



GONG ANNUAL REPORT

2009

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THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM

The Electoral system programme includes GONG's election related activities aiming to contribute to the achievement of higher democratic standards of electoral system, and enabling higher transparency and political participation of all informed stakeholders.

1. Monitoring of the elections

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

During 2009, GONG successfully cooperated with the bodies in charge of organizing elections in the Republic of Croatia.

▪ **Local elections 2009.**

During the local elections in 2009, GONG monitored the entire election procedure with the emphasis on the following:

- **the work of the institutions in charge of the electoral process** (State Election Commission, Central State Administration Office (CSAO) – which later became the Ministry of Public Administration (MPA), Agency for Electronic Media),
- **financing of election campaigns** (the use of rules, respect of democratic standards),
- **upholding the Constitutional law on the rights of national minorities** (representation of minorities in local and regional authorities),
- the Election Day(s).

GONG regularly informed and educated the general public about the electoral process through its website www.gong.hr and through media by publishing information, reports, etc. With this purpose, GONG made several guides which it published on its website: **the Voters' guide, Guide through local and regional self-government, Guide for local elections' candidates, Guides through campaign financing, and Guides for partisan and non-partisan observers.**

The first round of local elections was observed by **700 GONG observers**, out of which 92 were a part of **46 mobile teams**, who monitored the elections on over 1000 voting stations, while the second round was observed by **200 GONG observers**, out of which 80 of them were in **40 mobile teams**, who monitored 540 voting stations.

The pre-election period was marked with numerous dilemmas regarding the implementation of the new Electoral Law, lack of clear rules in relation to promotion of political parties, lists and candidates coverage in the media, as well as financing of election campaigns. Upon recognizing this issue, GONG organized a **round table** with the aim of discussing some of the aforementioned issues, and on which more details will be presented in the continuation of this report.¹

The final GONG report on the local elections was published on www.gong.hr, and some of the most relevant findings and evaluations from the report are listed below.

GONG marked down the issue of the citizens (voters) fictitiously registered in the areas bordering with Bosnia and Herzegovina, and whose actual place of residence is in Bosnia and Herzegovina. What was also noticed was that the transparency of election campaign financing remained low, and that there was a considerable increase in the misuse of local resources in the pre-election campaign, whereas it is not known whether someone was sanctioned for this type of misuse of local resources which is forbidden by Law.

¹ In the part relating to initiatives taken for amendment and improvement of electoral legislation, point 4.

The Election Days in both rounds of the election were conducted mostly in a democratic atmosphere which enabled the voters to exercise their voting rights. However, the freedom of choice, the confidentiality of voting procedure, and the dignity of voters were seriously infringed in a number of areas by supporters of certain parties and candidates and by certain election committees as well, and GONG continually reported on this through daily announcements on the Election Days, and in the final report on the elections. The events that took place during Election Days, which are described in details in GONG's communication, clearly demonstrate the violation of human and civil rights in certain areas. What was also of concern, were the cases of breaking the law and violating certain procedures, as well as infringement of basic democratic principles of voting confidentiality and freedom of choice by deterrence and blackmails. In that sense, the implementation of elections followed by such cases of law breaking at these local elections demonstrate that there was no progress made whatsoever in relation to the 2005 local elections.

Individual cases of violence, and reports on vote buying (by offering money, photographing voting ballot paper); give way for serious doubts that there were areas in which the fight for power implied illegal behaviour and various offences. Furthermore, there were numerous reports on breaking the 'campaign silence' rule by large number of parties and independent candidates.

After the elections, the local units needed to comply their statutes with regulations on the representation of national minorities, which, by fault, were not harmonized on time, that is, before the elections, and it is not certain whether the composition of all the councils and assemblies is in accordance with the Constitutional Law on the rights of national minorities which is to be supervised by the MPA. GONG asked the MPA on several occasions for information on municipalities, towns and counties which did not harmonize their statutes, and received the response from the MPA that the statutes are in the process of harmonization, and that some units received a special warning to harmonize their statutes. GONG is continuing to monitor the harmonization of the statutes.

▪ **The 2009 Presidential elections**

During the presidential elections of 2009, GONG monitored the entire election procedure with the emphasis on:

- **the work of the institutions in charge of the electoral process** (State Election Commission, The Ministry of Public Administration, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration, Diplomatic and Consular representations in the Republic of Croatia, Agency for Electronic Media),
- **the financing of election campaigns** (the use of rules, respect for democratic standards and monitoring costs of advertising)
- **monitoring of media campaign with the aim of analyzing the content of messages and campaigns of presidential candidates through the "Ad Watch" project** (in cooperation with the students of Faculty of Political Science, Political Marketing Department).

GONG informed and educated regularly the general public on the electoral process through its website www.gong.hr and the media, by regularly publishing information and reports. With that purpose, several guides were made and placed on the website: **Guide through the presidential elections, Guide through the lists of voters and voting outside the place of residence, Guide for candidates, Guide through campaign financing, and Manuals for partisan and non-partisan observers.**

Furthermore, with the purpose of having better monitoring of electoral process, GONG offered free education on monitoring of the elections to all presidential candidates' election teams to which only Nadan Vidošević election team has responded.

The presidential elections in the entire Republic of Croatia were monitored by **55 mobile teams** on the sample of 10% of polling stations selected by a statistical method, **11 mobile teams in Bosnia and Herzegovina** and observers in **Germany** (only in the second round), **USA and Switzerland**. GONG received reports from 758 voting stations in the first, and from 710 in the second election round.

GONG's estimate is that the elections were organized and conducted according to the Law. A progress was noted in the work of most of the institutions in charge of the electoral process, except the Ministry of Public Administration which made a step backwards with its activities. The electoral process was not entirely transparent due to defects in the regulation of the election campaign

financing, and the inadequacy of election regulations was observed in relation to the media behaviour and behaviour of candidates during the election campaign.

The pre-election period was marked with various issues regarding the implementation of elections which have been mostly repeating from previous years – the issue of updated voters' list abroad, the applying of regulations regarding the financing of campaigns, the obligations of the media. On several occasions, GONG representatives publicly stressed out the need for implementing and improving the regulations (technical implementation of elections, updating the list of voters, financing campaigns, media obligations, informing and educating the voters, harmonization of other related laws) with the aim of improving the transparency and legitimacy. In this sense we also emphasized that the interest of participants only or predominantly during the election time, results in having the same topics and issues repeated with every elections. In recognition of this problem, GONG organized a **round table** which discussed some of the aforementioned issues, and of which more details will be in the continuation of this report.²

However, the overall estimate by GONG is that the elections were for their most part conducted in a democratic atmosphere which enabled the voters to exercise their voting rights, and the participants in the elections were largely informed about their rights and obligations. The election campaign was focused on various topics not directly related to the powers of the President of the Republic of Croatia, however, and due to poorly managed media campaign, as well as the fact that the regulatory bodies do not dispose of concrete tools to sanction candidates, the campaign, at times, surpassed the limits of good taste. The regularity of campaign financing was, at moments, difficult to monitor, of which we will give more details in the continuation of the report.³

During the electoral process, and right before it started, GONG had a couple of meetings with the representatives of the OESC/ODIHR Mission who, also, monitored the election in Croatia, but on a limited scale, and some of the objections GONG had regarding the implementation of elections, were also entered into OESC/ODIHR reports.

The final GONG report on presidential elections was published on www.gong.hr.

▪ **Elections abroad**

- **Bulgaria:** Dragan Zelić participated in an OESC/ODIHR mission as a long-term observer at the parliamentary elections in Bulgaria held in July 2009.

- **Albania:** in July 2009, Maja Kočiš participated in an OESC/ODIHR mission of monitoring parliamentary elections in Albania as a short-term observer.

- **Kosovo:** in October 2009, ENEMO mission started an observation mission for the local elections in Kosovo. 8 of GONG's observers were sent to that mission as first and second round observers.

- **Ukraine:** GONG member Mihael Rukavina and Joško Belotti participated in the ENEMO mission for observing presidential elections of 2010 in Ukraine as long-term observers from December 2009.

- **Lebanon:** Dragan Zelić participated in the NDI mission as a short-term observer at the parliamentary elections in Lebanon in June 2009.

- **FYR of Macedonia:** Vesna Kesić and Anton Finderle participated in March and April in the OESC/ODIHR mission of observing presidential elections as short-term observers.

Other:

- ❖ September – Mihael Rukavina participated at the training for observers held in Bucharest (Romania), and organized by NEEDS.

² In the part relating to initiatives taken for amendment and improvement of electoral legislation, point 5.

³ In the part relating to initiatives taken for amendment and improvement of electoral legislation, point 3.

- ❖ November – Petar Ležaja participated at the training for observers held in Belarus, and organized by OESC/ODIHR.

2. Initiatives for amendments and improvement of electoral legislation

GONG makes comparative analysis of electoral legislation, encourages public debates and actively advocates amendments and improvements of electoral legislation of the Republic of Croatia, with the aim of achieving Western European standards. In the reporting period, we engaged in the following activities:

1. Cooperation with the State Election Commission (SEC)

During local and presidential elections in 2009, GONG actively monitored the work of SEC. In the pre-election period, GONG encouraged public debates regarding issues which occurred at the local elections, and in cooperation with the Faculty of Law organized various **round tables**⁴; in cooperation with the Faculty of Political Science, GONG organized a **round table** regarding presidential elections⁵, which was attended by the representatives of SEC; GONG attended SEC's sessions and gained even further insight into the work of SEC; it also sent a series of questions in writing to SEC asking for clarification of organization and implementation of elections. The cooperation of GONG with the electoral bodies at all levels was generally good, with some unpleasant exceptions and lack of understanding demonstrated by certain electoral bodies.

