19 different organizations, from 17 countries.

- **Kyrgyzstan:** one GONG observer monitored the Kyrgyzstan Parliamentary Elections as a part of the ENEMO mission, in December 2007.

- **Georgia:** ENEMO started its monitoring mission of the snap Presidential Elections in Georgia at the end of the year. Elections were held on January 5, 2008. Three GONG observers were a part of the mission.

2. Educational campaign for citizens concerning the *minority* electoral process

On the occasion of national minorities' councils and representatives' elections which were called for 17 June 2007, GONG and STINA news agency were implementing an informative campaign from May till August 2007. The public campaign was being implemented as a part of the project *Support to the Councils of National Minorities in Areas of Special State Concern* which is being implemented by the Council for National Minorities and WYG International. The project is financed by European Union.

In regard to the fact that the citizens of Croatia, as well as the national minority voters themselves, are not sufficiently introduced to the work and elections of the mentioned councils and representatives, our campaign had the following goals:

- to inform the public about the upcoming elections and their importance
- to educate the public on the role and significance of the national minority councils and representatives
- to motivate the members of national minorities to candidate and to run in the elections
- to increase the visibility of the councils and their representatives.

Joint activities included two radio and one TV jingle which were aired on 14 TV and about 30 radio stations in pre-election period; 10,000 copies of an educative brochure on elections and minority self-governance which were distributed to national minority organizations and all interested institutions and media; 8 Citizens' Hours on the subject of the elections, 10 15 minutes long shows on the subject of elections, councils and national minority rights aired on about 30 radio stations, two separate TV talk shows in an one hour duration aired on 14 radio stations; 2 issues of an educational – informative bulletin distributed before and after the elections – the bulletins gave a closer look to the elections and minority self-governance, each of which had a printing run of 4,000 copies.

GONG published educational-informative materials and events announcements on its website, while GONG offices were open for giving out information.

On Election Day Eve, GONG and STINA news agency organized a public assembly on which the national minority, the Government and the international community representatives spoke to the citizens and national minorities in Croatia.

After the elections, a public opinion research was conducted about the elections and the campaign, which was later on represented on another public assembly in July.

3. Campaign on educating the citizens about the electoral process for the Parliamentary Elections

In the period from early October till 25 November GONG carried out several educational campaigns and acts of informing the citizens about the Parliamentary Elections.

800,000 educational brochures were written and printed, containing information on the electoral process, electoral system, voting procedures, bodies responsible for conducting elections, voters' lists, voting procedures for specific voters' categories, functions and duties of observers, violations of electoral regulations etc.

790,000 brochures were inserted in daily newspapers: Večernji list, Slobodna Dalmacija, Jutarnji list, Novi list, Glas Istre, Glas Slavonije, Zadarki list and 24 sata. The remaining brochures were handed out by GONG activists.

Two videos were produced and aired on TV stations which aired them for free. The first video was on the subject of voters' lists and it informed the citizens about the deadlines for checking and correcting the data from the voters' lists, and it also informed them on getting the certificates for voting outside their place of residency and for early registration of voters who voted abroad. The second video dealt with the subject of Election Day and it informed the citizens on Election Day procedures and on national minorities member's right to choose between the regular and the national minority ballot. Both videos (Voters' lists and Election Day) were aired on the following TV stations: Croatian National Television (HTV – both channels), RTL, City of Zadar Television (GTV), Nova TV, Pula, RI TV, City of Split Television (STV), Slavnskobrodska Television, Independent Television (NET), City of Vinkovci Television and Čakovečka TV. The first video was aired from end of October till 10 November, and the second one during the eight days before Election Day. The videos were aired about **600 times** on **10 TV stations**.

Also, two audio jingles were produced and aired on 14 radio stations which gave a discount. Three radio stations (Radio Centar, Radio Jadranka, Radio Zupanja) aired the jingles for free. The jingles were aired more than **600 times**.

The website www.gong.hr was redesigned and presented as such on October 17, and on it, one could find useful information on elections, election procedures (Law on Elections, State Election Commission's Mandatory Instructions and announcements from the State Election Commission, the Constitutional Court and the Ethics Committee) as well as news and information on GONG and its activities on elections in general etc.

We answered more than 500 questions regarding electoral laws, voters' lists, election silence, addresses of polling stations etc. Questions were answered via telephone, e-mail (gong@gong.hr) and in direct contact with the citizens who were coming to our offices in October and November.

11 press conferences were held and **15 public announcements** were published. GONG appeared in the media about **500 times** in total in October and November. More than **300** articles were written about GONG or some of our activities were mentioned.

During the entire campaign GONG cooperated excellently with the media which broadcasted our press conferences and public announcements and contacted us on a daily bases to inquire about our opinion, comment or to invite GONG representatives to be a guest on one of their shows.

When the campaign ended, GONG published a report on its website. The report contained information on the campaign as well as a list of donors and money spent.

4. Ad Watch project

In order for the citizens to be able to decide who they are going to cast their vote for in the elections they need information on what the particular parties and candidates are offering to the citizens during the pre-election campaign. It is for this reason that GONG decided to conduct a pilot project, *AdWatch* in cooperation with students from the Political Marketing class of the senior year at the Faculty of Political Science.

During the pre-election campaign an analysis on a national level was conducted about how much information the messages of political parties contain. Students who participated in this project were divided in six groups which then monitored political messages of six parliamentary parties (to be more precise, in one case it was a coalition of parties) on a national level.

The messages which were analyzed were the ones that were visible through the media or otherwise available to the average voter: paid advertisements on three national TV stations, articles in four daily newspapers (Jutarnji list, Vecernji list, Slobodna Dalmacija, Novi list) and promotional material of the parties (commercial adds, announcements, TV videos).

For each of the categories a matrix of questions was developed and each group of students answered the same questions. The data obtained was processed at the end of every week. Three weekly reports were issued, in total, and were published on GONG's web page. The reports were also sent to the media which showed great interest in the project and which published articles and reports on the results of our research. A project like this one was never before conducted in Croatia and this was the first time that information like these were made accessible to the public.

5. PVT project

The goal of the PVT project is an independent verification of the official election results via process of independent gathering and analyzing election results from the polling stations.

The project started in early October and ended on 26 November 2007. In this project **900 observers, 20 trainers – educators, 17 GONG employees** and **28 call centre workers** participated.

The statistic sample for data gathering from 12-20 % polling stations in the Republic of Croatia resulted by gathering all of the election results. GONG used the same statistic sample as the one used in the 2000, 2003 and 2005 elections. All of the observers got an additional PVT education and a PVT manual. November 15, 899 polling stations were chosen for the PVT project. Afterwards, GONG appointed the observers for the PVT project, assigned them with the polling stations, informed them about the project and handed them out forms in order for them to report election results from the polling stations to the call centre.

PVT calling centre started receiving phone calls on 25 November at 7:15 p.m. and ended at 26 November at 12:46 a.m.

Results for candidature lists as a result of the PVT project match within the evaluated standard error with the official election results of the State Election Commission. This includes all but one candidature list in one constituency. At the very beginning of making the results known, the results showed a tendency opposite to the one that the media were announcing based on the exit-poll surveys, which were also confirmed later by the first results of the State Election Commission and the final results of the PVT.

6. Post-election activities

GONG made the insight into the election material from Parliamentary Elections, received from polling stations abroad. During the ten days after the election material from polling stations abroad was submitted to the State Election Commission, GONG made an insight to election material from **68 polling stations**, out of which **30** were from **Bosnia and Herzegovina**.

A press conference was held on which the results of the analysis were presented to the public. It was once again noticed the problem of outdated voters' lists abroad and so there was at least one case of a deceased person voting. It is also noted that there were some problems in the work of voting committees which, at occasion didn't follow the voting procedures. All findings were forwarded to the State Election Commission.

With the goal of checking citizens' reports on the fact that some of the voting committees didn't allow the national minorities' members to choose between the regular and the national minority ballot, there was a check of election materials from 15 polling stations in Croatia. Not one piece of evidence was found that election committees withheld the voter's right to the members of national minorities to choose between ballots.

25 November 2007, GONG published an unofficial report, while a month later it published the Final Report on Election of Representatives to the Croatian Parliament. The report contains general information on the elections and GONG's assessment of the elections and occasional breaches of election silence.

Forms admitted from observers were analyzed and therefore information on complaints and remarks addressed to the State Election Commission were gathered.

7. 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 the year 2007, the seventh season of the project was held, which in the year 2006 received a prize from the Council of Europe. During the first semester of the school year 2007/2008 22 trained lecturers/ trainers conducted **801** "I Vote for the First Time" workshops in 201 high schools all over Croatia in which more than 22,000 high school students participated. Around 50,000 educational brochures about elections and the right to vote and advocacy initiatives were distributed to students.

! In the seven years of project implementation 150,000 high school seniors took part in 5,304 workshops. 288 high schools took part in the project, which comes to 80% of the total number of high schools in Croatia.

8. Initiatives for changing and for the improvement of electoral legislative

GONG creates comparative analysis of electoral legislative, encourages public debates and actively advocates changes and improvement of the electoral legislative of the Republic of Croatia with the goal of achieving Western European standards. In 2007 we were engaged in the following initiatives:

State Election Commission

Although the law was adopted in April 2006, the State Election Commission wasn't formed until the end of 2006. GONG monitored the proclamation of the public appeal for members and the president of the State Election Commission. Still, the constitution of the State Election Commission was being postponed for 8 months since a consensus on the choice of the President wasn't reached. In February 2007 immediate changes of the Law of State Election Commission were proposed by which it was stipulated that the President by virtue of office will be the President of The Supreme Court and two more judges of the Supreme Court will be elected as vice presidents. GONG protested against such changes demanding that the State Election Commission be formed as soon as possible as a regular, professional body without hiring the Supreme Court judges, since it was GONG's opinion that the State Election Commission with such a "combined" membership will work with a reduced capacity. Meanwhile, the Law was modified and the modifications were published in the Official Gazette (Narodne Novine) no. 19/07. In February 2007 the Croatian Parliament confirmed the elected members of the State Election Commission.

During the year, GONG monitored the formation and the work of the State Election Commission. GONG representatives participated in a seminar for members of the State Election Commission which was held on the subject of the work of the State Election Commission on the upcoming elections. The mentioned GONG representatives wrote a paper and held a lecture on the subject of monitoring the elections.

