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**The Open Society Institute-Brussels' response to the Joint Communication:
"A Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity with the Southern Mediterranean"**

For nearly three decades the Open Society Foundations have worked to promote vibrant and tolerant democracies. George Soros first became a philanthropist in 1979 by giving scholarships to black students in apartheid South Africa, soon after he began funding local civil society in communist Eastern Europe. Today, we run programmes in more than 70 countries supporting justice, media, health, education, human rights and good governance. Our experience of transition in Europe and the former Soviet Union is rooted in establishing local foundations run by local people, accountable to local boards of governance.

The Open Society Institute-Brussels (OSI-Brussels), the EU policy arm of the Open Society Foundations (OSF), welcomes the 8 March Joint Communication,¹ and has taken note of the subsequent Council Declaration and Conclusions. OSI-Brussels has drawn together responses based on OSFs' 30-year experience in transition situations; in annex are more detailed lessons from the work of the Open Society Foundations. OSF is also a significant donor in the Southern Mediterranean in its own right.

We are encouraged by the positive elements in the proposed Partnership on the prioritisation of civil society as a building block for democracy; a readiness to use political rather than technocratic leverage; and the proposal to use clearer conditionality and benchmarks. These are significant and welcome changes to the EU's approach to its neighbourhood.

This response document focuses on six areas that we regard as important for further policy development in the EU's approach to the region, and on which OSF can offer expertise and cooperation:

- human rights benchmarks and conditionality;
- accountability for past wrongs;
- engaging and supporting civil society;
- a broad reform agenda;
- transparency and corruption; and
- mobility.

¹ European Commission/High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Joint Communication, A Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity with the Southern Mediterranean, Brussels, 8.3.2011 COM(2011) 200 final.

HUMAN RIGHTS BENCHMARKS AND CONDITIONALITY

*“It is an **incentive-based approach** based on more differentiation (“more for more”): those that go further and faster with reforms will be able to count on greater support from the EU. Support will be reallocated or refocused for those who stall or retrench on agreed reform plans” (p.6)*

The EU’s proposed use of benchmarks to measure progress of human rights and governance is welcome and overdue. The “more for more” approach sets the tone for a positive relationship, and will be most effective if it is complemented by details of where “less for less” would be applied. The Partnership and the EU’s sectoral assistance will be better respected in the region if they are offered with a clear indication of what would force the EU to rescind its offer and what assistance would be retracted if counterparts fail to meet the benchmarks.

To set more detailed conditions and benchmarks, the EU could draw on standards enshrined in mutually agreed international covenants and treaties. The three most prominent are the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, (both already ratified by Libya, Tunisia and Egypt), and the European Convention on Human Rights, as well as human rights practices encouraged by the Council of Europe. The 18 articles in the “Rights and Freedoms” of the Convention proved a check-list for universal rights that could be directly incorporated into EU benchmarks.²

Conditionality and benchmarks by the EU that require the states to implement their existing commitments in the Covenants are more likely to be seen as supportive rather than restrictive. Similarly, the EU could make North African states’ progress in implementation into important conditions in the Partnership agreements.³

The immense shift in the geo-political landscape makes this the right moment for Europe to define its position on democratic governance and clarify what it expects politically from partners. The clear commitments and tangible benchmarks required for the Partnership could become a more explicit *acquis communautaire* for democracy in the external action of the EU that goes beyond economic and technical conditionality and provides guidelines on implementation.

Benchmarks that are essential for democratic transition and derive from the EU’s own policies and documents will give guidance on sequencing of reforms. Based on OSF’s experience, these priorities should include:

- freedom of speech, including a free and independent media;
- freedom of information, including provisions for right of access to information held by the state;
- an inclusive constitutional reform process;
- the development and consolidation of political parties that provide for open political discussion and electoral choices;
- unrestricted parliamentary debate;
- a clear threshold for power wielded by representative bodies rather than the executive;
- the establishment of mediation bodies to deal with abuses of power;
- the constitutional protection of human rights (especially minority rights);
- the protection of judicial independence; and
- explicit recognition of the necessity for an active and informed civil society.