After the first and second round of **local elections**, GONG made a survey of election materials on a small sample and the structure of invalid and valid voting ballot papers, and found **that the members of voting committees were not properly educated for this task**. Namely, GONG determined that part of the ballot papers which were dismissed as invalid, should have been taken as valid, according to the position of the Constitutional Court (Decision on electoral disputes from 2009). Since there were no noticed regularities with the claiming the ballot paper to be invalid for any particular party or candidate, it proves to show that this is not the case of deliberate attempt of influencing the election result, but the fact that the **voting committees were not educated enough and as such demonstrated a level of insecurity in performing their duties. A high percentage of invalid ballot papers in certain counties in comparison to the 2005 local elections for representative bodies** was also noticed, which can be interpreted as an example of poorly educated voters and voting committees, but can also demonstrate negative attitude of voters towards candidates and politics in general. GONG notified the general public about all other findings through a press conference and its website, and through the reports on the implementation of local elections.

One of the more significant issues present during **presidential elections** was voting outside the place of residence in the second round of the elections. SEC made several official requests to the Ministry of Public Administration to enable the casting of votes for voters who will be outside their place of residence in the second round of the elections, and who did not register for the voting outside their place of residence until 12 December 2009. This initiative undertaken by SEC was in line with the GONG's requests directed at the MPA regarding this particular issue.

GONG emphasized in all of its public appearances the fact that a more **comprehensive campaign for informing and educating voters on the upcoming elections failed to be organized** by SEC, **for both local and presidential elections**, which was also pointed out by the OESC limited election observation mission.

Organizations CESI, GONG and Croatian Youth Network sent a joint request to SEC, after **local elections**, requesting the availability of data which will, in the future, make it possible to monitor the implementation of the Gender Equality Act (according to which political parties are obliged to have 40% of women representation on their lists of candidates) and measures of the National Youth Programme whereas one of the measures includes the encouragement of participation of young people in politics.

⁴More on this part in the continuation of the report, under item 4.

⁵ More on this part in the continuation of the report 5.

Furthermore, in order to avoid any vagueness on the election day, and with the aim of having a complete and trustworthy reporting on the results of the **presidential elections**, GONG asked SEC to make a public notice and warn the media to adequately report on the exit polls, i.e. to ask the media to educate the viewers on the exit polls coverage, which SEC did.

Having in mind the working conditions, the overall workload and legal framework within which many issues were not regulated, it is an overall evaluation of GONG that SEC organized and conducted local, especially presidential elections in a proper and transparent manner by setting higher election standards. However, there are still numerous challenges ahead of SEC in the upcoming period in which SEC is expected to become more engaged and established as an independent and professional electoral body which initiates and conducts electoral reform and raises the level of education, trust and participation of citizens in the electoral process. A more proactive approach is expected from SEC even in the period without elections.

In 2009, GONG continued to monitor the work of SEC with the aim of creating a **shadow report on the work of SEC**.

2. Voters' lists

During the reporting period, GONG monitored the issues regarding voters' lists during the entire local and presidential elections of 2009.

One of such issues was the problem of **fictitious residence**. After the GONG's initiative towards the Ministry of Interior (hereinafter: MoI) regarding this issue, the Central State Administrative Office for Public Administration requested from all of the state administration offices in the counties (for which MoI established to have authority) to, upon receiving the official cancellation of residence from the police, delete such persons from the voters' register, and to stress out the necessity to have all the police registrations of residence processed in the same day, and, if necessary, to engage in overtime work for the purpose of preventing inaccuracies in the voters' lists.

For presidential elections, GONG publicly requested from MPA **to enable the issuance of confirmations** between the two election rounds **for voters to be able to vote outside their place of residence in the second round of election**; however, MPA refused to do so, although it was clear from the explanation given that the valid provisions of the Voters' Lists Act were the same ones applied for the 2000 and 2005 elections, and that all that was missing was some good will on behalf of the MPA to make this possible.

GONG additionally sent **a couple of queries regarding management of voters' list and data on voting outside the place of residence**, and questioned the work of MPA in other ways as well (e.g., by sending a query regarding provision of IT services for managing the voters' lists).

During the reporting period, GONG had a significant media coverage regarding voters' lists in all daily papers, and on national television stations and Internet portals.

3. Financing of election campaigns and political parties

GONG continued with its activities of advocating improvement of the Act on Financing Political Parties, Independent Lists and Candidates through monitoring transparency of election campaign financing in local and presidential elections of 2009, and through the analysis of annual financial reports of political parties for 2008.

Local elections

In relation to the last elections for members of representative bodies in 2005, the local elections of 2009 **showed no significant improvement in the regulation of the financing of election campaigns** which is why the elections remained equally non-transparent.

GONG publicly warned about the problem of **misuse of public resources** in campaigns, and regarding cases in which **confidential personal data** of citizens were used for the purpose of campaigning.

With very weak and **deficient legal framework** it was nearly impossible to monitor the financing of election campaigns mostly because the candidates financed their campaigns from the funds of political parties, various donations on state and local level made through third persons, through forming coalitions with other candidates, etc. For that reason, in April 2009, Transparency International Croatia and GONG invited political parties, lists and candidates in local elections to:

1. by the beginning of official campaign, i.e. till April 30, announce the amounts they intend to spend in their campaigns;
2. to, at least 7 days before the start of the elections, i.e. till May 10, announce and deliver to the competent election committee preliminary reports on the amount and sources of funds intended for the campaign, as well as the names of their donors;
3. to, at least 14 days after the announcement of official election results, announce and deliver to the competent election committee final reports on the amount and sources of funds intended for the campaign as well as the amount and structure of costs in the campaign.

With the inadequate legal framework in place, most of political parties and candidates decided not to respect the good democratic practice and thus did not announce **preliminary financial reports**. After the elections, GONG requested from the election committees of the town of Zagreb, Rijeka, Osijek and Split copies of preliminary financial reports and information on candidates who did not submit their reports. Only the election committee from Osijek delivered the copies of reports, while other election committees passed on the information that, according to the law, they are not obliged to publish preliminary financial reports. The opinion from SEC was requested regarding this issue, and SEC confirmed that election committees are not obliged to publish preliminary financial reports, but that there is also no legal obstacle for the reports to be published before the elections, and to, upon receiving a written request to do so, such reports should be delivered to the interested party. Election committees were supposed to publish those final reports on campaign financing, but such **reports from 556 municipalities and towns, and 21 counties are nowhere to be found** which makes it difficult to make subsequent analysis, to which GONG pointed out publicly on several occasions.

With regards to the above-mentioned, GONG concluded in its election report that the legal framework and local election practice **did not fulfil the minimum standards of transparency** in the election campaign financing nor did it respect the standards of political responsibility towards citizens (voters and tax payers) and that the public did not receive any answers as to who financed which option and with what amount. This fact is extremely important since, without the transparent financing of pre-election campaigns, there is no transparent electoral process or fight against political corruption.

Presidential elections of 2009

On 19 November 2009, GONG and Transparency International Croatia (TIC) invited all the candidates to, in accordance with the law:

1. publicly announce a.s.a.p. the amounts they intend to spend in their campaigns;
2. at least 7 days before the first round of elections i.e. till 20 December, publicly announce and deliver to SEC preliminary reports on the amount and sources of funding collected for costs of election promotion, as well as the names of their donors;
3. at least 15 days after the first round of elections, i.e. 10 January 2010, publicly declare and deliver to SEC the data on the amount and sources of funds spent for election promotion as well as the amount and structure of costs in the campaign.

The media, and especially national televisions, radios and news agencies were invited to publish the costs of their advertising services with the aim of contributing to the transparency of elections as well as amounts of total costs paid for the election promotion for each candidate, thus fulfilling their corrective role.

All candidates delivered to SEC their preliminary reports on the amount and sources of funding for election campaign.

Even with the extremely quality legal framework, it is still very **difficult to monitor the transparency of financing of election campaigns**, and it is especially difficult when, as is case in Croatia, a legal framework is insufficient and deficient. The existing legal regulations did not make it possible for any monitoring of financial reports, especially considering the interpretation of responsible institutions⁶,

⁶ Although the Act on Financing Political Parties, Independent Lists and Candidates was passed (Official Gazette, no. 01/07), GONG received opinions from the State Audit Office and MPA which pointed to the fact that the aforementioned law does not apply to independent candidates in presidential elections due to the Act on Financing the Election Campaign for the Election of the President of the Republic of Croatia (Official Gazette, no. 105/04) which is still in force. The Act on Financing the Election

thus the candidates could state amounts of income and expenditure knowing that none of the responsible institutions will look into those statements. This situation stands in complete opposition with the publicly proclaimed fight against corruption made by all of the political parties and candidates, which points to discrepancy between the words and actions of Croatian political elite, which GONG also emphasized in its report on presidential elections.

GONG and TIC tried to follow the values of advertising on various TV programmes and press, without calculating other costs such as:

- Advertising abroad, advertising on national and local radio stations, local TV stations, advertising in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Internet advertising,
- Office costs (lease, overheads, telephone, postage),
- Design costs, preparation, print and procurement of promotional materials,
- Organization of assemblies (the lease of the stage, acoustics, place, performers),
- Travel expenses and accommodation,
- Work contracts, employment contracts, service contracts and student contracts,
- Costs of volunteer.

The amount of advertising was monitored since the beginning of official election campaign, on 19 November 2009, and till 10 January 2010, through the MEDIApuls Agency which recorded the amount and duration of **videos on 4 national TV stations. Ads in all daily newspaper (13) were also monitored, as well as weeklies, fortnightlies, and monthlies (49)**. It is necessary to emphasize that these are gross values of rented advertising space monitored, i.e. **additional commercial discounts** to quantity and advance payment **were not included in this**. Furthermore, in the calculation of advertising values, **the donation of advertising spaces made by companies or other subjects was not included**. Such advertisement and discounts were free to be listed as a donation and were listed in the reports. **VAT costs, if there were any**, were not included in the estimate of advertising values. Several days before the elections, on 23 December, a media conference was held on which GONG and TIC presented the agency's calculation of advertising values in the pre-election campaign **up to 20 December**⁷.