GONG began to hold regular meetings with the State Election Commission 6 months before the elections, continued to do so during the entire campaign as well as after the elections.

Also, GONG participated in State Election Commission's sessions and gave proposals and comments on the Regulations on the Rights and Duties of Non Government Observers and on State Election Commission's Manual on the work of the voting committee.

GONG is also one of the initiators of the assessment of electoral process which will be conducted, together with UNDP and the State Election Commission, in late January 2008.

Voters' lists

For several years now, GONG has been actively advocating that changes in the Voters' lists Act from 1992 be made, that the lists be up to date and cooperation with the Central State Administrative Office for Public Administration (SDUU) in order to deal with these issues.

In January 2007, the Central State Administrative Office for Public Administration (SDUU) i.e. the Government of the Republic of Croatia referred a final draft of the Voters' Lists Act to the Parliament procedure. In this draft some of **GONG's recommendations** were included like a more detailed regulation of special groups of voters voting, for example the ones in armed forces, seamen etc., a regulation of severe violations of official duty for the breaching of Law decrees, publication of information in mass media, regulation of the procedure for temporary enlisting and withdrawal from the voters' lists for citizens who don't have a residency in Croatia, but who find themselves in Croatia on Election Day.

Finally, in February 2007, the Croatian Parliament passed a new Voters' Lists Act which represents a considerable improvement in relation to the old, 1992 Act and with that GONG's long-term goal has been partially fulfilled. Nevertheless a concern remains about the implementation of the new Act in practice and a special concern is referring to following the Act when it comes to previous registration of voters and giving out certificates to vote on Election Day.

During June and August 2007, GONG held several meetings with the representatives of the Central State Administrative Office for Public Administration and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration in order to get more acquainted with the preparations for elections and with the implementation of the new Voters' Lists Act. On these meetings future modules of cooperation in relation to the Parliamentary Elections 2007, were arranged.

During the elections GONG cooperated with the SDUU sharing information about procedures and helping citizens to address their issues from lower levels of Administrative offices towards the SDUU. GONG also monitored SDUU's attempts to give precise information concerning voters' lists to the citizens.

Before and during the election campaign GONG also cooperated with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration regarding the Ministry's organization and management of the elections abroad. Accordingly, GONG monitored the education of the civil servants for diplomatic and consular representative bodies as well as the Ministry's efforts to inform and educate the citizens.

During the pre-election campaign GONG educated and informed the citizens about the deadlines for checking the data in voters' lists, and also, two **Mystery Call researches** were conducted in order to verify the work of the State's Administrative Office and diplomatic and consular representative bodies. The results were presented to the public. The goal of the research was to check whether or not the procedures of previous registration of voters abroad and the procedure of temporary enlistment in voters' lists were being honored in order to evaluate how well the workers of authorized bodies are informed and to what extent the information on the previous registration and temporary enlistment in voters' lists are accessible to the citizens so that they could be warned if any problems were to arise. To GONG's knowledge, although the procedures were being honored in general, some problems and irregularities did arise because of the inadequate education of civil workers which, in the end, led to the fact that a certain number of citizens lost their right to vote.

In 2007, GONG had significant media appearances concerning voters' lists in all daily newspapers and on the leading TV stations and Internet portals.

Election campaigns and political parties financing

The new Act on Financing Political Parties, Independent Lists and Candidates which was established by the Central State Administrative Office for Public Administration was adopted in December 2006 after a longtime advocacy from GONG. The new Act on Financing Political Parties, Independent Lists and Candidates is a step forward to the previous regulations governing the financing of political parties. With this Act anonymous donations are banned, pecuniary sanctions are introduced as well as the delivery of annual reports of political parties. On the other hand, the Act does not contain any special provisions on funding in an election campaign or any requirements to deliver any special reports on the funding of an election campaign and it is for this reason that GONG paid special attention on Act implementation in this year's elections.

According to the old Act on Financing Political Parties which is being implemented on financial operations of political parties in the year 2006, the parties which were given funds from the State's budget were obligated to deliver an annual report for the last year to the Committee for the Constitution and Standing Orders. However, according to the new Act on Financing Political Parties the parties were obligated to publicly declare their financial reports on their websites after the reports were reviewed by the State Audit Office, as confirmed by the opinion of the Committee for the Constitution and Standing Orders demanded by GONG in March 2007.

In April 2007, GONG had a meeting with the State Audit Office and asked for a further explanation about publications of financial reports and, through media, asked that the parties publicly, on their websites, publish their financial reports. The largest parliamentary political parties published their reports, except for the HDZ.

Having in mind problems and issues in regulating the financing of pre-election campaigns, during the elections, GONG, with the cooperation of Transparency International Croatia (TIH), conducted activities concerning the financing of pre-election campaigns and raising the level of public awareness on this subject.

On a press conference which was held on October 29, GONG and TIH *invited all political parties, independent lists and candidates to make public, by November 3, according with the election legislation, the amounts of money they are planning to spend on the election campaign and to make public the preliminary reports on the amounts and sources of the campaign funds and the names of the donors by November 20.*

In order to help them, GONG prepared sample forms for financial reports and published them on its website.

Together with TIH, GONG implemented a project by which it was monitored how much the political parties are spending on their promotion during the campaign in order to make assessments of a grand total of their campaigns.

Promocija Plus Agency was hired for this project and in the period between the 3rd and 23rd November, it analyzed promotional material on national TV and radio stations (HTV 1 i HTV 2, NOVA TV, RTL, Otvoreni radio, Narodni radio) as well as Z1 and OTV TV stations and radio stations Sljeme and Radio 101. Also, advertisements on the most frequently visited internet portals, in daily and weekly newspapers and on billboards were monitored. The research was conducted on a national level. Based on the results of this research GONG and TIH assessed how much money the political parties spent for pre-election campaign.

Several days before the elections, GONG and TIH organized a press conference on which the assessments of advertisement costs in the first two weeks of the campaign were presented and political parties and other candidates were once again invited to publish their campaign costs, together with a list of donors and donations. After the press conference, most of the parties confirmed GONG's and TIH's prognosis. Two days before the elections, the parties made public the requested information form GONG and TIH and it was the first time in Croatia that such information were made public in Parliamentary Elections.

Ten days after the elections GONG and TIH organized a third press conference when they presented the final assessment of pre-election campaign costs. Political parties were invited to publish their final financial reports with all the information on donors, amounts of particular donations received and campaign costs.

Results of research showed that a grand total of campaign costs reached a sum of about 100 million HRK. It was proven that most of the parties published a somewhat accurate campaign costs assessments, but it was also noted that there was a great discrepancy between the published and the actual costs of HDZ (which published three times less the amount).

Other initiatives

In November 2006 we received a response from the County State Attorney's Office in Split regarding the criminal charges filed by GONG on account of election fraud on Presidential Elections 2005. Since the State Attorney's Office determined that there is no ground for charges GONG held a press conference and addressed the chief state attorney Mladen Bajić, for support. The chief state attorney demanded a continuation of the investigation for he believed that there are grounds for criminal proceedings and in February 2007, Vanja Škorić and Dragan Zelić were once again asked to give statements to the police.

Finally, in October 2007 State Attorney's Office in Split came to a conclusion that there is a ground for filing criminal charges, i.e. that a criminal act was committed but that there were no evidence which would point to the perpetrator.

PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY

The program area of Participatory Democracy includes GONG activities which aim at increasing the quality and quantity of participatory democracy in Croatia. More specifically, they aim to raise the level of citizens' participation in political processes 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 as necessary elements in the work of state institutions as to contribute to higher citizens' confidence in democratic institutions and their representatives.

1. Citizens' Hours

"Citizens' Hour" is an event where citizens and their elected representatives on the local and national level meet. These meetings are being organized with the purpose of enabling citizens to ask questions, praise or criticize but also to suggest possible solutions to actual problems. The meetings are organized with the goal to make the communication between voters and their present or future representatives should be an ongoing and continuous process and not something that only occurs during the pre-election period.

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, besides the elected representatives (parliamentary representatives, councillors, etc.), we also invite representatives of the government, local executive authorities, independent experts and all those who can answer the countless questions our citizens may ask.

In 2007 **208 Citizens' Hours** were organized – 32 in the form of radio talk show and 176 in the form of a public meeting. **605 guests** (members of Parliament, town council members, ministers, town and municipality mayors, county prefects, experts, activists, etc) participated in Citizens' Hours. **4,832 citizens** attended public meetings and **144** citizens asked questions during radio talk shows. Citizens' hours were organized within specific projects, implemented locally or nationally, and were supported by various donors and covered specific topics within the projects.

! From the start of the project, total of 1,085 Citizens' Hours were organized all over Croatia hosting 3,045 guests. All together, 21,325 citizens participated in public meetings and 2,145 citizens asked questions in radio talk shows.

2. Visiting the Parliament

In association with the Parliamentary Office for Public Affairs, GONG organized tours of the Parliament since March 2001. These tours were initially conducted by representatives of the Parliamentary Office for Public Affairs, but since 2003, students who are volunteering within GONG's Internship Program have taken over this responsibility. High schools have shown the greatest interest in visiting the Parliament and GONG has accordingly organized visits tailored for students. Student groups from outside of Zagreb were given the opportunity to meet with their home constituency's MP.

In June 2006 GONG stopped organizing tours for high schools in the extent it did before, gradually closing the project and enabling citizens to apply for tours directly to the Parliament. From that time on, tours are organized only for particular groups of citizens and high schools within certain GONG local and regional projects in Croatia.

In 2007, **45 citizens attended Parliament's sessions** and **309 citizens visited Parliament** within the tours organized by GONG.

*! From the start of the project in spring 2000, **1,043 citizens attended Parliamentary sessions** and **18,637 citizens and students visited Parliament** in Parliament Tours.*

! From the start of the project till its ending in June 2006, a total of 360 groups of students and citizens visited the Croatian Parliament. Since 2000, 160 high schools from all over Croatia took part, at least once, in Parliament Tours.

3. Internship Program

"Internship Program" is a volunteer program for students and young professionals in order for them to get additional education and practical experience for they do not have this possibility inside the existing curriculum in Croatia.

We introduced Internship Program to the Croatian Parliament at the beginning of 2001 when the first 10 law and political science students started doing volunteer work for MPs. Apart from the experience young people get through this program, it is important to mention that this kind of support to the work of Croatian MPs in more than welcome.