This priority list could also form the basis of the “less for less” side to the Partnership. Negative benchmarks would include: delays to the legal protection of human rights; continuation of extra-judicial practices, either through continued state of emergencies or otherwise; flawed electoral processes or institutions; continued politicisation and lack of democratic oversight of security institutions; restrictions on media, freedom of information and civil society, particularly restrictive laws on NGOs; and freedom of association or assembly.

On the basis of measures and funding deployed in each specific situation, the EU could then define what support would be retracted. Making financial disbursements conditional on participatory and inclusive constitutional processes could be a first step. Further steps might include non-renewal of support for cyclical programmes/projects; the channelling of more money directly to independent civil society organisations and less

² Fundamental rights and freedoms in the ECHR are: right to life, prohibition of torture, prohibition of slavery and forced labour, right to liberty and security, right to a fair trial, no punishment without law, right to respect for private and family life, freedom of thought, conscience and religion, freedom of expression, freedom of assembly and association, right to marry, right to an effective remedy, prohibition of discrimination.

³ *Human Rights in the EU: How the Lisbon Treaty Could Help*, Open Society EU Paper 1, January 2011.

to government; revising trade commitments; and ultimately suspending disbursement of development funds in the case of egregious violations of EU principles. Decision-making with regard to “mutual accountability” must be rooted in sound analysis of the EU tools deployed on the ground, starting with those that would send a political signal first, towards, as a last resort, the suspension of money flows. Any such measures must be clearly communicated to partners.

The involvement of women and youth in post-revolution discussions and constitutional processes is vital to the success of the transitions. For the EU to insist through the Partnership on quotas for inclusion of women in national dialogues, within the structures of government and within the consultative mechanisms of the Partnership would give a powerful message of the importance that it attaches to this issue.

ACCOUNTABILITY FOR PAST WRONGS

“Political and economic reforms must go hand-in-hand and help deliver political rights and freedoms, accountability and participation” (p.5)

The Communication endorses social justice and political accountability, but lacks reference to mechanisms to account for **past violations**. The old regimes across the Middle East and North Africa were rooted in serious, systematic and widespread violations of basic human and political rights. Immediately after Mubarak’s departure in **Egypt**, protesters occupied the Egyptian State Security Investigations Service, marking a poignant end to the system of fear and control cultivated by the Mubarak government. Experience of political transitions from autocracy shows that without a serious political commitment to address the legacy of past violations, mistrust between state and citizen remains entrenched, and violations are likely to continue. New leaders have to acknowledge the population’s need for information about the scale and depth of state-sanctioned human rights violations, recognise their grievances and promote an end to impunity.

Although **Tunisia** moved quickly to disband its State Security services, this does not in itself signify commitment to ending abuses. Experience shows that victims of rights violations need to be engaged in the process of accountability, and donor support used to assist a transparent and balanced vetting process when security services are re-formed.

The EU’s support to political reform and dialogue with transitional states should therefore include a drive for serious investigations of past crimes. Within the Partnership framework, investigations could be supported through the establishment of national commissions, with the offer of international expertise, to communicate and explore transitional justice needs and options. The EU could also help facilitate a free and informed national choice on transitional justice and support the implementation of effective outreach before, during and after the transitional justice process.⁴

Reform efforts in security and government institutions will need to be informed by a process of vetting. The purging of institutions based on vengeance rather than legal criteria must be avoided. The eventual process in post-conflict Libya can refer to examples in the Western Balkans and West Africa.⁵ OSF, through its Foundations, the Open Society Justice Initiative and grantees, has access to officials and individuals engaged in many past processes who can offer guidance on their applicability to the Southern Neighbourhood.

ENGAGING AND SUPPORTING CIVIL SOCIETY

*“A thriving **civil society** can help uphold human rights and contribute to democracy building and good governance, playing an important role in checking government excesses” (p.7)*

As the largest non-governmental funder of civil society worldwide, OSF welcomes the Communication’s references to civil society and looks forward to assisting in the development of further details of its role. Human rights organisations, the media, religious institutions, academia and virtually all aspects of civil society in North Africa have suffered serious operating constraints and repression. Experts from the region note that civil society organisations will need to build real infrastructure and capacity to sustain their role in newly democratic societies.