GONG, together with TIC, reacted to **admission of anonymous donations through auditex machines and sms**⁸. **It was pointed out that anonymous donations, even those received via telephone and SMS, are illegal**. SEC's response to this issue was welcomed since it pointed out to the fact that the anonymous donations are prohibited by law and are set as a standard in Croatian electoral legislation, although it is not specifically regulated for presidential elections. They also warned about the **prohibition of using offices, official vehicles and office equipment of state bodies, municipalities, towns and counties for the needs of election campaign** and that all possible misuse of official telephones and office equipment in the institutions responsible for handling telephone and sms donations to individual presidential candidates, should be checked and, if required, sanctioned.

Annual financial reports of political parties

During the reporting year, **GONG monitored the publishing of annual financial reports of political parties**, and after the Croatian Parliament publicly announced the results on the performed audit of annual reports, GONG made a **short analysis of most commonly found infringements in business handlings of political parties**, and of **infringements made according to the Act on Financing Political Parties, Independent Lists and Candidates**.

GONG Council made an announcement in which they pointed out that with the initial inspection of the findings of State Audit, there were again a series of irregularities and infractions found which, as in 2008, impose the question of determining responsibility and initiating infringement proceedings against those who violated those regulations. This, in turn, would lead to further increase in transparency and would thus enable differentiation of minor breaches from irresponsible business management. Taking into consideration that the competent institutions did not follow the rule of Law in the last year, the GONG Council requested for the competent institutions to take a more serious approach to their work and ensure that all citizens are treated equally by law. However, it is not known whether these

Campaign for the Election of the President of the Republic of Croatia consists of 7 articles and is completely cosmetic in nature, and besides having numerous drawbacks, it does not make provisions for any type of sanctions.

⁷ For more details, please visit na <http://www.gong.hr/news.aspx?newsID=3111&pageID=191>

⁸ <http://www.gong.hr/news.aspx?newsID=2901&pageID=191>

institutions engaged in any type of activity in order to sanction possible irregularities in the work of political parties.

During the reporting period, GONG received significant media coverage regarding political parties financing and election campaign financing in all daily press, as well as on all leading television stations and portals.

4. Round-tables concerning local elections

With Croatia introducing a direct electoral system for municipal prefects, mayors and county-prefects, and the new system of local and regional self-government, several months before the elections, the jurisdiction of the representative and executive bodies was still not clearly defined.

This is why, GONG in cooperation with the Faculty of Law of the University of Zagreb organized a round table in order to discuss local elections and problems in the functioning of municipalities, towns and counties after the elections; and an appeal was sent for making changes in the regulations with the aim of improving legal framework and avoiding possible blockage in functioning of local and regional self-government.

The following responded to the round table discussion: Vladimir Šeks, Vice-President of the Croatian Parliament; Antun Palarić, State Secretary at the SDUU; Josip Kregar, Dean of the Faculty of Law, and representatives of institutions of legal, executive and local government, as well as institutions and associations dealing with the electoral process, and professionals who have been dealing with the issues of electoral process and local self-government for many years.

A month after a round table was held, the Parliament adopted and improved the legal framework for functioning of local and regional self-government.

In October 2009, GONG cooperated with the Faculty of Law again and organized a similar round table with the purpose of presenting analysis of local election implementation, problems of cohabitation and responsibilities of chiefs in municipalities, towns and counties, repeating the appeal for changing the regulations in order to improve the legal framework and avoid possible blockage in functioning of local and regional self-government.

5. Round-tables concerning presidential elections

In November 2009, GONG, in cooperation with the Faculty of Political Science in Zagreb, organized a round-table on the occasion of upcoming presidential elections of 2009/2010.

The challenges of implementing presidential elections from the aspect of voters' lists, pre-election campaigns, the role of the media and election campaign financing, were presented at the assembly. Representatives of SEC, MPA, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration, State Audit Office, Croatian national Television, and representatives of other institutions and associations dealing with the electoral process, and professionals who have been dealing with the subject for many years, were all present at the round table.

The public and the media all had a chance to go into more details and familiarize themselves with the presidential elections, while the representatives of the institutions answered numerous questions asked by the representatives of academic community, professional associations, media and students...

The round table on the subject of presidential elections will be again organized at the end of all election activities in 2010, in order for GONG to present its report to the general public, and to report on the implementation of presidential elections and give additional recommendation for the improvement of the electoral process.

4. I Vote for the First Time – Educating high school students

The "I vote for the first time" project, was initiated in 2001, with the aim of encouraging young people to become more active in regards to participation in political life. Having in mind that high school seniors acquire their right to vote when they turn 18, it was GONG's intention to familiarize and inform those

youngest voters about their rights and about the importance of involvement and participation of citizens in democratic processes.

In 2008, we marked **the eight season of the project**, which in 2006 received an award from the Council of Europe, and continued holding workshops until February 2009. During the eight season, 13 educated trainers/lecturers from GONG held 432 workshops with over 10 000 students attending them. Besides the information given to the students during workshops, the students were also given educational leaflets covering elections, voting rights, and advocacy.

! After eight seasons of project implementation, a total of 160 000 high school seniors participated in 5 736 workshops. 288 schools got involved in the project during those eight years, which makes about 80% of total number of high-schools in the Republic of Croatia. With this, GONG concluded the implementation of the "I vote for the first time" project which is why no funds will be requested in the future for the implementation of this project. The above given numbers say a lot about the success and the reach this project achieved, and it is rightly considered one of the most successful of the GONG's projects. We feel that we have contributed permanently through this project to the education and motivation of eight generation of Croatian citizens to get more actively involved in political processes.

5. Other activities

- ❖ Vanja Škorić participated in January at the **Consultation on local self-government and local elections**, organized by the Association of Municipalities.
- ❖ Dragan Zelić participated in February in a round-table discussion "**Local self-government and direct elections – media coverage of election campaigns**", organized by the Croatian National Television.
- ❖ Sandra Pernar participated in February in a round-table discussion "**Women at the local elections of 2009**", organized by the Gender Equality Committee of the Croatian Parliament.
- ❖ Dragan Zelić participated in April and November in Zadar at the **education of journalists from local media** where he held a presentation on the topic of local and presidential elections and the problems GONG encountered during the elections. Education was organized by ProEduca, University of Zadar, HURIN and Konrad Adenauer Foundation.

GOOD GOVERNANCE

The Good governance programme includes GONG's activities which aim at achieving high standards in institutional management and of decision-makers in policy that should be characterized by honesty, responsibility and openness towards the public.

1. Freedom of information Act

The availability of information owned by public authorities is one of the fundamental citizens' rights, and the principle of openness is one of the fundamental principles of democratic government.

For the fourth time GONG conducted **annual research of the implementation of the Freedom of Information Act**, in the period between January and September 2009. The research showed the following results: 39 percent of requests sent to the public authorities by citizens-volunteers were answered to in line with the procedure (69 out of 177 requests), and **over 60 percent of requests were not answered in line with the Act**. By comparing the data from the same research in 2008, it is noticeable that there has been a decrease in the number of requests answered in accordance with the legal deadline – in 2008, 49.4 percent of requests were answered in line with the procedure. The challenges of implementation of the law remain similar as in previous years – public authorities are still trying to find out who submitted the request and they try reaching them on their phones or mobiles (7 cases), some public authorities charge for copies of the documents considerably higher than is the

market (real) copying price, some simply ignore the citizens' demands. The report had been published and presented at the press conference held in front of the Republic of Croatia's Government building.

Some of the cases within the research conducted during 2009 GONG selected as case studies, and decided to use all of the available legal mechanisms in order to **test the possibilities of exercising the right of access to information in the Republic of Croatia**. For two of such cases disputes are now pending.⁹

In 2009, Transparency International Croatia and GONG repeated the **"We have the right to know!" action, thus marking the Day of the Freedom of Information Act in September and October**. Within this action, GONG and TIC conducted a month-long **media campaign** through TV videos and press conferences held in Croatian towns, through materials and brochures being distributed at the stands and through local media coverage. The aim of the action and campaign was to clarify how citizens can use this Act to make their lives better, and also to help the interested public authorities how to implement the Act more efficiently. **Brochures and t-shirts** were printed for the purpose of implementing this action.

GONG conducted and published a short **comparison of Croatian Freedom of Information Act and the Convention of the Council of Europe on the Right of Access to Official Documents** which came into force during 2009 (Croatia still hasn't ratified the Convention), demonstrating the differences between the achieved international standards and Croatian law. More precisely, the Croatian law lacks the test of public interest and proportionality test, clear provisions on what amounts can be charged for the purpose of exercising the right of access information, and a quick and efficient appeal procedure.

GONG representatives participated at the **professional consultation for "The Freedom of Information and Protection of Personal Data in Units of Local and Regional Self-government"**, organized by the Academy for Local Democracy in Zadar and Pula in 2009 for representatives of units of local and regional self-government, where they presented the results of research of the implementation of the right of access information and recommendation for the improvement of the implementation and amendment of the Freedom of Information Act. Furthermore, the representatives of GONG gave a presentation at the **professional consultation of the Croatian Journalists' Association** in 2009, within the project The Right of Journalists to Information.

In March of 2009, **GONG analyzed the official Government Report on the implementation of the Freedom of Information Act for 2008**, and found numerous illogicalities and disparities with own report on the implementation of the same Act, for the same year. For example, the official report did not contain various cases of rejected requests for access to information for which GONG possessed the original documentation. Additionally, out of more than 4000 public authorities, who are on the official listing of public authorities, only 748 delivered their data to the Government for the requirements of official report. For this reason, **GONG presented its analysis to the general public and discussed the methodology and the content of the official report**. The Members of Croatian Parliament used the analysis made by GONG as arguments for presentations during the discussion about the official report.

During the entire reporting period, GONG had media coverage on various occasions in relation to the issues regarding the right of access to information, and responded to numerous questions posed by journalists, citizens and various organizations.