In 2007, 15 students volunteered for MPs and caucuses in the Croatian Parliament.

During 2007 steps were taken in order for the Parliament to take over the activities of the Internship Program, fulfilling the closing strategy of the Program.

The decision was reached by the Parliamentary Presidency for the Secretariat to agree with GONG the framework of the future implementation of the Program. It was agreed that in the meantime GONG will still operate as the intermediary until the end of this Parliamentary assembly (November 2007). Also, starting from January 2007, the Parliament took over the responsibility for paying the interns symbolic monthly fee to cover their expenses.

! From the start of the program, 78 students and young professionals volunteered for 34 MPs and several deputy clubs and in 9 government offices and in local government bodies in which the project was being implemented since May 2005.

! Having in mind that after this program was initiated it was the first internship program in the Croatian state institutions, and then facing serious obstacles in its implementation, we find the fact that Parliament is taking over the Program for future students a huge success.

4. Initiatives

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. Having in mind that without citizens, there would be no state institutions GONG carries out advocacy initiatives with the goal to make the institution of the public a practice in Croatia.

Freedom of Information Act

GONG conducted two researches on the implementation of Freedom of Information Act at the end of 2005 and 2006 and both researches showed almost identical results.

We used the results of the 2006 research during 2007 in order to compare our results with the Report on the implementation of the Act made by the Central State Administrative Office for Public Administration and adopted by the Croatian Parliament at which point we found that the public bodies were delivering wrong information to the above mentioned office. Also, the results of this research made it possible for GONG to start with active advocacy for changes and amendments to the Act, especially for introducing the institution of the information commissioner, public interest test, test of linearity and a gradual abolishment of lists of public bodies.

In 2007, we gave legal aid in exercising the right to the freedom of information to numerous institutions and organizations.

Also, concerning advocacy for transparency in negotiations about Croatia's accession to the EU, GONG asked the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration for a delivery of negotiation standpoints for submitted chapters. The demand was ceded to the Croatian Government who declined the demand without a proper explanation. For this reason GONG started an administrative litigation at the Croatian Administrative Court on the grounds of violation of decree ar. 209. The ruling of the court is expected sometime in 2008.

A few days before the International Right to Information Day and on the day itself we launched a short media campaign again. The goal of the campaign was to raise the awareness of citizens and educate them about their right to access information and right to participate in decision-making process. The video and radio clip produced for the 2006 campaign were aired again on TV stations and broadcasted on radio stations free of charge. The clips were aired on 11 TV stations and 20 radio stations (including HRT). Also, the distribution of an educational leaflet to the citizens was continued in order to educate them on their right to access information.

Institutional cooperation has significantly improved during 2007 with regard to the fact that GONG established a direct cooperation with the SDUU, Academy of Local Democracy (ALD), Croatian Personal Data Protection Agency (AZOP) and Council for National Security Office (UVNS). All of these institutions are partially or completely responsible for implementation of the Freedom of Information Act. In this sense, the SDUU invited GONG's coordinator for the research of implementation of the Act to participate in a working group for a draft of primary and advanced educational module for civil workers and employees. In 2007 a primary module of education for civil workers and employees was made and 4 educational seminars were held at which employees of various state bodies, the Croatian Government, the Croatian Parliament, Constitutional Court, AZOP, UVNS and other employees participated. At the end of 2007 GONG's representative gave the working group a proposal of an advanced educational module which was accepted and the making of the module as well as arranging educational seminars are expected in 2008.

Cooperation with the Academy of Local Democracy (ALD) was also established. ALD has by now organized two conferences on the implementation of the Act with the tendency to educate local self-governance representatives. GONG's representatives gave a lecture on organizations' experiences on both conferences (December 2006 in Rijeka, June 2007 in Split).

Furthermore, GONG's representative Ariana Vela became a member of the Freedom of Information Advocates Network (FOIA Network) which consists of an exceptionally large number of organizations. All of them advocate a successful and quality implementation of national laws and exchange experiences.

GONG also organized a round table on the subject of the right to access information in April 2007 in the Croatian Parliament. The guests were state secretary of the SDUU, members of the UVNS, the President of the Croatian Administrative Court, NGOs and the City of Zagreb representatives, MPs and the Slovenian Information Commissioner Mrs. Natasa Pirc Musar who presented the institute of the Information Commissioner, explained the implementation of the public interest test and presented particular examples from Slovenian practice.

Thanks to GONG's initiative cooperation with the SDUU was established in organizing a conference on the occasion of International Right to Information Day which was held on September 28 in Journalists' Home. Beside domestic experts and GONG representatives, Mr. Sean Garvey, from the Office of the Information Commissioner of the Republic of Ireland, also gave a presentation at the conference.

During the conference changes and amendments to the Freedom of Information Act were officially announced accordingly to GONG's recommendations.

Also, during 2007, Human Rights Office of the Croatian Government invited GONG representative to participate in the making of a National Strategy for Fighting Corruption, i.e. to make a plan for the next term of office. GONG's representative made a part of the draft which is related to the implementation of the Freedom of Information Act, Law on Data Secrecy and Law on Informational Security. She also proposed the goals which were to be fulfilled in the next term of office.

During the entire year GONG appeared in the media on numerous occasions concerning issues about the Freedom of Information Act and turned into one of the most prominent Croatian organizations when it comes to the question of this Act.

Law on Data Secrecy and Law on Informational Security

Law on Data Secrecy and Law on Informational Security are directly connected to the implementation of the Freedom of Information Act considering the fact that they make it possible to withhold certain information to protect the interest of the Republic of Croatia, i.e. in a certain way they derogate decrees of the Freedom of Information Act.

In February 2007, GONG held a press conference in cooperation with the Croatian Journalists' Society on the occasion of a repeated referral of the bill of the Law on Data Secrecy to the Parliament procedure. On this conference a concern and fear were expressed due to legislative verdicts that still make it possible to misuse the institute of data secrecy thus causing harm to the Freedom of Information Act.

The Council for National Security Office made a Draft of the Final Proposal of the Law and invited GONG representatives to its presentation. On the presentation of the Final Draft of the Law on Data Secrecy, beside GONG representatives, the Faculty of Law, Centre for Peace Studies and Human Rights Centre representatives also participated. On the presentation GONG insisted that amendments to the Final Draft be introduced, primary the ones that were relating to the formation of a favorable legislative regime for introducing the public interest test in the Freedom of Information Act. Based on this proposal, one of the more important amendments was introduced which made possible the implementation of a specific public interest test and also left the possibility of its stipulation in other laws.

The Law was adopted in July 2007.

GONG was actively involved in the research of Law decrees implementation. In this respect, GONG gave free legal aid to the Centre for Peace Studies in their demands concerning classified NATO documents. Since access to these documents was denied because of data secrecy, GONG drew up an appeal, an urgent appeal and then an administrative law suit which was referred to the Croatian Administrative Court. The ruling is expected sometime in 2008.

Transparency of Parliament's work

GONG continued to monitor the implementation of the Regulations on transparency of Parliament's work. In April 2007, GONG protested on a case of a refusal to issue a permanent Parliament accreditation to a Varaždin News journalist Helena Puljiz to whom the accreditation was issued a month later.

External members of Parliamentary Committees

According to the Standing Orders of the Croatian Parliament and without any particular explanation, only 11 out of the 24 Parliament Committees have external members with the role to provide expert advice to Committee members during sessions. Furthermore, there are no explicit criteria for appointment of external members.

After the Committee for Constitution, Standing Orders and Political System rejected GONG's and two Parliament parties' proposals for amendments of the Standing Orders GONG representatives continued to initiate a public debate on the need for appointing external members of the Committee on several occasions (a public discussion on the subject of NGO's participation in the consulting process with the state bodies, Zagreb, May 2007, public discussion on the subject of cooperation between the NGOs and the Croatian Parliament, June 2007).

Now that the new MPs were elected at the end of the year, GONG will continue to advocate for explicit criteria for appointment of external members of the Committee.

Elections for the Constitutional Court judges

In 2007 the Croatian Parliament was to elect 9 new Constitutional Court judges due to expiration of term of office.

GONG actively monitored the elective procedure and panel discussions with the candidates. Because of the speedy procedure and not enough time for the public to get to know the candidates and discuss them, GONG raised its voice in protest against such a way of electing the Constitutional Court judges. Elections for three more judges are in process.

5. European Class

During the last seasons of the "I Vote for the First Time" project, the teachers that participated in it proposed a similar workshop on the subject of the European Union in order to additionally educate the youngest of voters in Croatia. Proposals like these could be heard from the students themselves who also participated in the project for they were not satisfied with the quantity and quality of information they were being given on the EU which was primarily coming from the media.

Being aware of the complexity of the subject of EU, the effects of Croatia's membership in the EU and the existing curriculum which covers this subject only partially, we have developed a workshop in cooperation with the Informative Office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration. The workshop is tailored for high school seniors and it explains, in an interesting and interactive way, concrete effects of Croatia's membership in the EU, particularly what it means for the young people, their mobility, education and future employment. One of the basic messages that this workshop sends out is to stimulate young people to objective thought and to reduce negative opinions on the Union as a result of lack of information on the effects of Croatia's membership in the EU.

At the beginning of February 2007, we initiated the first season of the "European Class" project nationwide.

Out of the 349 contacted schools the "European Class" workshop was held in **143** schools all over Croatia in 2007. During the second school semester, **from 21 February 2007 till May 2007, 601** workshops were held. **20** educated trainers conducted the workshops and more than **16,000** high school seniors participated.

! The brochure "European Union?" which gives the basic information about the EU as well as links to internet pages on relevant domestic and European state bodies, caused special attention. Beside the 18,000 copies of the brochure that were handed out to students who participated in the workshop, an additional 18,000 copies were printed and distributed to the Agency for Education via "Meridians" magazine.

6. "Good Governance" Project

In May 2006, we started implementing the project „Promotion of the Principles of Good Governance and Increased Citizens' Participation in the Decision-Making Process in the Republic of Croatia“. The project is being implemented until November 2007 all over Croatia within the EU funded CARDS 2003 and 2004 programs.

The main goal of the project is to promote and protect the principles of good governance, as well as strengthen civic participation in decision-making process at the local level in Croatia. The project primarily targets citizens, local civil society organizations, neighborhood councils, national minorities' councils and local officials, in order to improve communication among them.