⁴ Most recently explored by Clara Ramírez-Barat, International Center for Transitional Justice, *Making an Impact: Guidelines on Designing and Implementing Outreach Programs for Transitional Justice*, January 2011.

http://www.ictj.org/static/Publications/ICTJ_MakingAnImpact_pb2011.pdf

⁵ Caspar Fithen, *The Legacy of Four Vetting Programs: An Empirical Review*, Security System Reform Program International Center for Transitional Justice, February 2009. <http://www.ictj.org/images/content/1/2/1276.pdf>

State institutions and civil society will benefit from assistance with their mutual confidence-building efforts. The platforms and dialogue mechanisms convened or initiated by the EU will have the additional benefit of encouraging the socialisation of officials with their constituents, and the public with their institutions.

OSF is ready to assist with the formation of a platform driven by local needs, building on lessons from elsewhere, such as the Euromed or Eastern Partnership civil society platforms.

The EU has acknowledged the importance of civil society as an organised movement and a driver of political change and reform. In referring to areas of possible civil society engagement as “*human rights, the environment, social and economic development*” (p.6), the Communication does not define how this should progress. OSF experience suggests that the most effective approach to civil society would take into account three different levels:

- i. Full incorporation of civil society in the discussions on benchmarks and the normative framework will ensure ownership and sustainability of the changes promoted in the Partnership. Proper civil society engagement, support and protection must be, in themselves, criteria for the Partnership’s progression. This includes well-defined bilateral (CSO-government/CSO-EU) channels, and a “tripartite dialogue” process (CSO-government-EU). In particular civil society consultation should be stipulated in and around the Political and Human Rights Dialogues – and the Partnership premised on such inclusion.
- ii. The development and support to civil society growth should prevent the creation of imbalances and gaps in the sector. EU Delegations are key to this process and the creation of the European External Action Service provides an opportunity to assign additional staff who understand both the political setting and the civil society sector in each country. As a demonstration of best practice, Delegations would actively seek views, give visibility to and provide training to CSOs, especially outside the capitals. Systematic engagement of local actors to discuss the methodology and priorities of financial assistance to civil society is key to effective assistance. Local ownership of programming priorities is essential. Lack of a systematic approach will result in unaccountable funding, distorted priorities and the discrediting of a sector on which each democratic transition relies.
- iii. Finally, the process of engagement has to be thoroughly defined and implemented by both the states and civil society actors and included within the conditions for enhanced incentives. The EU can encourage the governments to establish mechanisms for sustained dialogue on draft laws, policies and programmes in the reform process. This means defining and communicating the entry points for civil society and avoiding ad hoc approaches where possible. Last-minute consultation with civil society actors on complicated legal documents will only suggest “box-ticking” rather than inclusion and undermine commitment. Clarifying modalities for civil society involvement in a tripartite dialogue, its contribution to drafting policy documents (at pre-drafting, draft, final and review stages), and its role in monitoring and participating in policy implementation will show the EU is sincere about the “important role” civil society plays in “checking government excesses” (p.6).

Associating CSO representatives to Human Rights Dialogues or Human Rights Sub-Committees where these have been set up through consultations would usefully support and engage local groups. These existing dialogue structures can be reinvigorated through the Partnership and their agendas approved at ministerial level. Support from EU Foreign Ministers and the HR/VP for a human rights strategy with each country will give greater weight to a technical process, whilst empowering local Delegations to act politically to push the agenda forward.

The European Neighbourhood Review, now scheduled for May, provides an opportunity for an improved approach to civil society. Lessons learned from the Instrument for Pre-Accession’s TACSO (Technical Assistance to CSOs) facility should be incorporated into the new Facility under the ENP to address previous problems and the specifics of applying this assistance in North Africa. Lessons from the IPA Facility include the need to ensure adequate staff within EU Delegations to allow for training and engagement of CSOs; the participation of CSOs is institutionalised in the Partnership; and steps to ensure that the rules of financing (both co-financing and procedures) do not overburden new and fragile CSOs.