In November 2009, GONG started with the preparations for the continuation of the next round of research of the implementation of the Act for 2010.

2. Other initiatives for transparency in the work of public authorities

The activities of state institutions have to be public and serve the citizens, since the citizens are the ones who create the need for existence of the institutions in question, and finance them through the tax system. Having in mind that the state institutions would not have even existed if it wasn't for the citizens, GONG is engaging in various advocacy initiatives which aim to make publicity and transparency a rule in the Republic of Croatia.

⁹ For more details, please read the report on the implementation of the research in 2009, published on www.gong.hr.

1. Transparency of work of the Croatian Parliament and Government

Within its sphere of actions, GONG continued to monitor the transparency of work of public authorities, especially of the Croatian Parliament and Government.

GONG continued to monitor the implementation of the Rules on Public Access to Proceedings in the Croatian Parliament and its Working Bodies.

Since the beginning of the current Government's mandate, GONG monitored the transparency of its work with the aim of informing the public on Government's method of work and transparency in making decisions, with the emphasis on publishing daily agendas in due time, and materials from open and closed Government's sessions, as well as the availability and duly announcement of other decisions. With this purpose, **GONG monitored open, closed, and telephone sessions of the Government of the Republic of Croatia.**

Government's websites were regularly checked for public announcements, news, laws, and on several occasions the Government was requested to present certain decisions from previous session as well as to provide clarifications regarding the publishing of certain documents on their website. **In March of 2009, GONG published the report on the transparency of work of the Croatian government for 2008.** The report clearly indicated that the government continued to violate the principles of good governance, transparency and responsibilities towards the citizens by holding numerous closed sessions, by not publishing the decisions regarding distribution of funds from the state budget reserves, and by not making public the content of its decisions in its announcements from closed sessions. **The government also refused to publish daily agendas of closed sessions, at the request of GONG,** by classifying them as „very secret“.

2. The Act on the Prevention of Conflict of Interest in Performing Public Duties

The Act on the Prevention of Conflict of Interest in Performing Public Duties is one of the fundamental tools for fighting the corruption. GONG continued to monitor the implementation of the act in question by following sessions and work of bodies in charge of its implementation: the Committee for Preventing Conflict of Interest and the National Committee for monitoring the implementation of the National Anti-Corruption Programme.

In June 2009, **GONG publicly supported** the amendments of an independent representative, Mr Lesar in regards to accepting a proven conflict of interest as a reason for the termination of a mandate of elected representative of national and regional/local government.

Furthermore, **GONG composed and published a short guide for citizens on the most important issues of the conflict of interest** which can be found on GONG's website.

3. The Act on Golf Courses

The activists of Green Action, GONG, and TIC continued in their joint efforts **to warn of the damaging effect of the Act on Golf Courses which was passed in 2009.** The NGOs jointly wrote and referred the proposal for initiating the procedure for examining the constitutionality of the **abovementioned law in January 2009,** clarifying the ways in which the Constitution has been breached by passing such law.

GONG's representative, Suzana Jašić participated in March in a round-table discussion on the Act on the Golf Courses, organized by the Green Action.

4. Changes in the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia

In the fall of 2009, a negotiating process began within the Croatian government and Parliament, and political parties in the Parliament regarding constitutional changes. However, the process of public debate on the constitutional changes never occurred. This is why, GONG in cooperation with some other NGOs, organized a public debate on constitutional changes and proposed amendments to the Constitution. **The NGOs which participated in the discussion jointly proposed a set of amendments and presented them to the public, thus initiating a series of meetings and a lobbying process for the insertion of those amendments in the official proposals for amendments made by political parties.**

3. Project LOTUS

In 2009, i.e. from the beginning of December 2008 and till the end of November 2009, **GONG, in cooperation with the Association of Cities**, and within the EU funded Phare 2006 Programme, implemented the project **LOTUS (Local Responsible and Transparent Government and Self-government)** with the aim of determining the **level of transparency** of public authorities in Croatia.

A research was conducted within the project through which the procedures and practices of good governance of all 556 local units (towns and municipalities) were analyzed in areas of transparency, cooperation with CSOs and local self-government functioning. The project was implemented by a team of 13 people, out of which 6 collected necessary data from towns and municipalities for making the analysis. The data were being collected from February till the end of April.

The preliminary research results were presented to the public during a press-conference held before the local elections, which were held in May, and subsequently attracted significant media attention. The final results were presented in October at an annual assembly of the Association of Towns, when the awards were given for the best, i.e. **the most transparent towns and municipalities: awarded were the town of Rijeka, Opatija, Kutina, Osijek, Karlovac, Čakovac, Crikvenica and municipality Viškovo** (these are listed according to the results achieved, from the highest to the lowest). These 8 units achieved 75% or more of the total score within the research and as such are examples of good practice among the units of local self-government in Croatia.

The report on the conducted research, which includes recommendations to competent bodies, is available on GONG's website - <http://www.gong.hr/page.aspx?PageID=185>, as is the **electronic database** in which you can find more detailed information for a particular town/municipality, and compare the results for up to four towns/municipalities - <http://www.gong.hr/survey/default.aspx>.

A **Manual for responsible and transparent local government** was also created within the project, and is available on GONG's website. This manual is intended for local units, especially those who achieved lower results in the research, to do better in the future, and thus contribute even more to the development of democracy and civic participation on a local level.

The LOTUS project had already contributed significantly to the development of democracy and civic participations, as well as to the strengthening of civil society in Croatia, which was the general goal of the project, since the publishing of the research in certain local units resulted in various positive changes made during the project's implementation period, which, in turn enabled an increased civic participation and inclusion in the decision-making process, and political processes in general on a local level, of which some towns and municipalities reported through a memo sent to GONG in the period between the announcement of preliminary results and final results of the research, which consequently caused the improvement of the final results for certain local units.

It is noticeable from the media coverage that the project was accepted with appreciation by the independent opinion-makers and academic community, and the results of the research were used by other civil society organizations (e.g. B.a.B.e.) for the implementation of their projects.

By taking all of the above into consideration, it is our wish to continue with the implementation of the project in regular time intervals of two years, in order to be able to follow the trends and improvements in the work of local government, and subsequently award those best among them as an example of good practice to others. This is why, GONG, again in partnership with the Association of Towns, already applied for the funds which would enable the implementation of this project in 2011, and considering the success of this project, we are considering the implementation of a similar project on a national level.

4. European class – high-school students' education

During the implementation 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. Similar proposals were coming from the students who participated in the

“I vote for the first time” workshops; for they were not satisfied with the quantity and quality of information they were receiving about the EU, and which was coming primarily from the media.

Being aware of the complexity of the EU issues, the effects of Croatia’s pending membership in the EU and the existing curriculum which covers this subject only partially, we developed a workshop in cooperation with the Information Office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration. The workshop was 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 of this workshop and its aim is to **stimulate young people to objectively think about the EU and to reduce negative opinions on the Union as a result of lack of information on the effects of Croatia’s upcoming membership in the EU**. The project started in 2006.

Beginning of the year, we started with our third season of the project which ended in December. In 2009, we held **282 workshops** “European class” in **57 high-schools** throughout the Republic of Croatia. **Around 7 000 high-school senior students** participated in workshops.

At the end of the year, GONG secured the funds for the continuation of the project implementation in 2010 through IPA EU INFO programme, with the additional activities planned for the new season, such as: conducting a research on students’ knowledge and interest for subjects regarding the EU, and educational trainings about the EU for high-school teachers.

*! After three seasons of project implementation throughout the Republic of Croatia, **30 900 senior students** participated in **1 192 workshops**. Out of 350 high-schools existing in Croatia, 160 high-schools and grammar schools got involved in the project during those three seasons.*

5. 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 a local level and to change the negative attitude youth usually has 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 at the end of 2006. In 2007 the project was implemented again in The Town of Rijeka, at which time The Town fully financed the project and cooperation was agreed for years to come as well.

The Action Day, which is a central event within the “I think globally, and act locally!” project, **was held for the fourth time in the Town of Rijeka on 5 November 2009**. During the Action Day, around **90 high-school students from Rijeka**, working in 10 small groups, developed local projects **on the subject of “The Identity of Youth”**. With the help of group coordinators and GONG volunteers, the students had the first half of the day to think about different ideas, and develop those project ideas into project proposals. In the second half of the day, the students prepared themselves for the presentation of their projects, and for the selection of the best project at the assembly of the *ad hoc* created town’s Youth Council.

For the implementation of the best project of one group of students the Town of Rijeka already secured the amount of 10 000 Kuna, however, this year, for the first time, students did not manage to achieve the necessary majority at the assembly of the Youth Council, which is why, subsequently, in agreement with the major of Rijeka, Vojko Obersnel, an **implementation of 3 students’ group projects**, which won the most votes at the Council’s assembly, was decided on.

The key activity in the realization of winners’ projects occurred on 5 December 2009, when the “artistic” part of the Action Day project was held titled “A Journey Through Rijeka’s Music History: ‘From Zajc to Urban’”. This part included: a photography exhibition by Gregor Bogdanović “SubKultura” in which through large photographs a part of Rijeka’s subculture was depicted, as an integral part of Rijeka’s identity; a lecture of Rijeka’s music history “From Zajc to Urban” was held; a young Rijeka’s artist, Vlado Dumanić, gave a recital as an introduction into the presentation of the audio-installation “The Rijeka (*river*) of music” which, as well as the lecture, were completely designed and created by the students from the working group. The final part of the programme consisted of the

projection of video “Guitar-pick in Palcho“ which featured the recordings of Rijeka’s Television with the performances of Rijeka’s unknown bands. After the projection, the participants were able to continue enjoying themselves with the “Rijeka’s music time-machine” playlist played by young DJ from Rijeka, Lerga.