By the end of 2007, out of a total of 216 scheduled "Citizens' Hours", 199 were organized. From April till July 2007 16 series of public advocacy workshops for a series of organizations were organized and an animated DVD on the same subject is in the making. In March this year 50,000 copies of an educational brochure "Let the citizens' voice be heard in the local community" were made, explaining local and regional self-government. In September last year, a two week national educational campaign on the right to access information was conducted in programs of 11 TV and 36 radio stations and the same campaign was conducted again this year but in a lesser capacity.

7. Strengthening CSOs and Development of Cross-sectoral Cooperation in the County of Sisak-Moslavina Project

In May 2006, GONG, in partnership with SMART Association, began implementing "Strengthening Civil Society Organizations and Development of Cross-sectoral Cooperation in the County of Sisak-Moslavina" project. The project was being implemented within Regional Operative Program of Sisak-Moslavina County with the financial assistance of the European Union through CARDS 2003 Program. Project activities were implemented until December 2007 in 7 target towns/municipalities of Sisak-Moslavina County: Hrvatska Kostajnica, Kutina, Novska, Petrinja, Sisak, Sunja and Topusko. The aim of the project was to contribute to the strengthening of CSOs in the County, to encourage citizens' participation in the development of local policy, especially participation of CSOs and youth, and to enhance communication and strategic relations between various stakeholders in the County.

In the period from January 1, 2007 till December 31, 2007, 31 "I Vote for the First Time" workshops were conducted; more than 667 students and citizens got a chance to visit the Parliament and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration; 26 Citizens' Hours in a form of public debates and radio contact shows were held; an Advocacy workshop was conducted and a Workshop on working with the media for organizations' representatives was conducted. A study visit for the CSO representatives and local officials of Sisak-Moslavina County to the City of Rijeka was organized and diplomas were given to all who participated in the project. SMART Association conducted 5 modular trainings also for CSO representatives.

8. Activities in War Affected Areas

Supported by the OSCE Mission to Croatia, we implemented civic political/economic education and civic participation encouragement projects in **4 Slavonia counties**.

GONG Regional Office Slavonski Brod in September 2006 started implementing activities in 4 Slavonia counties within the project "Civic political and democratic education, local self-organizing and participation encouragement in target counties of Western Slavonia". During the eight months of

project implementation 31 Citizens' Hours were organized, 4 EU info desks, 7 visits to the Parliament, 2 public advocacy workshops and 6 media workshops.

9. Find Your Way in the Decision Making Process Project

Supported by the United States Embassy, in September 2006 we began implementing "Find Your Way in Decision-Making Process" project in 9 target towns/municipalities all over Croatia. Project's main goal was to include citizens and civil society representatives in decision making-process on the local level, to open communication channels between local officials and citizens and to strengthen local CSOs/citizens' groups to actively participate in local community development.

The project activities included organization of open panel discussions and radio talk shows in cooperation with beneficiary CSOs and a training seminar for beneficiary CSOs' representatives on public advocacy, work with the media and examples of best practices in communication between local officials, local CSOs and citizens. The project was implemented until April 2007 in Donji Miholjac, Drnis, Dvor, Imotski, Lipik, Korenica, Senj, Sinj, and Zupanja, with the final goal to strengthen local CSOs to continue with organizing similar activities in the future.

10. Think Globally, Act Locally! Project

The aim of the project "Think Globally, Act Locally!" is to give the opportunity to young people between the age of 14 and 19 to develop the skills necessary to actively participate in decision-making processes on the local level and to change the negative attitude youth generally have regarding politics by giving them an opportunity to assume responsibility for budgeting and implementing agreed measures locally. The original idea was developed by the Instituut voor Publiek en Politiek (IPP - Dutch Centre for Political Participation), and GONG was the first organization implementing the project in SEE in the end of 2006.

In 2007 the project was implemented again in the City of Rijeka with the "Action Day" as the central event taking place on October 12 in local government facilities where about 80 high school students worked in groups to develop small-scale local community projects on the subject of "Young help the old". The students were given limited funds to implement the project they all agree upon (exactly in the way local government officials discuss local projects and vote for the best proposal). The students decided that the best project proposal came from the group that proposed habitat improvement for the Home for the Helpless Elderly on Rijeka's Kantrida which was realized in December.

Action Day 2007 was completely funded by the City of Rijeka and during 2008 project broadening including other cities is planned.

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

The second edition of the booklet "Lost and Found - Guide to achieving citizens' rights and interests with public institutions" was printed in 2006 in 12,700 copies and it is intended for all citizens who want to become familiar with their rights and find their way within public institutions more easily in order to efficiently assert their rights and interests. In 2007 almost 10,000 copies of the Booklet was distributed via GONG's regional offices, various NGOs, state and local institutions and OSCE branch offices.

In 23 thematic chapters some of the most frequent questions and problems that citizens encounter in everyday life were collected and addressed – containing instructions on whom and how to contact as well as laws where they can find more detailed information. The electronic edition of the booklet is available at www.gong.hr and is being updated on a regular basis. On the same website one can find a PDF version of the Booklet also.

In 2007 on the Booklet's web site new articles were added such as the ones on Constitutional Court, public procurement, youth advices, sorting of conflicts through conciliation, state's jurisdiction in cases of natural hazards, new list on public bodies... In addition, due to frequent changes in legislation,

names of institutions and public administration in Croatia, we made several changes and adjusted the entries regarding legal regulation.

12. Network for Regional Capacity Development (MRRAK) Project

GONG's Regional Office in Rijeka in partnership with the SMART Association (Rijeka), Centre for Citizens' Initiatives (Porec) and Initiator (Pokretac, Korenica), starting from January 2007, began to implement a three years project Network for Regional Capacity Development – MRRAK" financed by National Foundation for Civil Society Development. The aim of the project is to strengthen civil society's capacity in the area of Primorje – Gorski Kotar, Istrian and Lika – Senj County.

After the making of a business project plan and the assessments on the need of CSOs, local and regional self-government units, the media and business sector, GONG's Regional Office in Rijeka is implementing activities concerning the founding of Rijeka organizations' forum and the making and issuing documents on cooperation between CSOs and local and regional self-government units in Primorje – Gorski Kotar and Lika – Senj County and in the following cities: Gospic, Vrhovine, Lovinac, Korenica, Pula, Pazin and Umag.

In December the Network organized a **Conference on cooperation between local and regional self-government units** and CSOs in Rijeka on which GONG's Vanja Skoric and GONG's Regional Office members Aleksandra Vinkerlic and Igor Bajok gave presentations.

13. Adaptation and competitiveness of Slavonia – Baranja's farmers to the European Market Project

In July 2007, GONG's Regional Office in Slavonski Brod started with the preparations to conduct nine Citizens' Hours in four Slavonia counties. Citizens' Hours took place from October 2007 till the end of January 2008 and its goal was to inform and educate the agricultural population of Slavonia and Baranja on European processes, the course of negotiations between Croatia and the EU in the Agricultural and Rural Development chapter, pre-accession funds and other effects of Croatia's accession to the European Union which are related to this subject. The project is funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration.

CIVIL SOCIETY

The program domain Civil Society includes GONG's activities aimed at stimulating a systematic cooperation between the CSOs in Croatia and developing the mechanisms of support for these organizations, with promoting activism and citizens' participation on a local and regional level.

1. Initiatives

Since the legal framework that regulates operation and financing of CSOs as well as civil society in general is fairly vague, we have been active in advocating legal prerequisites for high-quality and sustainable development of civil society in Croatia since 2000.

Draft Law on Voluntarism

Together with other CSOs' representatives, GONG continued its participation in the work group on the draft proposal of Law on Voluntarism. After the Draft was finished in September and the public discussion which included CSOs representatives ended, Draft Law was referred to Parliament procedure and adopted on second reading in February 2007.

GONG participated in the making of a booklet Legislative Administration of Voluntarism in the Republic of Croatia, in June 2007 in which the rights and duties of volunteers and organizers of volunteering are being explained in a more detailed manner.

GONG together with several other organizations and with the ECNL, contributed in the making of the publication on the implementation on Law on Voluntarism which was printed and distributed all over Croatia in September 2007. GONG's representative participated on the 3rd annual national conference on voluntarism, also in September. In December GONG received an invitation to nominate a representative into the National Committee for Voluntarism Development, founded by the Croatian Government by virtue of an advisory body. GONG representative Vanja Skoric was appointed to the Committee and participated on two of its sessions working on the Ethics Code for Volunteers and deciding on awarding the State's prize for volunteering.

Proposal of the Law on Pro Bono Legal Aid

In July 2007, Croatian Government adopted and referred to Parliament procedure a proposal on the Law on Pro Bono Legal Aid which does not honor the Constitutional Principle of equal access to courts, disables citizens with poor assets in getting legal aid and it establishes an attorney monopoly in a way that it completely limits the organizations and produces criminal liability for them.

For this reason, GONG contacted numerous CSOs which provide legal aid to Croatian citizens and a coalition made out of more than 20 organizations and numerous networks was formed which makes a total of 50 most prominent organizations in the Republic of Croatia. Among others, the Croatian Helsinki Committee, B.a.B.e (Be Active, Be Emancipated), Centre for Peace Studies, SDF and others have joined this coalition, while GONG's representative Ariana Vela was chosen for Coalition coordinator.

First on its own, and after the Coalition was established in its name as well, GONG wrote two written inquiries to the Ministry of Justice and to the Croatian Government about this Law Proposal and about very poor legislative decrees. There was also a press conference on which a withdrawal of the proposal from the Parliamentary procedure was demanded as well as the forming of a new work group in which the organizations would also participate and an case study on which organizations are providing legal aid and in which juridical sectors.

During the summer of 2007, the Coalition gained support from the Ombudsman, Ombudsman for Children, Delegation of The European Commission to the Republic of Croatia, OSCE and numerous embassies and attorneys.