To build on and encourage a consultative approach to civil society, the EU could offer to provide technical support to the new governments by bringing experts (from government and civil society) to discuss different models of laws and their implementation mechanisms. OSF has been engaged with such facilitation and development activities for different transition contexts and is actively engaged in supporting the sharing of experiences between and within regions. In particular, our experience has shown that civil society actors benefit from knowledge-transfer from peers who have undergone similar transitions experiences between and within regions.

OSF's links to the Southern Neighbourhood region and partners on the ground can bring useful perspectives as the Partnership develops. We can help in identifying local voices to develop a platform for civil society, provide feedback on previous schemes run by the Commission for civil society support elsewhere and assist Delegations with their outreach activities.

A BROAD REFORM AGENDA

We welcome the commitment to support the democratic and constitutional reform process and the inclusion of "differentiation" as a working principle. Balancing conditionality and intrusiveness is a delicate task, not helped by Europe's relations with past regimes. The EU can apply the conditionality suggested by the Communication by helping develop a system that protects the rights of the citizens. The international community needs to help develop the electoral system rather than to try to control the outcome of the elections. This means that it must avoid any impression of channelling the money towards EU-friendly actors or particular political groups.

European states have their own experience of post-conflict and pre-accession reform. Exchanges in 'lessons learned' exercises with North African states would therefore be productive. The region particularly needs expertise on constitutional courts and technical advice on constitutional division of labour between the legislative, executive and judicial components.

The EU is at its most effective in the **electoral** environment when it backs its own technical assistance with credible efforts to support the political process. OSF welcomes the Communication's commitment to mobilising "*electoral assistance*" and that "*a commitment to adequately monitored, free and fair elections*" (p.5) is the entry qualification for the Partnership. The holding of free and fair elections is an important element, but equally important is the development of checks and balances and pluralist political space. An electoral calendar that aims to exploit the political fervour of the street before the conditions are in place will risk a flawed process.

The goal of a "*more effective law enforcement cooperation to improve security throughout the Mediterranean*" referred to in the Communication (p.6) requires sound national institutions on which to stand. A nationally led **review and reform of security institutions** is a good first step, and support is currently missing in the Communication and the EU response. Regardless of whether a crisis management mission is deployed, we recommend that the EU promotes a coherent and normative framework for reforms that emphasises government transparency in budgeting procedures, civilian and democratic control of the military, intelligence and police forces, and training and development that responds to the security needs within each country. In the absence of a coherent EU policy on security sector reform, the EU can use the situation in the region to promote a comprehensive approach that is based on context, consultation and coordination with local stakeholders.

EU support could address corruption in the Egyptian security sector building on previous experience in for example Kosovo and the DR Congo.⁶ This will involve mapping out the political interests in the military, understanding personnel, contracting and procurement policies and pushing for clarity in the finances and budgets of the defence sector. However, the priority is to identify and stop worst practices such as torture, arbitrary detention and lack of legal representation. An independent investigative commission, preferably with prosecutorial powers, could be one option for addressing abusive institutions. The EU was supportive of a vetting board for police officers in Afghanistan, but a more robust form of vetting (to identify abusive units and officers and the most corrupt), with authority from parliament, transparent operations and measures built in to protect due process would be needed.

The Communication includes support for **judicial reform**, enhanced transparency and the fight against corruption. OSF experience in transition countries has shown that while reforms mainly depend on government policy and implementation, NGOs can play a useful role in the legal reform process, monitoring the delivery of government commitments, documenting problems, participating in public interest litigation and providing advice on policy options and legislation. OSF has worked with partners (for example, in Chile, Macedonia, Poland) to address legacies of secrecy and repression by supporting the adoption, implementation, and improvement of freedom of information laws, and has used these laws to gain the release of information on government contracts and programs. OSF has long been engaged with local groups to develop approaches for improving the delivery of legal aid with significant effects on access to justice in the short-term and broader judicial reform in the longer term.