Along with, now already traditional Rijeka’s Action Day, **in 2009, Action Days were organized in Zabok and Pazin as well.**

The Action Day in Zabok was held on 23 January, with **43 Zabok’s high-school students** participating in it. Supported and coordinated by GONG’s activists and employees of town administration units, the students spent the entire day creating projects on **the subject of creative leisure time of young people.**

Divided in five groups, they came up with various ideas, but, since the task meant they should decide only for one idea, after a difficult selection, the award was given to the project titled “Festival of Zabok Youth” designed by the *T group - kao vuha*, but only after the fourth round of voting of Youth Council, and after a long negotiating and coalition process among the groups.

The winning project was realized on 7 March in Zabok. Different activities gathered not only the young, but older people as well. The youngest enjoyed in chalk-drawing on the main square, and those slightly older enjoyed in creating objects from clay and plasticine, and painting with tempera. The time foreseen for high-school students was divided in two parts - karaoke, as a kind of warm-up, and rock and punk concerts of six local bands: *T kao krava*, *Dirty rockers*, *Mitra*, *Gluha vuha*, *Fixis* and *Nautilus*.

The Action Day in Pazin was held on 25 November 2009. **57 students** of high-school and grammar school “Juraj Dobrila“ from Pazin were on that day divided in 6 groups which developed project proposals on **the subject of “Volunteerism“**. Two rounds of voting were necessary in order to choose the “winning” project of one group of students called “Krofnice“.

The “Krofnice“ group wished to mark with their project an International Volunteer Day in cooperation with one Pazin’s kindergarten, “Olga Ban“. Their aim was to try and wake up the spirit of volunteerism in children through creative workshops, and help children paint the wall of the kindergarten that would remain as a lasting memory of that day. One of the proposals was also to include children in creative artwork on the subject of volunteerism. After painting the wall, a stall was set up on the main square at for distribution of theme leaflets containing all information about voluntary associations from Pazin.

! The City of Rijeka nominated the “Think Globally, Act Locally” project as Best Action for Children and Youth, and the project was awarded the Charter for a Model Implementation of Children and Youth Actions, 2006. This Charter is awarded to chosen towns among the ones that are a part of the Croatian Towns and Districts Friends of Children Initiative, which was initiated by UNICEF in 1996.

6. Lost and Found – A Guide to Achieving Citizens’ Rights and Interests with Public Institutions

The second edition of the booklet “Lost and Found - Guide to achieving citizens' rights and interests with public institutions” 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, was printed in 2006 in 12,700 copies and distributed in 2007 and 2008.

Furthermore, the electronic issue of the Guide is available at <http://www.gong.hr/page.aspx?PageID=38> and is being regularly updated. On the same web page, citizens can also find the *pdf* version of the Guide.

In 23 thematic chapters are some of the most frequent questions and problems that citizens encounter in everyday life – containing instructions on whom and how to contact as well as laws where they can find more detailed information.

7. Other activities

- ❖ Sandra Pernar participated in February at **the presentation of Phare 2006 projects** organized by the Office for Cooperation with NGOs, held at the EU Info centre in Zagreb. On this occasion, Sandra presented GONG's LOTUS project.
- ❖ Sandra Pernar participated in February in a **round-table discussion "Croatia: tired of EU reforms?"**, organized by the Political Development Academy.
- ❖ Dragan Zelić participated in March in a **round-table discussion "The position of national minorities in the context of upcoming constitutional changes"**, organized by the SDP's Council for human rights, civil society and legal system.
- ❖ Sandra Pernar in September participated on an **annual conference of the Political Development Academy** in Zadar, at which she presented the research results from the LOTUS project.
- ❖ Dragan Zelić participated in December in a **round-table discussion "Territorial Constitution of the Republic of Croatia"**, organized by the Ministry of Public Administration.
- ❖ Igor Bajok and Vanja Škorić successfully concluded their **participation in the Policy Fellowship Programme of the Open Society Institute** within which they participated in two additional workshops and created a policy research on the subject of "Citizen Participation in Public Decision-Making: How Sub-national Governments Can Support Citizen Engagement and Institutionalize Participatory Practices". The research will be published after the completion of the final version with the mentor's comments.

ACTIVE CITIZENS

The Active Citizens programme includes GONG's activities which promote activism, educate and encourage citizens and CSOs to more active and cooperative approach.

1. Development of Volunteerism

GONG representative, Vanja Škorić, **continued in the course of 2009 with her participation in the work of National Board for Development of Volunteerism**. The Board finished a new Ordinance on State Award for Volunteerism, and gave a proposal for amendments of the Labour Act regarding the use of term volunteerism for the description of internship. Furthermore, at the Board's initiative, the Ministry of Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity sent a memo regarding popularization and volunteerism development through educational system, to all Ministries with the request of submitting the report on the actions taken with the aim of popularizing and developing volunteer work.

2. Code on consultations with interested public in the processes of passing laws, other provisions and acts

Although the creation of the Code as a document that is to give basic guidelines for the inclusion of relevant stakeholders of civil society in all segments of the procedures of passing new acts and regulations, was among the priority measures of the Operative Plan of the National Strategy for Creating a Stimulating Environment for Civil Society Development, the Code was not adopted in the course of 2007 and 2008 (when the deadline was set for the adoption of Code).

The last known information about the Code was that the body of text was finished in the summer of 2008; however, the Government did not adopt it, and during 2009, it was impossible to find out the stage of finalizing the amended text of the Code.

The amended body of text included significantly reduced obligations for the inclusion of relevant stakeholders of civil society in all segments of the procedures of passing new acts and regulations, and it was adopted at the closed session of the government held at the end of 2009. **GONG, in cooperation with several other organizations, made an analysis and criticism of the adopted**

amended text of the Code and sent it to the relevant institutions, disapproving of the way in which the Code was adopted. Furthermore, since it is foreseen that the Code should contain guidelines for its implementation, the organizations called for the CSOs to be included in the guidelines making process. The governmental Office for Cooperation with NGOs in the Republic of Croatia made an announcement in a written reply to the organizations that the guidelines for implementing the Code will be made and that a wider public debate regarding those guidelines will be held.

3. Advocacy Network

Beginning with 2009, GONG started implementing the Advocacy Network project. The project aimed at increasing the level and up-to-dateness of information on legislative activities of the Croatian Parliament and Government, as well as the increase of the number and scope of advocacy activities of civil society organizations. The aim of Advocacy Network was to contribute to the participation in the shaping and monitoring of public policies by the civil society, improvement of the integrity of democratic public institutions and rule of law, and in connecting organizations of civil societies on common platforms of actions. Finally, the project's aim is to contribute to an ever growing democratization and civil society development in Croatia.

The interest to participate in the Advocacy Network was already expressed by over **20 civil society organizations and activists**, and the cooperation was realized through a joint mailing list.

In 2009, daily agendas of government and Parliament's sessions were sent to the list several times a week, including announcements from closed and open sessions of government, as well as announcements of the Board's sessions with the instructions on how to participate in these sessions, information gathered from the Official Gazette, professional articles and media announcements.

Information sent by the members of the Advocacy Network

One of the goals of the projects was a mutual exchange of information among all members of Advocacy Network. The members were very active and sent information on the Conclusion of the government on the Implementation Programme of the National Strategy for Development of Cooperation of the Republic of Croatia for 2010, open letters to the Government of Croatia, information on round-tables, information on the reprimand given to Croatia by the European Committee of Social Rights for homophobia in the sex-education curriculum, etc.

Joint initiatives

The result of the increased level and up-to-dateness of information on legislative activities of the Croatian Parliament and government received by the CSOs, and the flow of other useful information from Croatia and the EU, contributed to initiating joint initiatives, out of which we highlight the following:

- initiative to exchange financial and administrative illogicalities regarding NGOs work,
- joint reaction referred to the governmental Office for cooperation with the NGOs (UZUVRH) in relation to the non-transparent manner of adopting the Code on consultations with interested public in the processes of passing laws, other provisions and acts,
- CSOs round-table discussion on the subject of constitutional changes,
- joint support given to the Green Action regarding pressures made by the Ministry of environmental protection, physical planning and construction towards Green Action,
- initiative for candidates from CSOs to take part in the HRT (Croatian National Television) Programme Council.

Although the project had funds only for 2009, GONG will continue with the implementation of this activity in 2010, considering its noticed value in the sense of strengthening civil society organizations in Croatia and improving conditions for their work.

4. Radio GONG

The Radio GONG project is a media project which GONG implemented in partnership with local radio stations. The aim of the project was to produce and broadcast monthly radio shows on local stations throughout Croatia, with the purpose of informing and educating the public on terms used often in public, political and media space in Croatia, and which concern political culture and social engagement

of citizens. **32 local radio stations participated in this project** which aired the shows free of charge, produced as a part of this project.

12 ten-minute shows were aired with the following subjects: corporate social responsibility, social integrity, corruption, local elections, public opinion, media and ethics, sustainable development, philanthropy, right of access information, civil society, advocacy, and volunteerism. All shows, besides being broadcasted in local radio stations' programmes, are available for download on GONG website – www.gong.hr.

The project aimed at educating the citizens, but also at influencing the development of critical thought in citizens in relation to events in their surroundings, and to the events from the Croatian political life in general.

Besides educative action directed at listeners, the intent was to educationally influence the journalists from those radio stations as well, so that they would create similar content for shows in the future, thus additionally contributing to the understanding of terms related to good governance (on all levels and in all sectors) and civil engagement in the society, and, finally, contributing to the development of civil sector and democratic process in the Croatian society.

Having in mind the interest of local radio stations and listeners of those radio shows, it is our wish to continue with this project in some way, which is why we applied for the funds for this project.

5. Civil Society and the State – Cooperation in Implementing Anti-Corruption Measures

Since one of the principles and goals of the Anti-Corruption Strategy of the Republic of Croatia is to improve cooperation between civil society and competent public bodies, GONG maintained contacts with the representatives of the Ministry of Justice and USKOK, and participated in several lectures and round-tables regarding the Anti-Corruption Strategy in the Republic of Croatia.