In September 2007, the Government adopted the Final Proposal of the Law without the recommended changes from the organizations and it was referred to Parliament procedure. The Coalition gained further support from the Ombudsman, Parliament Committees for Human Rights and Gender Equality, professors from the Faculty of Law in Zagreb, the media, the citizens etc. holding of a theme session of Parliament Committees for Human Rights and Gender Equality concerning this issue was successfully arranged and yet another open letter was referred to the President of the Croatian Government and to the Minister of Justice in which the July demands were repeated and it was warned on the problems that this law will cause the citizens with poor assets. Despite the meeting with the Minister of Justice, Ana Lovrin and a strong public pressure the proposal was put on the agenda during the last Parliament session. During this period the Coalition held several more press conferences on which the public was informed about the poor aspects of this Law and a withdrawal of the Proposal from Parliament procedure was advocated. Finally, the Parliament did not vote on law and the entire process started over. The Coalition demanded from the Prime Minister and the Minister of Justice the founding of a new work group in which all copartners will have its representatives. By Minister's decision, two Coalition representatives, out of whom one is GONG's representative, were appointed members of the work group.

Preliminary meeting of the work group was held in December and on it two Coalition representatives demanded the making of an entirely new Law proposal.

New Law on Foundations

Croatian Law on Foundations needs to be changed in order to make the legal procedure for funding various foundations simpler. According to the current legislation, procedure of foundations' founding is unnecessarily complex.

In 2007, GONG actively participated in the making of a new Law on Foundations in cooperation with domestic and foreign legal experts and organizations such as AED, ECNL, USAID and others. Communication with all Croatian foundations was established and several consultations with them were held at which GONG also participated. On these consultations formal and, more important, practical problems of the foundations were laid out, particularly the ones referring to a long-lasting and complicated process of registering a foundation *mortis causa*.

A draft of the proposal on the Law on Foundations was referred to the State's Central Office as the authorized audit body at what point the same body also noted how amendments of the Law are needed.

The Security Intelligence Agency affair and the Council for the Development of Civil Society

GONG, together with 14 CSO's representatives organized a protest and sent an open letter to the Croatian Government in January 2007 on the occasion of Day of CSOs which was organized by the Office for Cooperation with CSOs under the high patronage of the Vice-president of the Croatian Government and the Minister of Family Affairs, War Veterans and Intergenerational Solidarity, Jadranka Kosor.

The reasons for the protest were: the fact that Council for the Development of Civil Society wasn't formed for over more than 4 months, that the members elected by the CSOs were being subjected to illegal security controls and the fact that civil society representatives in the Joint Civil Society of the EU and Croatia Committee were being appointed behind closed doors. CSOs demanded an immediate dismissal of the commissioner of the Office for Cooperation with CSOs, Jadranka Cigelj. The Government did so by immediate procedure the same day.

Although the facts about security checks were known since December 2006 when the Centre for Peace Studies warned both the Government and the public that secret services were conducting a security check of their activist Sandra Bencic, who was, on the behalf of human rights organizations nominated for the Councils member, the Government did not react until 15 CSOs protested before the Day of CSO's started.

Jadranka Cigelj confirmed to the press that she herself ordered the secret services to conduct an inquiry on activists' lives. However, the Government did not relieve her of her duties on the grounds of abuse of authority and because of the fact that she ordered the secret services to conduct an investigation on prominent activists. Neither the Prime Minister nor any other of the ministers initiated the question of responsibility of secret services' acts.

The formal ground of Cigelj's dismissal by the Government was a questionnaire by which she supposedly "unauthorized and by abuse of authority asked the Council's members for their personal data which she then intended to send to the Security Intelligence Agency". But the questionnaire in question was a joke and not the real one from the Security Intelligence Agency. This was a piece of paper that the CSOs were giving out that morning at the protest in order to show the absurdity of employing the secret services. CSOs were not satisfied with the Government's act for it relieved Cigelj of her duties for the wrong reason and not because she ordered the secret services to conduct security checks.

CSO's representatives demanded on several occasions a supervision of the Council for Citizens' Supervision of Intelligence Agencies and a reading from the Security Intelligence Agency and the State concerning a series of irregularities that occurred while security checks were being conducted. In most cases the CSOs didn't receive a response except a reading from the Council which established the security checks weren't illegal but that human rights were violated to the members in question. A procedure for the making of a new regulation on security checks was set in motion. The regulation would lay down in detail the way in which the checks would be conducted and who would

have the authority to do so. One of the checked members of the Council started a procedure on the European Court of Human Rights.

GONG, as well as many other CSOs, saluted the appointment of Igor VidaCek as a commissioner of the Office for Cooperation with CSOs with whom quality cooperation was established in 2007.

Civil Society Development Strategy and the Operative Plan

The operative plan for the national strategy for creating stimulating environment for civil society development for the period from 2007 until 2011 was adopted February 1st 2007. It was made based on the proposal from the National Strategy for Civil Society Development adopted by the Government June 12th 2006.

GONG representatives continued to cooperate with the Office for Cooperation with CSOs as well as with the Council for the Development of Civil Society on activities related to achieving the Strategy's goals.

Policy Paper – process of CSOs consultations with the Government on the process of making legal texts

In May 2007, GONG representative was invited by the Office for Cooperation with CSOs and the ECNL, to make a policy paper on the process of CSO's participation in the making of legal texts. After the making of the policy paper on domestic and international practice is finished, the Office for Cooperation with CSOs will issue a brochure all with the purpose of finding and establishing a quality model of participation.

2. Cooperation with Institutions, Organizations and CSOs in Croatia

- Hrvoje Rancic, GONG's Regional Office Zadar coordinator joined a few Zadar CSOs in activities aimed at developing City Action Program for youth which includes local youth organizations and enables wider participation of all interested individuals. Within the City Program a campaign "Speak now or forever hold your peace" was initiated. Hrvoje represents GONG in a working group and during April and May GONG organized 5 public panels on the subject of City Program for Youth Activity.
- Dragan Zelic presented GONG's experiences in election monitoring and media campaigns in the last elections in Croatia to participants (Croatian journalists) of the seminar "Election Reporting for the Journalists of Printed Media" held in April and May 2007 in Opatija, organized by the International Centre for Journalists' Education. The rest of the presentations were given by professors of the Faculty of Law in Zagreb, professors from the Dubrovnik University and other experts.
- GONG was invited by WYG International, Council for National Minorities and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration to participate in the work of the Managing Board of CARDS 2003 project *Support to the Councils of National Minorities in Areas of Special State Concern*. The project included GAP analysis of the work of national minorities' councils, creation of educative booklets and campaign on raising awareness amongst the citizens. Dragan Zelic represented GONG in the Managing Board until March 2007 when he left it for the reason of potential conflict of interest since GONG had the intention to respond to WYG's invitation to conduct an educative campaign concerning the upcoming minority elections.
- GONG's Regional Office Rijeka continued to participate in the development of civil society in the Rijeka area. Aleksandra Vinkerlic was a member of the Council for promoting voluntarism in the County of Primorje – Gorski Kotar while Igor Bajok of the Committee for Coordination between CSOs and the City of Rijeka.
- In 2007, regional Office Slavonski Brod representatives participated in **four sessions** of the Slavonski Brod City Council.

- In **November**, Aleksandra Vinkerlic joined the **work group** for drawing up the Local Youth Action Plan of the County of Istria on which she worked during 2007 and the working version of the Local Program for Youth Action was presented in August 2007. (www.istra-istria.hr).
- At the **end of 2006**, Coordination of several CSOs "**The Right to a City**" from Zagreb approached GONG with a request to support their activities aimed at increasing the transparency of decision-making in the Zagreb City government. To be more precise, the problem begun when it was decided that a shopping centre with underground garages would be built in the protected urban area of the centre of the city and this without any public discussion. In 2007 GONG's volunteers participated in an organized collecting of signatures for a petition "Against the devastation of the Flower Square". Besides this, they participated in public actions of surrounding the Square with citizens' postcards and in the protest in front of the Zagreb City Congress when their opinion was expressed by signing.
- In **March**, Hrvoje Rancic was a speaker at a **round table** "Civil Society in the process of Democratic Transition" in Zadar organized by the Political Academy.
- In **March**, April and October 2007, Vanja Skoric and Damir Azenic participated in **work groups** for assessing projects that arrived to the Human Rights Office.
- In **March** 2007, Ariana Vela gave a **presentation** on the subject of right to access information in the Bjelovar town hall.
- In **spring** 2007, the Centre for Expert Training and Education of the SDUU workers founded a **working group** with the aim of working out a program for education of government workers concerning the Freedom of Information Act. In the working group, beside state bodies' representatives, GONG's representative Ariana Vela was also included. In 2007, a basic module was made and four educative seminars for the Croatian Parliament, ministries, Constitutional Court, Ombudsman, counties and other representatives were conducted. Ariana participated in a part of the education concerning the right to access information and data secrecy and held an interactive workshop with examples from practice.
- In **May**, Suzana Jasic was invited by the Centre for Peace Studies to be a guest speaker at one of their **classes** "Civil Action and Public Policies". The idea of the class is to give the participants a general idea on what the public policies are and what are the possible types of operations – actions and activities that support them and GONG is one of the CSOs that represented itself as to the attendants as an example of good practice.
- In **May**, Vanja Skoric gave a presentation at a **conference** "New Modules of Government and CSOs consultation" organized by the Office for Cooperation with CSOs, on the subject of GONG's experiences in the process of consultation with state bodies, the process of making and implementing new legislative acts, programs, strategic documents etc. as well as the anticipated improvement of standards in the consultation process. The goal of the conference was to initiate a creation of a Codex of positive practice of Government and CSOs consultation in the preparation and implementation of new legislative acts according to the best European practice in the area. The creation of the Codex is in priority measures of the Operative Plan for implementation of the National Strategy for Creating Stimulating Environment for Civil Society Development adopted at the Croatian Government's session in February 2007.
- In **May**, Sandra Pernar participated at a **round table** organized by the Swedish Embassy on the occasion of Swedish donors pulling back from Croatia. Sandra gave a presentation on GONG's financial sustainability.
- In **May**, Vanja Skoric participated at a **round table** on a new regulation on voluntarism organized by the City of Zagreb. She presented the future legal frame.
- GONG's Regional Office Rijeka, by invitation of the Primorje – Gorski Kotar County in **May**, helped in the realization of activities on the occasion of marking the European Week. Around ten GONG volunteers participated in informing the citizens by distributing EU material.

- In **June**, by invitation of the City of Rijeka, Aleksandra Vinkerlic from the regional Office Rijeka joined the **Coordinative Board** of the Cities Friend of the Children as a member and participated in a Draft of the Local Action Plan for Rights and Interests of Children.
- In **June**, GONG's representative Ariana Vela gave a **presentation** on GONG's experiences in the implementation of the Freedom of Information Act on a consultation in Split organized by the Academy for Local Democracy.
- In May, the Centre for Peace Studies invited GONG's representative Ariana Vela to be a part of the work group that will create a **textbook** for education of the Security Intelligence Agency's workers and a **brochure** for citizens and their rights.
- In **June 2007**, Suzana Jasic was a guest on a **plenary session** "Donators and the NGOs: standpoints and misconceptions" at a conference "Civil Society: a work in progress organized by the AED, Zagreb. Also, Ariana Vela moderated and held a **presentation** within the plenary session on CSO's participation in consultation process and decision making and the modalities for CSOs participation in writing legal texts.
- In **June**, Vanja Skoric **gave a presentation** on expert consultation "Confirming the Criteria for Gaining the Status of an Organization that acts for the Public Good" organized by the Office for Cooperation with CSOs and the European Centre for Not-for-Profit Law from Budapest.
- In **June**, Vanja Skoric and Suzana Jasic participated on a **seminar** about the **electoral system** for State Election Commission members in the organization of the UNDP within their project of support for the State Election Commission. Various aspects of the electoral process and present experiences were presented by the Faculty of Law and the Faculty of Political Science professors, Central State Administrative Office for Public Administration representatives, representatives of election commissions from Macedonia, Great Britain, Hungary and others. Suzana Jasic **gave a presentation** on the observer's role in the elections, GONG's experiences in monitoring the elections and cooperation with the State Election Commission.
- In **late June**, Suzana Jasic participated at a **conference** "The media and election monitoring" in Opatija organized by Radio 101, International Center for Journalists' Education, Centre for Media and Communication Research, SEEMO (South Eastern Media Organization) and the Croatian's Journalist Society. Suzana Jasic presented the legal frame of election monitoring by the media in Croatia, international practice and GONG's recommendations and experiences.
- In **July** Multicultural Center (MKC) from Zupanja asked the Regional Office Slavonski Brod for a donation in the form of various GONG's brochures and materials. MKC decided to put up a permanent info desk inside their office where members of the organization and the rest interested citizens would be able to find various useful materials. "Lost and found" booklets and all the others GONG's educative brochures were donated.
- In **September**, Ariana Vela participated in the making of the **National Program for the protection and promotion** of Human Rights by invitation of Human Rights Office of the Croatian Government.
- In **September**, Ariana Vela gave a **presentation on the position of the Coalition of CSOs who are in the system of providing legal aid**, on a public panel held at the Human Rights Centre. At the panel Croatian Government representatives, Ministry of Justice, Delegation of The European Commission to the Republic of Croatia and Ombudsman representatives, the media, CSOs and others.
- In **September**, three volunteers of GONG's Regional office Slavonski Brod helped in the action of collecting signatures for a petition demanding amendments to the Freedom of Information Act which was organized by Transparency International Croatia on the occasion of International Right to Know Day.

- In **October**, Ariana Vela presented GONG's standpoints and recommendations for the improvement of decrees in the Freedom of Information Act to the **Delegation of the European Commission to the Republic of Croatia representatives**.
- In **October**, Ariana Vela participated in representing GONG's activities in the aspect of providing legal aid, advocacy and right to access information to the delegation of Ukrainian CSOs, organized by the Croatian Government and the Human Rights Centre.
- In **October**, Sandra Pernar participated at a conference "Dialog between Croatia's Civil Society and the EU: state and perspectives" in Split. At the conference, she presented the initiative on founding the office of Croatian CSOs in Brussels which was initiated by a group of participants in the Program for Information and Education on the EU for CSOs implemented by the National Foundation for Civil Society Development and ECAS from Brussels.
- In **October**, Ariana Vela participated on an expert consultation on fighting corruption on the subject: The Steps to follow in the implementation of the National Program for Fighting Corruption: Civil Society's role". She held a presentation on CSO's participation in the creation of anticorruption mechanisms.
- By invitation of the Ministry for Family Affairs, War Veterans and Intergenerational Solidarity in **November**, Vanja Skoric, as GONG's representative was appointed to the **National Committee for Voluntarism Development**.
- In **November**, Ariana Vela gave a presentation and answered questions from the participants of the first public discussion on the subject of the **Codex of Good Practice for consulting the State and Civil Society in the procedure of law making and other regulations** organized by the Office for Cooperation with NGOs and the Council for Civil Society Development.
- In **December**, members of GONG's Regional office Slavonski Brod, Sanja Beslic – Kozmus and Mihael Rukavina, together with a few volunteers, participated and supported a public protest of an organization for animal protection "Salvation" Slavonski Brod, by which it was demanded from the City Government to give a final solution on the question of asylum for abandoned dogs in the city.
- In December Ariana Vela was appointed as member of a working group of the Ministry of Justice for the creation of the law that regulates free and sponsored legal aid.
- During the year, GONG's Regional office Zadar continued to cooperate in activities of adopting the Charter of cooperation between the City of Zadar and Zadar's CSOs through the Forum of Zadar CSOs.
- During the year Suzana Jasic continued to act as a member of the HRT's Program Council.

3. Legal Aid and Advising

Citizens can make use of legal aid services by visiting GONG office in person, or via phone, email or fax. We answer 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 we provided legal aid in gaining rights to access information to numerous institutions and organizations such as the coalition of CSOs under the name of "The Right to a City", citizens' initiatives that asked documentation regarding the amendments made to the General Urban Plan of the City of Zagreb, to organizations (Friends of the Earth Croatia, Bjelovar centre for Civil Society, Centre for Peace Studies etc.)

GONG dealt with more than **1,500 various inquiries for legal aid** regarding the implementation of the Freedom of Information Act and procedures, election regulations and numerous on citizens' participation in the decision-making process.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. Training Courses, Consultations and Visits

UNDP Kazakhstan – study visit – Zagreb

In February 2007, United Nations Development Program (UNDP) gave audience to two UNDP representatives from Kazakhstan. The goal of their visit was to introduce themselves to the way that the UNDP office in Croatia, as well as the state bodies on a central and local level in the implementation of development projects cooperates with the CSOs. The Kazakhstan colleagues were particularly interested in the CSOs role in organizing the election process and the engagement of the CSOs in raising the electoral culture with citizens and for this reason they visited GONG where Vanja Skoric and Dragan Zelic presented GONG and gave them consultation. The experience and knowledge they obtained in Croatia will help them in a concrete way in a successful realization of certain projects implemented by the UNDP Office in Kazakhstan.

Iraqi activists – educational training – Zagreb

From 22nd till 30th May 2007, GONG gave audience to a group of 9 civil society's representatives from Iraq and a few NDI's representatives. The study visit, financed by the NDI with the aim of organizations' development, under the name "Lessons Learned: Development of Organizations and Citizens' Influence" was designed by GONG. During the week Iraqi guests had the opportunity to find out more about Croatia, GONG's organizational and program development, but also about a few other organizations, the media, how to visit the Croatian Parliament and the MVPEI and the City of Rijeka as an example of good practice of local self-government and to participate in some of GONG's activities (Citizens' Hour, Open Parliament).

Dutch students – visit – Zagreb

In August 2007, GONG was visited by 25 students from the Department of Public Administration of Leiden University in Holland and Damir Azenic and Vanja Skoric presented GONG, its development and activities. The visit to Croatia was a part of the students' education on post conflict country development.

Fatah – visit – Zagreb

In November 2007, GONG was visited by 15 representatives of the Palestinian organization Fatah and Sandra Pernar presented GONG, its development and activities. The visit to Croatia was organized by the NDI and besides GONG they visited some of Croatia's political parties.

2. Project and Program Cooperation with International Organizations

Politeia Network

Politeia – a network for citizens and democracy in Europe is active in the area of citizens' (European) citizenship and gathers organizations that work together and exchange experiences regarding issues on active (European) citizenship, civil society and education on democracy.

After a meeting of nine European organizations, including GONG, that was held in December 2005 in Amsterdam and a revitalization of Politeia network was agreed upon, in December 2006 an annual conference of members was held on which a change in Politeia's status was agreed upon i.e. its

registration in a sense of an organization with a European standard. On the same conference the Statute of the future organization was discussed and conciliated. The registration is underway.

At the beginning of 2007, Politeia started new internet pages on which information and news on the network member's work are being published as well as all the other information concerning network's work area. Also, Politeia publishes a newsletter on a regular basis which is then being distributed to a large number of users all over Europe.

Particular member-organizations have, since the network was initiated, in a joint effort, implemented several projects and GONG accepted from the Dutch IPP project methodology for "Think Globally, Act Locally!" project.

Electoral project in Macedonia

From 5th till 7th July GONG's representative Vanja Skoric participated at a conference "Electoral project in Macedonia" by virtue of election expert as a part of the OSCE/ODIHR Office. The conference was organized on the occasion of starting a project for a reform of electoral legislature in Macedonia implemented by the OSCE Mission in Macedonia, MOST organization and the Ministry of Justice. Vanja Skoric held a presentation on the subject of campaign financing and protection of election right.

Also, in October, Vanja Skoric yet again by invitation of OSCE/ODIHR participated in the work of a work group that is working on the electoral codex in Macedonia.

3. International Conferences, Seminars, Visits, Presenting GONG

Seminar of the Fond for Open Society "Strengthening Transparency, responsibility and Public Integrity in Western Balkans", Belgrade, Serbia

In March, Sandra Pernar participated in a seminar "Strengthening Transparency, responsibility and Public Integrity in Western Balkans" organized by the Fond for Open Society in Belgrade. On the seminar successfully implemented methodologies in anticorruption projects, mostly in Central and Eastern Europe, were presented. The seminar was intended for watchdog organizations in the region.

OSCE/ODIHR expert meeting: "Election Monitoring and Electronic voting" – Warsaw, Poland

In March, Dragan Zelic, participated on a meeting of experts organized by OSCE/ODIHR on the subject of election monitoring and electronic voting (e – voting). Representatives of ODIHR, election commissions and various experts monitored the experiences of countries that implement e-voting. Since ODIHR wants to set the principles and standards for monitoring e-voting, all important aspects of such an election process were discussed.

International conference on voluntarism – Novi Sad, Serbia

In April, Vanja Skoric participated on an international conference on voluntarism which dealt with a regional overview of the legal regulation of voluntarism. Vanja Skoric presented a draft on the Law on voluntarism from Croatia and a campaign for promoting voluntarism organized in 2006.