The Ministry of Justice, the Republic of Croatia Government's Office for Cooperation with the NGOs, GONG and Transparency International organized in May of 2009, in Croatian Parliament a **round table on the subject *The First Year of Action Plan Implementation of the Anti-Corruption Strategy – Achievements and Challenges***.

In the round-table discussion GONG stressed out the need to make the Code on consultations with interested public in the processes of passing new laws, other provisions and acts public, as well as the necessity in monitoring the implementation and efficiency of measures from the Action Plan of the Anti-Corruption Programme. The Ministry of Justice accepted this proposal and several months later published an Analysis of monitoring the implementation and efficiency of measures.

GONG also reflected on the execution of measures and concluded that it is good to have most of the measures executed in time since they concern amendments and passing of regulations which present the foundation for the successful fight against corruption. However, the need to have other regulations (such as the Freedom of Information Act) improved in time as well, was also stressed out, as this was already foreseen by the Action Plan. A concern was expressed that the measures are being executed too quickly, and only to fulfil the deadlines of the Action Plan, without really organizing proper, professional public debates, i.e. without significantly involving civil society organizations, an act which would contribute to the quality of measures. The primary goal was to achieve a quality implementation of anti-corruption measures, and this can certainly be achieved by including all interested stakeholders, from the process of shaping the measures and regulations to their implementation.

6. Cooperative Activists' Actions

♦ In the reporting year, GONG was involved in the **"The Right to the City" activities and Green action activities in relation to the Cvjetni trg (Preradović square) and Frankopanska street issues** by providing support in the view of consultations and going to the preparatory meetings, volunteering in public actions and participating in public assemblies such as the one in the form of a round-table "What kind of town do we want?" held in April.

7. Legal Aid and Consultations

Citizens can seek and receive legal advice from GONG, whether by visiting GONG's office in person, or telephoning, sending an e-mail or a fax. We respond directly to citizens' queries, and if their questions are not related to the areas we cover, we refer them to state institutions (e.g. Government's Office for Human Rights, Ombudsman, etc.) or civil society organizations which would be of help to them.

In this reporting period we provided consultations in **exercising the right of access to information** to numerous institutions and organizations and citizens and journalists. A large numbers of question were also related to participation of citizens in the decision-making processes and **local and presidential elections**.

8. GRIF

In 2009, a GRIF (Gong's Accounting and Finances) Department started functioning within GONG. GRIF is an additional activity that GONG implements that aims at acquiring funding for self-financing of GONG, but which also contributes to the development of other CSOs.

GRIF is a department specialized for giving accounting and administratively-financial services to civil society organizations. In 2009, the GRIF team consisted of two employees, and plans for hiring additional staff in the following year are made.

GRIF employees currently provide services for 7 beneficiary organizations, and GONG is continually looking for new clients in order for GRIF to further develop and grow. GRIF has operated successfully since its beginnings, i.e. it made income and contributed to the primary goal for which it was founded, and that is GONG's self-financing. Besides that, GRIF helps the functioning of beneficiary organizations by providing services of managing their finances without significantly straining their budgets.

9. Other activities

- ❖ Suzana Jašić and Sandra Pernar participated in March/April in activities of **working group for evaluating CSOs' projects applied for the tender published by the Office for Human Rights**.
- ❖ Suzana Jašić participated in March in a **round-table discussion "Journalism on the Internet"**, organized by Croatian Journalists' Association.
- ❖ Sandra Pernar participated in March in a **round-table discussion "Croatia as a provider of international development help – the role of the civil society organizations"**.
- ❖ Suzana Jašić participated in April in Rijeka in a **round-table discussion "Preparing for the local elections – decreasing the risk of corruption in units of local self-government"**, organized by the National Board for Monitoring the Implementation of the Anti-Corruption Strategy. She held a presentation on the subject of transparency in the work of public authorities.
- ❖ Suzana Jašić participated in June on the **conference "Censorship, Media, Croatia"**, organized by Open Society Institute.
- ❖ Mihael Rukavina participated in September on **Days of NGOs in Virovitica-Podravina County** where he presented the work of GONG to citizens and handed out some of GONG's printed materials.
- ❖ Sandra Pernar participated in September in a round-table discussion on the occasion of International Day of Democracy on the subject of **"Democracy and Political Tolerance"**, organized by the Interparliamentary Union in the Croatian Parliament. Sandra held a presentation on the subject, but from the perspective of CSOs.
- ❖ Sandra Pernar participated in September in the **train the trainer** workshop on the subject **"Active citizens for better Europe"** organized by Babe organization, where she held a

lecture on EU institutions and possibilities of inclusion in the decision-making processes on the EU level.

- ❖ Sandra Pernar and Dragan Zelić participated in October in the **workshop on cooperation between agencies in implementing and monitoring anti-corruption programme**, organized by the Ministry of Justice and Embassy of Great Britain.
- ❖ In cooperation with the Town of Rijeka, GONG organized an **assembly in Rijeka “Preparing for the elections of Youth Council – You have a Council, use it!”**. Igor Bajok and Suzana Jašić participated in the assembly as GONG’s representatives.
- ❖ In November, Dragan Zelić held three **workshops for members of the Council for Roma minority** in Čakovac, organized by the organization ACTnow, on the subject of democracy and citizens’ participation.
- ❖ In November, Mirela Travar participated at a **Conference on the implementation of the Anti-Discrimination Act**, organized in Dubrovnik by the Office for Human Rights, Centre for Peace Studies and Ombudsman.
- ❖ Sandra Pernar participated in December in a round-table discussion “Raising local voices to the national level: mapping the areas of discrimination in 5 regions” and on the **opening of House of Human Rights in Zagreb**, organized by the organization Babe.

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

The International Cooperation programme includes exchange and transfer of knowledge and experiences with similar organizations of civil societies and institutions of other countries.

1. Independent and Partnership Project

1. “Transparency in the work of public authorities – exchange of experiences and practices“ project

“Transparency in the work of public authorities – exchange of experiences and practices” was the project with which GONG aimed at **helping organizations from Bosnia and Herzegovina – CCI, and Montenegro – CDT and AMN** to increase their capacities for implementing activities in the areas of advocacy and increase of transparency in the work of public authorities (on all levels). **The transfer of GONG’s know-how** to aforementioned organizations was foreseen within this project, but also their familiarization with Croatian practices in 4 areas:

1. The publicity of Parliament’s work
2. The publicity of Government’s work
3. The publicity of the work of local self-government
4. The Act on the Right to Access Information.

The aim of the project was to enable relevant organizations from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro to implement additional activities and projects, to offer them additional knowledge and help develop new skills in order to be able to influence the level of publicity in the work of public authorities in their countries.

An analysis was made within this project, as well as a **Comparative presentation of the level of transparency in the work of public authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Republic of Croatia** which was to serve as a basis for organizing a study visit of beneficiary organizations to Croatia.

The study visit was organized in October 2009. During the visit, the organizations were introduced to GONG’s projects and activities dealing with the strengthening of transparency in the work of public authorities in Croatia. The representatives of the beneficiary organizations visited the Croatian Parliament and its Department for Public Relations, and met with some MPs. They were also given information about the work of Transparency International Croatia and Delta organization from Rijeka.

During a visit to the Town Rijeka, the representatives from the beneficiary NGOs were also introduced to the methods of communication Rijeka practices, and openness of the city institutions to citizens.

After the study visit ended, **the representatives of beneficiary NGOs expressed their readiness to use certain activities and experiences GONG demonstrated when developing new activities within their organizations**, and which will be aimed at strengthening the level of transparency in the work of public authorities in their countries. Depending on the activities placed into focus within certain organizations, their representatives expressed their satisfaction with getting an insight into certain activities GONG implements. In the final phase of project implementation, the CCI and CDT representatives reported on how certain activities they were introduced to through this project **became a part of their planning for the following period** and GONG will continue to provide support in a further transfer of its know-how whenever possible.

2. Conference on “Election law and Law on the conflict of interest – experiences and practices in the region” – Sarajevo, BiH

Suzana Jašić and Robert Maračić participated in January on the international conference “Election Law and Law on the Conflict of Interest – experience and practices in the region”, organized by the Association of Association of Election Officials which gathered the representatives of organizations from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia, as the final part of a joint project of the Association of Election Officials (BiH), Cesida (Serbia) and GONG.

3. “Brez meje – Without Borders“ Conference, Podčetrtek, Slovenia

GONG, in partnership with the Slovenian organization CNVOS, organized in November a conference that gathered representatives of Croatian and Slovenian organizations (a total of one hundred participants) and competent state authorities from both states. The purpose of the conference was to exchange experiences and opinions regarding economic crisis from the perspective of possibilities of civil society organizations development.

2. Trainings, Consultations and Study visits

Marshall Memorial Fellowship Programme – Study visit – Zagreb

In March, GONG was visited by the participants of the American Marshall Memorial Fellowship Programme within which they visited Zagreb and met with the representatives of different institutions and organizations, as well as with GONG representatives. The programme was initiated by the German Marshall Fund, and the visit to Zagreb was realized in cooperation with the Institute for International Relations. While in GONG, participants familiarized themselves with the work of an NGO and specific problems GONG is faced with in their work.

Workshop on Official Development Assistance (ODA) practices for the Government of Croatia – Zagreb

Sandra Pernar participated in March in a workshop organized by USAID for officials of Croatian Government, on the subject of the development assistance programme. Sandra presented GONG’s experiences in the implementation of projects aiming at providing assistance in the area of development, and the possibilities of cooperation between the NGOs and the government in the same area.

Management students from Stanford University – Study visit – Zagreb

In April, Sandra Pernar held a presentation for students of management at Stanford University, who visited Zagreb during their study visit to Europe and met with representatives of various institutions and organizations, including GONG.