OSCE/ODIHR's Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, Warsaw, Poland

Suzana Jasic participated on the OSCE/ODIHR's Human Dimension Implementation Meeting in September, in Warsaw. This is an annual meeting of countries – members of the OSCE on which a two week discussion on all aspects of human and political rights is being conducted. Suzana Jasic was invited to participate in the part that regarded the elections.

"Trilateral Co-operation and Civil Society", Prague, The Czech Republic

Suzana Jasic participated on an assembly "Trilateral Co-operation and Civil Society" in Prague, initiated by the Dutch Embassy in Prague and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs in cooperation with the Check Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

ENEMO's (European Network of Election Monitoring Organizations) annual assembly

In September Dragan Zelic participated on ENEMO's annual assembly in Ukraine on which future plans of ENEMO were discussed and a new leadership of the organization was elected.

The conference "New external financial instruments - new opportunities for civil society in the EU neighborhood", Brussels, Belgium

Sandra Pernar participated on an international conference "New external financial instruments - new opportunities for civil society in the EU neighborhood" organized by ECAS in Brussels in October. The conference itself was, in fact, an introductory part in ECAS' efforts for rhetoric to be implemented in practice when it comes to EU's support for the development of civil society and its readiness to include neighbor countries' CSOs on a policy dialog level.

The conference „Access to Legislative Initiatives: Effective Framework for CSO Participation and Advocacy“, Skopje, Macedonia

Vanja Skoric participated, in December, on an international conference „Access to Legislative Initiatives: Effective Framework for CSO Participation and Advocacy“, organize by ECNL in cooperation with the Office for Cooperation with CSOs of the Macedonian Government and the office for Cooperation between the Parliament and CSOs. Vanja presented the experiences and mechanisms of Croatian CSO's participation.

ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

1. Conferences, Seminars and Public Events, Presenting GONG

- February 2007 – Suzana Jasic participated on a National Forum for the accession to the EU: truths and misconceptions about the EU organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration in Rijeka.
- February 2007 – Ariana Vela and Robert Maracic participated on a conference "Anticorruption Measures and Prevention Politics held at the Dubrovnik Hotel, organized by the European Commission.
- February 2007 – Suzana Jasic participated on a panel "Media and the elections" organized by the International Centre for Journalists' Education, held at the Croatian Journalists Home.
- February 2007 – Ariana Vela participated at a discussion on a Pre-draft of the Law on Foundations organized by the AED.
- March 2007 – Ariana Vela and Robert Maracic participated at a conference "European Standards of Governing in Major Cities" organized by the City of Zagreb and the University of Zagreb.
- March 2007 – Ariana Vela participated on a conference "Outsourcing in Cities and Counties", organized by USAID.
- March 2007 – Ariana Vela participated on a presentation of the Index of Budgetary Transparency.

- March 2007 – Vanja Skoric participated at a round table “Civil Society and the Government”, organized by the Parliament Committee for Human Rights and National Minorities.
- March 2007 - Ariana Vela participated on a Conference about social entrepreneurship, organized by AED.
- March 2007 – the Regional office Slavonski Brod organized info desks in Daruvar, Pakrac, Slatina and Nova Gradiska on which they were handing out material o the EU obtained by various embassies and the EU Info Center and GONG materials (“Lost and Found”, leaflet on the Right to Access Information Act).
- April 2007 – Robert Maracic attended a conference “Constitutional Implications of the EU Membership”, organized by the Faculty of Law of the University of Zagreb.
- April 2007 – Robert Maracic and Damir Azenic attended a round table “Standpoints and Citizens’ Support of Croatia’s Accession to the EU”, organized by the Institute for Public Finances and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.
- May 2007 – the Regional office Rijeka participated on the Third Annual Fair of CSOs in the Lika-Senj County. The propose of the fair is to gather in one place all active representatives of the civil sector, local self – government from the Lika – Senj County area as well as potential donors, media representatives and citizens with the goal of turning the attention and to make the public more sensible to the value of the civil sector’s action in the Lika – Senj County.
- May 2007 – Ariana Vela attended a conference “Civil Alliance 2008: Together towards NATO”. The Civil Alliance 2008 came into existence within the Adriatic Initiative while gathering three CSOs – Institute for International relations from Zagreb, Institute for Democracy and reconciliation from Tirana and FORUM The centre for Strategic Research and Documentation from Skopje. The Civil Alliance 2008 will insure a forum for joint lobbying in Brussels and Washington for Croatia’s, Albania’s and Macedonia’s accession to NATO on the 2008 summit.
- May 2007 – the Regional office Slavonski Brod participated on a traditional Fair of CSOs which is being organized by the City Office for Social Activities on the occasion of the Day of the City of Slavonski Brod. The citizens were being presented with numerous GONG materials and brochures via info desks.
- May/October 2007 – Maja Kocis and Vlasta Sanko participated on a training seminar for local development organized by ODRAZ and was held in 5 blocks – Zagreb (2), Stubicke Toplice (2) and Fuzine.
- June 2007 – the Central State Administrative Office for Public Administration organized a round table on the subject of depoliticizing and professionalization of public administration (within the Public Administration Reform project) in the Croatian Parliament on which GONG’s representative, Suzana Jasic participated.
- December 2006/June 2007 – chief editor of the Lexicon of Law invited GONG to represent itself in the new edition of the Lexicon and the column about GONG was published in June 2007.
- September 2007 – Vanja Skoric participated on the National Forum for the accession to the EU on the subject of administration of justice, held in Krizevci.
- September 2007 – Suzana Jasic participated on an assembly "Trilateral Co-operation and Civil Society" in Prague, initiated by the Dutch Embassy in Prague and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs in cooperation with the Check Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- September 2007 – Ariana Vela participated on the presentation of the National Program for Protection and Promotion of Human Rights organized by the Human Rights and the Office for Human Rights of the Government of the Republic of Croatia.

- October 2007 – Ariana Vela participated on an expert consultation on fighting corruption on the subject: The Steps to follow in the implementation of the National Program for Fighting Corruption: Civil Society's role". She held a presentation on CSO's participation in the creation of anticorruption mechanisms.
- October 2007 – by invitation of the Union of Autonomous Trade Unions of Croatia, Ariana Vela participated in a conference: "Lengthiness of Court Procedures and Human Rights Violations in the Republic of Croatia – causes, consequences and solutions".
- October 2007 – Ariana Vela participated in a conference "I Volunteer Locally, I Act Globally" in Opatija, organized by the National Foundation for Civil Society Development.
- October 2007 – Sandra Pernar and Robert Maracic participated in the Info Day on the program Europe for Citizens, organized by the Office for Cooperation with CSOs and the National Foundation for Civil Society Development in Zagreb.
- October 2007 – Sanja Beslic – Kozmus participated on a European forum "Effects of accession to the EU in the consumer protection and food safety department – Croatian expectations and Irish experiences" organized by the Institute for International Relations in cooperation with the University of Josip Juraj Strossmayer in Osijek.
- October 2007 – Maja Kocis and Katarina Dabic participated on a Democracy Festival in Bjelovar, organized by the Bjelovar Centre for civil society development and the Alliance of Just Societies. They presented GONG briefly, the main programs and projects GONG is involved in and GONG activities in the Parliamentary Elections campaign.
- November 2007 – Vanja Skoric participated in the first public discussion on the subject of the Codex of positive practice of Government and civil society consultation in the preparation and implementation of new legislative acts and other procedures, organized by the Office for cooperation with NGOs and the Council for Civil Society Development.
- November 2007 – Sandra Pernar participated at a round table on which CSOs and students talked with the American NATO Ambassador, Victoria Nuland, organized by the Faculty of Political Science.
- December 2007 – Mihael Rukavina attended a farewell banquet of the OSCE's Regional Office in Sisak. Mihael thanked the workers of the Office for their help and a very good cooperation accomplished by the OSCE Regional Office Sisak and GONG's Regional Office Slavonski Brod during the last several years.
- December 2007 – members of the Regional Office Slavonski Brod attended the awarding ceremony for the 2007 volunteer prize, organized by the Voluntary Centre Osijek.

2. Media Outreach

During 2007 we continued to develop partnership-relations with the media and journalists.

GONG's activities and initiatives had more than 1500 appearances in national and local media – TV and radio stations, newspapers and Internet portals. In addition to that, our video and audio clips on the right to access information (campaign aired in September), minority elections (campaign aired in May) and on Parliamentary Elections (campaign aired in late October and in November) were aired several thousands of times on around 10 national and local TV stations and on 30 national and local radio stations free of charge.

3. Managing the Organization

A. Assembly, Managing and Supervisory boards

11th GONG Annual Assembly was held on 28 September 2007. The Assembly adopted annual reports on the work of the Managing and Supervisory Boards.

The Assembly elected members of the Managing Board: Suzana Jasic as President of the Board and President of the association, Dragan Zelic (Deputy President) and Vanja Skoric. Also, the Assembly elected two new members of the Supervisory Board: Gordan Bosanac and Jagoda Munic while Marijana Grbesa, Bosko Picula and Albina Dlacic entered the second year of their mandate.

On the first, constitutional session of the Supervisory Board, Jagoda Munic was elected President of the Board and Gordan Bosanac Deputy President. Gordan Bosanac also represents the Supervisory Board in GONG's Employment Commission.

The Supervisory board held 7 sessions - 6 regular and the constitutive session.

B. Staff

During 2007 19 full-time employees worked at GONG: 10 in the Head Office and two and three in each of the Regional Offices. Apart from full-time employees, GONG also cooperated with a number of external associates on different projects (trainers, expert group members, etc).

C. Self-education

- At the beginning of September 2006, Damir Azenic was admitted to the College of Europe, Transfuse Association and Robert Bosch Foundation that gathers young professionals from the European Union SEE countries with the aim of additional education about the Union and cooperation in the region. The initial seminar of the program was held in September in Berlin. The second seminar, April 2007, was held in Brussels and it included visits to all Union Institutions.

- Dragan Zelic in February 2007 participated in a study visit on advocacy in Romania by joint organization and financed by USAID, EAD, and World Learning for Croatian NGO representatives. Their hosts were the Romanian Institute of Training and Advocacy Academy which passed on their knowledge and advocacy experiences.