GRECO Delegation – Consultations – Zagreb

In April, GONG was visited by a GRECO delegation (The Group of States Against Corruption), a body founded by the Council of Europe in order to monitor the compliance with the anti-corruption standards represented by the Council of Europe. The Delegation was interested in financing of election campaigns and political parties, i.e. the issues in that area, of which a report was also written, i.e. recommendations were given to Croatia as to what needs to be improved.

SIGMA – Consultations – Zagreb

GONG was visited in April by consultants from SIGMA, and had a discussion on the following topics: the responsibility of public authorities and public officials; objectivity and transparency of administrative decision-making process, efficacy of various mechanisms and protection of legality of the Act on Public Administration, free access to all the public information and protection of personal information. SIGMA is a programme which serves as a support in the modernization of state's administration, and which was created as a joint initiative of OECD and the European Union.

Study visit to BCNL organization – Zagreb

In April, representatives of civil society and state administration from Bulgaria came for a study visit to Croatia. The visit was organized by GONG, at the request of the BCNL organization from Bulgaria, in order for the participants to gain an insight into the functioning of civil society in Croatia and the conditions in which it operates. The participants visited Croatian institutions – National Foundation for the Development of Civil Society, Office for Cooperation with the NGOs, Council for the development of civil society, the Croatian Parliament, and in GONG's offices, attended by GONG's representatives, they had a discussion with the representative of the Town of Rijeka, and with representatives of several NGOs (B.a.B.e., Centre for Peace Studies, and Green Action).

Delegation from the Legislative Council of a separate administrative district of Hong Kong – Study visit – Zagreb

In September, GONG was visited by a delegation from the Legislative Council of a separate administrative district of Hong Kong whose visit was organized by a Committee for an Interparliamentary cooperation of the Croatian Parliament, and during the visit they met with the Members of the Parliament, and several other institutions and organizations, including GONG. They wanted to know a little bit more on the activities GONG implements, especially the advocacy activities.

Azerbaijan's NGO Support Council – Study visit – Zagreb

In November, GONG was visited by the representatives of the Azerbaijan's NGO Support Council under the President of Republic of Azerbaijan, consisting of representatives of NGOs and Government. They were on a study visit to Zagreb, organized by USAID in order to learn something about the Croatian model of cooperation between the civil society organizations and the government. While in GONG, they were introduced to the activities of the organization and the way in which GONG cooperates with other organizations and the government.

3. International conferences, seminars, guest and GONG's representation

Regional NGO consultation seminar on the Codex of good practice of public participation for South-East Europe – Istanbul, Turkey

Sandra Pernar participated in January on a Regional consultation seminar on the Codex of good practice of public participation, on which she gave input regarding the text of the draft of the Codex of good practice of public participation of the Council of Europe (the Codex was adopted by the Council of Europe at the end of 2009). The seminar was organized jointly by the Turkish TUSEV organizations and the Council of Europe.

Expert Seminar on Electoral Management Bodies – Vienna, Austria

Suzana Jašić participated in July on an Expert Seminar on Electoral Management Bodies in Vienna, organized by the OESC Presidency. Suzana participated as a panellist and presented Croatian experiences with the SEC as a permanent body.

Working group for the creation of amendments to electoral legislation, Skopje (FYR of Macedonia)

At the invitation of the OESC in Macedonia, GONG's representative, Vanja Škorić participated in September in the work of the working group for the creation of amendment to the electoral legislation.

Council of Europe Forum for the Future of Democracy - Electoral Systems: strengthening democracy in the 21st century' – Kiev, Ukraine

Sandra Pernar in October participated in the Forum organized by the Council of Europe in Kiev on the subject of elections. Sandra held a presentation on the subject of observing the elections by the civil society organizations.

HDIM – Warsaw, Poland

Suzana Jašić participated in October at the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, organized by the OESC/ODIHR. Suzana held a presentation within the session covering elections and democratic institutions.

NOVUM FORUM – Otočec, Slovenia

Sandra Pernar participated in November on an international assembly „NOVUM FORUM – Perspective for active citizenship“ in Otočac, organized by the Slovenian *Novum* Institute. Sandra held a presentation on the activities GONG implements in the area of encouraging civil participation and creating better conditions and possibilities for civil participation.

Conference “Civil Participation in Europe“ – Ljubljana, Slovenia

Sandra Pernar participated in November at an international conference “Civil Participation in Europe“ in Ljubljana, organized by the Council of Europe, Slovenian Ministry of public administration and CNVOS.

Freja Forum – Belgrade, Serbia

Sandra Pernar participated in November on an international assembly Freja Forum on which she held a presentation on experiences of Croatian NGOs in the process of Croatia’s accessions to the European Union. Freja Forum is organized every year by several Swedish organizations, with the support of Olof Palme Center and SIDA.

Conference “The Impact of Cultural and Citizenship Education on Social Cohesion” – Vilnius, Lithuania

Sandra Pernar participated in December on an international conference organized by NECE (Network of European Citizenship Education). The conference also served as an informal meeting of members of Politeia which resulted in providing the basis for possible future cooperation between Politeia and NECE.

4. Cooperation with international organizations

“Politeia“ NGO

Politeia – an organization for citizenship and democracy in Europe active in the area of (European) citizenship and gathers organizations with similar activities which work together through the exchange of experiences regarding issues of active (European) citizenship, civil society and education on the subject of democracy.

The organization was registered in Amsterdam in March of 2008. The founders of this organization are IPP (Instituut voor Publiek en Politiek - Amsterdam) and GONG.

During the reporting year, organizations maintained contact and exchanged information through e-mails. GONG and IPP agreed that they will try and apply for a joint project in 2010, financed by the MATRA programme of Dutch government.

ENEMO

ENEMO (European Network of Election Monitoring Organizations) is a group consisting of 19 CSOs from 17 countries from the area of former Soviet Union, and Central and Eastern Europe. These are frontline domestic organizations for the monitoring of elections. ENEMO organizes international observational missions, and up to now, the members organizations monitored over 110 national elections in different European countries, and trained over 100 000 observers. GONG is one of the co-founding organizations of ENEMO and its member.

In September of 2009, an ENEMO’s Assembly was to be held, but due to the lack of quorum, there was only an informal meeting at which GONG was represented by Mihael Rukavina. At the meeting, the current Secretariat reported on their status regarding the process of collecting funds for the new website design and stated that they initiated the process of registering ENEMO in Romania.

GONG participated in several observing missions organized by ENEMO in 2009, which was stated in the part of the report relating to the monitoring of elections.

CEDAG

CEDAG (European Council of Associations of General Interest) is a network of European organizations which functions as a European platform for national non-profit umbrella organizations and for national associations of general interest. At the end of 2008, GONG received an invitation to become a member of CEDAG, which it accepted beginning of 2009. During the reporting year, CEDAG applied for a project within an EU funding programme, in which GONG was listed as a partner.

ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

1. Organization's activities

A. Managing the organization

Up until April of 2009, the organization was managed by the Managing Board consisting of: Suzana Jašić (President of Managing Board and of organization), Dragan Zelić (Deputy President) and Vanja Škorić (member).

In January of 2009, at a regular Assembly of the organization a decision regarding the change in the Statute was adopted, with the aim of changing the structure of the organization, which was accepted as a strategic guideline at GONG's strategic planning in May of 2008.

In line with the amended Statute, and proposed amendments for changes in the organizational structure, the GONG Council's members were also selected at the Assembly (9 members). Council is a newly founded body competent in the area of strategic decision-making with the purpose of organizational development and benefit. The appointed Council members are: Dragan Bagić, Jelena Berković, Marijana Grbeša, Suzana Jašić, Vesna Kesić, Josip Kregar, Zdravko Petak, Marina Škrabalo and Nenad Zakošek. Members of the Council elected among themselves Vesna Kesić as Council's President, and Nenad Zakošek as her deputy.

Council members, in accordance with the Statute, appointed the members of the GONG Executive Board, a body that manages the work of the organization on an operational level. The appointed members are: Sandra Pernar, Vanja Škorić and Dragan Zelić. Members of the Executive Board elected Sandra Pernar as an executive director, and Dragan Zelić as her deputy.

The supervision of the organization's work was, in 2009, performed by the Supervisory Board consisting of: Jagoda Munić (President of the Supervisory Board), Gordan Bosanac (Deputy) and Albina Dlačić (member).

A three-day meeting of the Council and Executive Board was held in August on which the actual strategic plan was discussed in details, and strategic guidelines for the upcoming period were given.

B. Staff

Beginning of 2009, GONG had 14 employees, however, during the year, this number decreased. With the gradual closing of regional offices (Rijeka, Slavonski Brod, Zadar), i.e. with the expiry of the employment contracts of the persons employed in those offices, the number of employees was decreased by 5. Furthermore, one more person left the organization in October, for another employment, which resulted in GONG starting the new year with 8 employees.

Besides the permanent employees, GONG occasionally cooperates with a series of external associates on various projects (trainers, project associates, etc).

By the end of the year, a work on the implementation of teams of employees started, and a structure was conceived according to which employees work in 4 programme teams and 4 developmental teams. Programme teams relate to GONG's programmes: The Electoral System, Good Governance, Active Citizens and International Cooperation, while developmental teams are in charge of the funds collection, organizational administration, accounting and finances (GRIF) and website maintenance.

C. Education

- ❖ Sandra Pernar participated in March, in Zagreb, on the **Grundtvig Information Day** (Grundtvig is one of the EU mobility programmes).
- ❖ Albert Jedrejčić and Sandra Pernar participated in June, in Zagreb, in the **workshop of preparation for reporting on the grant scheme within the Phare 2006 programme** – Enabling the Civil Society Sector in the Pre-accession Process in the Area of Democratization and Human Rights, organized by the Central Finance and Contracting Agency.
- ❖ Sandra Pernar participated in September in the **Summer Academy on European Integration**. It's an educational programme that gathered 29 participants from different European countries, and which is being organized annually by the Aleksandar Kwasniewski Foundation. Programme lasted for a week, and covered various subjects (certain EU policies, European integrations and economic crisis, media and globalization, etc.), and was held in Gdansk (Poland).
- ❖ Dragan Zelić participated in November on **RCPAR training** in Torino (Italy). RCPAR is a five-year regional projects (2008-2013) of UNDP from Bratislava which gathers state institutions, academic institutions, civil society organizations, with the aim of exchanging ideas, experiences and encouraging of writing MCA (Multy Country Activities), i.e. writing joint projects.
- ❖ Albert Jedrejčić participated in December, in Zagreb, at a **seminar “Value Added Tax from 1 January 2010, financial reports in 2009, and other current issues in the work of non-profit organizations “**.
- ❖ Maja Kočiš participated in an **educational programme “EU in the community“**, organized by DIM organization. The programme consisted of 3 seminars: “We as the citizens of the EU“ (May), “Questions and answers on the EU funds“ (June), and “From idea to the project“ (October).
- ❖ Mirela Travar participated in an **educational programme on the Youth Policies**, organized by the Croatian Youth Network. Programme consisted of three modules: “Development of national and local youth policies “ (April), “Youth Policies and European Standards – European Challenges for Croatia“ (July) and “Participation and networking of young people – advocacy tools for the development of youth policies“ (October).

D. Volunteers

A great number of volunteers and members actively participated in numerous activities implemented by GONG, such as monitoring of the elections, materials distribution and help in organizing GONG's public appearances. Furthermore, in 2009, one volunteer was hired to work on programme activities, which presents a beginning in GONG's implementation of possibilities for enabling volunteering on GONG's programmes, which would prove useful for volunteers (students or newly graduated, young professionals) in terms of experience, and for GONG in terms of volunteers' contribution to the work of employees.

In 2009:

- 11 volunteers met the requirements of membership
- 2191 citizens applied for the volunteers' database – out of which 200 are continuously active
- 7300 hours of volunteer work performed by citizens were recorded .

E. Fundraising

In 2009, the financial framework of GONG's activities included several short-term projects (up to 6 months) and several long-term projects.

Short-term projects mostly involved activities which were implemented on a local level (project “Think globally, act locally“), but also projects implemented on a national level (projects “I vote for the first time“ and “European class“). Financial support for the project “Think globally, act locally“ was provided

by the towns in which the project was implemented: Pazin, Rijeka and Zabok, and for the other two projects, the funds were provided by the Ministry of Science, Education and Sport, Ministry of Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational solidarity, Balkan Trust for Democracy and the City of Zagreb.

The projects we conducted in the period of 12 months and more (advocacy activities, project LOTUS, Radio GONG, Advocacy network, etc.) were financed by the European Union and National Foundation for the Development of Civil Society. Also, at the end of 2008, upon the expiration of a three-year support for the advocacy activities GONG implemented financed by the Open Society Institute, GONG applied for a new three-year support which was awarded at the beginning of 2009, for the period of 2009 - 2011. Furthermore, 2009 was the year in which GONG had no right in using the three-year institutional support from the National Foundation for the Development of Civil Society, and with the expiration of that period, at the end of the year, GONG applied for a new three-year institutional support of the National Foundation for the Development of Civil Society for the period of 2010 – 2012, which was approved in December. By taking all of the above into account, the year 2009 presented a great challenge in the sense of ensuring financial support for the organizational activities, due to which a special emphasize was placed particularly on that issue. For that purpose, GONG wrote a larger number of project proposals and applied for different tenders for financial support to NGOs. In that sense we would like to highlight some of our successes in this area, such as ensuring the funds for the implementation of a 20-months long project by the European Commission in Bruxelles within the IPA 2008 programme financed by the European Delegation in the Republic of Croatia within the IPA INFO 2008. By the end of 2009, GONG had applied for two other significant projects where the financing is enabled through the two lines of the IPA 2008 programme, and for which the decision will be made in autumn of 2010.

In the last couple of years we implemented activities which resulted in successful diversification of the sources of funding for GONG's activities. At every moment, we implemented activities with the financial support of at least 8 different domestic and foreign donors, thus reducing the dependency on just one donor. However, the great challenge that lies ahead of us is the departure of most of foreign donors from Croatia, and dependency on mostly domestic sources of funding and the EU funds. In 2009, despite the reduced number of employees, and subsequently limited capacities which could have been otherwise invested in various activities, GONG demonstrated a remarkable ability and success in applying for the EU funds, which is why we believe that we have the reason to be optimistic about the upcoming period.

A step towards achieving sustainability of the organization was made with the founding of the GRIF department (GONG accounting and finances) – an activity whose goal is to acquire income for GONG's self-financing, and of which we already wrote in the report (in the part relating to the Active Citizens Programme). GRIF department has been successful from the beginning and contributed to the primary goal for which it has been founded in the first place, the starting of the self-financing process.

F. Meetings

GONG employees held numerous meetings with the representatives from the Government, Croatian Parliament, DIP, USKOK, several ministries (Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integrations, Ministry of Public Administration...), local authorities, political parties, the media, CSOs and other institutions.

Also, GONG was visited by many international organizations, as well as representatives of the European Union and a larger number of foreign embassies in the Republic of Croatia (American, Canadian, Dutch, Norwegian...).

2. Media Cooperation

In the reporting period, we continued to develop partnership relations with the media and the press in Croatia.

GONG activities and projects during 2009 were covered in **over 900 appearances in national and local media** - TV and radio stations, newspaper and Internet portals. Also worth mentioning is that the

audio and video spots on the Freedom of Information Act, made by GONG (the campaign lasted throughout September and October), were broadcasted on national television programmes, free of charge.

In the end!

Transfer of implementation of the Volunteering programme in Croatian Parliament to parliamentary departments

In the summer of 2009, GONG terminated its participation in the implementation of a volunteering programme “I volunteer in the Croatian Parliament“, whose implementation (under the “Internship programme“ title) was initiated by GONG in 2001, and taken over by the Parliament in 2008 (when the title was changed as well). In 2008, and in the first half of 2009, GONG representative acted as a professional support in the implementation of the programme in the Parliament, and as the first generation of volunteers finished the programme “I volunteer in the Croatian Parliament“, the Parliament continued to independently implement the programme, based on the experiences transferred by GONG.

*! Since the beginning of the implementation of the project within GONG's Internship programme, **78 students and young professionals volunteered for 34 MPs and several Clubs of MPs, as well as in 9 Governmental departments and bodies of local/regional self-government** in which the project was implemented from May of 2005. By counting the generation which started with the volunteering programme at the Parliament in 2008, we can say that GONG participated in introducing **a total of 128 students** into the volunteering programme at the Parliament.*

!! Taking into consideration that, at the time when the Programme was initiated, in 2001, it was the first volunteering programme implemented in Croatian state institutions, and having in mind the obstacles and problems we encountered, especially in those first years, the mere fact that the Parliament has taken over the implementation of this programme is a great success for us, and one of which we are very proud!

GONG's special contribution

- ❖ As in the previous years, GONG participated in consultations with the representatives of the European Union Delegation for creating Croatia's Progress Report and thus contributed to the creation of the document in providing information for the areas in which the organization is active.
- ❖ In 2009, a Human Rights Report of the American State Department was published for the year 2008, which makes a reference to GONG's Report on the Implementation of the Freedom of Information Act.

GONG'S FINANCIAL REPORT

GONG FINANCIAL REPORT 2009. (HRK)

GONG is an organisation which is financed by support and donors (inland and foreign) and self-financing activities.

The duration of one fiscal year is from 01/01 till 12/31. The financial report includes balance, income, expenditure and expenditure by budget lines.

Balance sheet**Assets**

Financial assets	114.394
Non-financial assets	51.381
Total Assets	165.775

Liabilities

Duties	354.190
Own sources	-188.415
Total liabilities	165.775

Consolidated Statement of Income**Income**

Income surplus transferred from 2008.	63.935
Income from State and local budgets	296.000
Income from membership fees	470
Income earnings	90.789
Income from citizens' donations	9.360
Grants and donations	1.719.710
Other income	3.300

Total income	2.183.564
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Expenditure

Costs for employees	1.276.040
Material expences	1.096.818
Financial expences	40.354
Other costs	1.577

Total expenditure	2.414.789
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Income surplus	-231.225
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Expenditure by Budget Lines

Personal expenses		Other costs	
Salaries	731.622	Honorarium	192.224
Taxes from salaries	543.860	Accountant services	56.120
		Office supply	17.022
		Equipment purchase and maintenance	17.334
Total personal expenses	<u>1.275.482</u>	Rent	46.091
		Utilities	58.050
		Communications (Internet, telephone and postage)	130.735
		Audio, video and printed material	71.330
		Travel and accommodation costs	195.933
		Representation (conferences, educations, round tables, public discussion)	48.465
		Bank charges	24.689
		Evaluation and consulting	100.434
		ICT services	91.876
		Other costs	89.004
		Total other costs	<u>1.139.307</u>
		Total expenditures	<u>2.414.789</u>

SPECIAL THANKS

GONG is a non - profit organization which depends on the support and donations from organizations, foundations and embassies. Without donor support, GONG wouldn't be able to accomplish its goals.

Financial support

**up to
5.000**

City of Slavonski brod

**up to
15.000**

City of
Pazin
City of
Pula

County of Primorje - Gorski Kotar

**up to
30.000**

up to 55.000

Ministry of Science, Education and Sports
Royal Norwegian Embassy , Zagreb

up to 170.000

The City of Rijeka

up to 310.000

National Foundation for Civil Society development,

City of
Zabok
Embassy of the United States, Zagreb

Zagreb
Royal Netherlands Embassy , Zagreb

**up to
40.000**

The City of Zagreb
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration

up to 550.000

Open Society Institute, Budapest

up to 800.000

European union

***Donations in goods and
services***

up to 3.000 (per legal person)

Facilities and stands were provided to us, without compensation, by many local self-government units, city institutions and others. Radio air was provided to us, also without compensation, by many radio-stations. We would like to express our gratitude for the generous support and cooperation.