- Sandra Pernar became one of the 25 attendants of the Program of Informing and Education on the EU for CSOs which is being implemented by a partnership of the National Foundation and ECAS. As a part of the contract that she signed with the Foundation she obliged herself to participate in educations and then, by the end of 2008 to hold at least 4 lectures/workshops based on the obtained knowledge. Therefore, during 2007 she participated in seminars in Opatija, Trakoscan, Zagreb, Brussels and Zadar.

- During April 2007 the Head Office staff and the Regional Office Zagreb staff participated in an educational seminar on advanced use of Excel. The training was financed by AED within the CroNGO program.

- During April Vanja Skoric and Dragan Zelic participated in a workshop on monitoring and evaluation of Zagreb activities organized by AED.

- Maja Kocis of the Zagreb Regional office and Vlasta Sanko of the Rijeka Regional office were admitted to a training program for local development in rural areas, organized and implemented by the organization ODRAZ in partnership with Alliance of City Organizations and Organization of Croatian Counties and the Croatian Business Council for Sustainable Development. The attendants participated in 5 blocks of educational seminars from May till October 2007.

- Suzana Jasic, Vanja Skoric and Dragan Zelic participated in June in an educational program "E – voting, E-democracy" in Tallin (Estonia) which was being held by the E-governance Academy

representatives. EAD beard the costs of this education within the Strengthening of Advocacy Capacities of the CSOs project.

- Maja Kocis, in June, participated on a training seminar for long term observers, organized by the OSCE/ODIHR Academy in Bishkek.

- In October, Ariana Vela participated in a training seminar for long term observers, organized by the OSCE/ODIHR Academy in Bishkek.

- In October, Sandra Pernar participated in a training seminar "Governing a project cycle", organized by the MVPEI's Department for Education on European Integration and the Central Office for Development Strategy and Coordination of EU Funds (SDURF) on the request of the Organization for Promoting Education Dolphin.

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 CSO fairs, and monitoring elections.

In 2007:

- 35 volunteers met the conditions for membership
- 4,771 volunteers are in the GONG database
- database recorded 55,798 hours of citizens' volunteer work.

E. Technical Development

In 2007 the consolidation of communication technologies was continued and according to the access capability of the service provider the communication platform is entirely based on one operator. The mentioned service enabled central management and supervision of computer infrastructure from Zagreb but also all the other locations where internet is available.

After nearly two years of using the VPN network in mobile technology, savings of 40% was accomplished on a monthly basis which is 10% more than the expected and foreseen.

The consolidation of management servers continues. New versions of computer software were implemented regularly. A central system in troubleshooting within the ICT system was implemented which enables reporting and governing the problems as well and the escalation of the problem was made easier.

F. Fundraising

During 2007, GONG's financial perspective included several short-term and several longer-term (up to 6 months) projects.

Short-term projects mostly included activities implemented on a local level but also a few projects implemented on a national level such as "I Vote for the First Time" and "European Class" projects. Financial support for these projects was secured form the OSCE Mission to Croatia, the Delegation of The European Commission to the Republic of Croatia, Norwegian Embassy, Ministry of Science, Education and Sports and the Ministry of Family Affairs, War Veterans and Intergenerational Solidarity. Also, for activities relating the Parliamentary Elections funds were raised from several different donors: the Dutch Embassy, Norwegian Embassy and USAID while the costs of printing the educative brochure was financially supported by the Croatian Government. And in the next period GONG will continue with the implementation of short-term projects with the emphasis on seeking financial support from the local governments since most of the foreign donors left Croatia in 2007. An example of financing of this sort in 2007 was the financing of the "Think Globally, Act Locally" project which was, in 2007, completely financed by the City of Rijeka. Projects we implement in a period extending 12 months (advocacy activities, CARDS program funded projects etc.) are financed by the European Commission, the National Foundation for Civil Society Development, MOTT foundation from the USA and the Open Society Institute from Budapest. Two significant projects that are being

implemented through a longer period of time (from 18 to 20 months) are “Promotion of Principles of Good Governance and of increased citizens’ participation in decision making processes in the republic of Croatia” and the “Strengthening Civil Society Organizations and Development of Cross-sectoral Cooperation in the County of Sisak-Moslavina” project. Besides this, GONG’s Regional office Rijeka started with a three year project of civil society development in the Primorje – Gorski Kotar County, Lika-Senj and the Istrian County with the support of the National Foundation for Civil Society Development. The year 2007 is a second year of a three year institutional support to GONG from the National Foundation for Civil Society Development and the second year of a three year support advocacy activities from the Open Society Institute. Institutional support in the amount of 50,000 USD was secured from the MOTT Foundation for 2007 and 2008.

We consider that a major success was accomplished in the diversification of financial funds sources for GONG activities in the last few years. At any given time, GONG had at least 8 different donors supporting different activities, making GONG less dependent on grant-making policy of a single donor. Major challenges for the next period include the absence of most of the foreign donors and reliance on domestic funds and EU funds. Also, turning to different ways of fundraising will present a new challenge.

G. Meetings

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

We had numerous meetings with representatives of Croatian state institutions, MPs, presidents and members of parliamentary committees, the Head of Central State Administrative Office for Public Administration and its representatives, the State Election Commission, USKOK (Office for Prevention of Corruption and Organized Crime) representatives, the Chief State Attorney, the Minister and representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration, the Minister of Justice.

Also, GONG was visited by many international organizations. Among others, GONG representatives have met with the Chief of the OSCE Mission to Croatia and other Croatia and B-H Mission representatives, the director and other USAID representatives, the European Commission representatives, the Dutch Minister of European Affairs and the Dutch Ambassador in the Republic of Croatia, the American Ambassador, Canadian Ambassador and other international and domestic institutions’ representatives.

In the end!

Within the “Good Governance” project in June 2007 the PULS Agency conducted a research for GONG about citizens’ familiarity on GONG’s work especially on the mentioned project and the right to access information.

Results of the research showed that more than three quarters of examinees are familiar with GONG’s work, that the citizens generally have a positive impression of GONG and they assess GONG’s work as positive for Croatian society. A large number of citizens are acquainted with particular GONG activities. The results also showed that the citizens are generally acquainted with the right to access information but very few of them used this right in the last year.

FINANCIAL REPORT - 2007

GONG is an organisation which is fully financed by support and donors (inland and foreign). 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.

Note: average exchange rate is 1 HRK = 0.2 USD.

Balance Sheet (HRK)		Consolidated Statement of Income (HRK)	
Assets		Income	
Long-lasting assets	132,896	Income from State and local budgets	807,245
Fleeting assets	876,538	Income from membership fees	1,081
Total assets	1,009,434	Income earnings	114,080
		Grants and donations	4,230,510
		Total income	5,152,916
Liabilities		Expenditure	
Liabilities	301,437	Material	85,934
Other sources	132,896	Energy	55,754
Fund balance	575,101	Services	2,579,140
Total liabilities	1,009,434	Costs for employees	2,367,242
		Non-material expenses	828,736
		Investment expenditure	45,258
		Other costs	53,752
		Total expenditure	6,015,816
		Income over Expenditure	-862,900
Expenditure by Budget Lines (HRK)			
Personnel expenses		Other costs	
Salaries	1,369,095	Accountant services	46,800
Taxes from salaries	998,147	Office supply	74,495
Honorarium	82,467	Equipment purchase and maintenance	76,134
Total personnel expenses	2,449,709	Rent	85,247
		Utilities	65,995
		Communications	287,703
		Photocopy costs	19,231
		Media public information activities	1,338,143
		Transport services	83,016
		Travel and accommodation costs	643,269
		Refreshment costs	
		- seminars, workshops, roundtables and press conferences	95,426
		Staff development, literature and press	29,561
		Employee fees	46,500
		Student service	183,958
		Transfers to the project partners	395,700
		Bank charges	37,644
		Evaluation & consulting	21,680
		Other costs	35,605
		Total other costs	3,566,107
		Total expenditures	6,015,816

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 2007 (HRK)

up to 4,000 ENCL Budapest Open Society Institute Bosnia and Herzegovina	up to 120,000 The City of Rijeka
up to 10,000 The County of Primorje - Gorski Kotar	up to 160,000 Royal Norwegian Embassy in Zagreb
up to 20,000 Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration Central State Office for Administration UNDP Croatia Human Rights Centre, Zagreb	up to 200,000 Charles Stewart MOTT Foundation, USA Royal Netherlands Embassy in Zagreb
up to 30,000 City of Zagreb APD - Association for Democracy - Bucharest	up to 220,000 AED Croatia - Academy for Educational Development
up to 55,000 Ministry of Family, War Veterans and Intergenerational Solidarity Ministry of Science, Education and Sports NDI - National Democratic Institute, Washington	up to 400,000 National Foundation on Civil Society Development
up to 80,000 CARE International Sarajevo	up to 500,000 Government of the Republic of Croatia
	up to 550,000 Open Society Institute Budapest OSCE Mission to the Republic of Croatia
	up to 900,000 The European Commission

In - kind supporters in 2007 (HRK)

up to 10,000 (rent of premises) Local self-government and institutions Student Council Rijeka Local CSOs	up to 40,000 Iskon Internet d.d.
up to 20,000 Atlantic Group	up to 50,000 Vip net d.o.o.
<p>Special thanks goes to national and local media who supported our campaigns for parliamentary and minority elections and the one on right to access information in 2007.</p> <p>The following media broadcasted at least one video or audio clip free of charge during 2007:</p>	
Gradska televizija Zadar HTV 1 and 2 Kanal RI NET TV NIT TV RI TV RTL Slavonskobrodska televizija Splitska televizija STV - televizija Slavonije i Baranje	Radio Borovo naselje Radio Centar Radio Dalmacija Radio Daruvar Radio Eter Radio Istra Radio Jadranka Radio Koprivnica Radio Moslavina Radio Mreznica

TV Čakovec
TV Dalmacija
TV NOVA Pula
Varazdinska televizija

Hrvatski radio Vukovar
Novi radio Zadar
Radio 101
Radio Banovina

Radio Nova Gradiska
Radio Ogulin
Radio Vallis Aurea
Radio Vinkovci
Radio Virovitica
Radio Zupanja
Slavonski radio
Zupanijski radio Pozega

A lot of media also broadcasted our clips with substantial discounts.

In 2007, **HINA** continued to support our work by providing us free of charge use of its News services.