⁶ For example, the EU mission EUSEC RD Congo has identified corruption in Congolese forces as the main impediment to security sector reform and has helped to decouple the chain of command from the chain of payment.

TRANSPARENCY AND CORRUPTION

The Communication briefly touches on “*enhanced transparency and the fight against corruption*” as part of the “*democratic and constitutional reform processes*” (p.5). However, it makes reference to the extractive sector only in terms of security of access rather than transparency of revenues. Past experience, in particular the case of Ukraine, demonstrates that early attempts to address patronage networks linked to the extractives sector are essential to building sustainable democracies.

The section on joint renewable energy investments, in line with the EU’s 2050 decarbonisation agenda, and the potential of “*a real and reliable convergence of South Mediterranean partners’ energy policies with EU policy*” (p.9) suggest a potentially coherent approach to energy policy. Similarly, looking towards an eventual “*EU-Southern Mediterranean Energy Community*”, building on or linking to the Union’s Eastern and South East Europe Energy Community, is promising. However, without setting down rules for transparency and governance at the outset, the risk is that the failures of past energy regimes are duplicated in new energy governance schemes and in the low-carbon sector.

The European Commission is increasing its own participation in the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) and is deliberating how to create EU legislation that requires country-by-country reporting of companies’ payments to third countries. Prioritising a system of revenue transparency would reflect those commitments. Commitment to the EITI standards and process sends an immediate sign that the benefits of each country’s natural resources are for national consumption; that the new method of governance is consultative rather than dictatorial and introverted; and that civil society is an essential partner. Egypt, Libya and Tunisia’s engagement in the voluntary EITI process, which is already supported in the Africa-EU Energy Partnership, would be a significant step towards an improved investment climate and, eventually, the economic and social benefits of good governance.⁷

The development of efficient tax and revenue systems can strengthen the institution-building process by ensuring that revenues from local resources benefit national budgets. A positive example would be a joint plan to locate assets seized in European banks and return them to national budgets. The plan would include options on where best those funds might be used including for transitional justice mechanisms and dealing with humanitarian costs.

The setting up of national anti-corruption commissions, building on EU Delegations’ experiences in supporting anti-corruption programs such as in Kenya, should be developed as benchmarks for the Partnership. Within the Council of Europe, the Group of States Against Corruption and the methodologies and standards within the Criminal and Civil Law Conventions on Corruption could be usefully extended to the region.

Promoting transparency in the Egyptian defence sector should be of special concern to the EU. The Egyptian military has deeply entrenched interests in the public and private sectors (there is no disaggregated information about defence spending, and the army owns most of the land in Egypt). There is serious concern about asset flight from Egypt’s banks given the vast levels of public corruption, a problem that could deeply destabilise Egypt’s economy in the coming weeks. Instability and unrest could certainly provide an excuse for the army to extend its power and drive back democratic gains.

Accountability and corruption also relates to how the EU gives and monitors its own assistance. Much of EU assistance is given in direct budget support. Insisting on local civil society monitoring of budget spending would support civil society development (particularly in the important growth area of budget tracking and accountability), whilst increasing accountability for EU taxpayers. Putting transparency and anti-corruption at the heart of the Partnership and ensuring mutual compliance will be one way to re-set the EU’s relationship with the region. OSF helped to set up and continues to support Revenue Watch Institute, the EITI and the Publish What You Pay (PWYP) coalition, and can offer lessons from these experiences to EU actors.

⁷ For further information, see Revenue Watch Institute’s assessment of EITI reporting methodology: *Making a Good EITI Report: Analyzing EITI Information*, February 27, 2011, <http://www.revenuewatch.org/news/publications/making-good-eiti-report-analyzing-eiti-data>; EITI’s report on its impact in Africa, EITI 2010 <http://eiti.org/files/EITI%20Impact%20in%20Africa.pdf>; PWYP’s assessment of the opportunities for EITI in the next two years, <http://www.publishwhatyoupay.org/en/resources/extractive-industries-transparency-initiative-next-two-years-opportunities-ensuring-eiti-r>; and the 12 Precepts of the Natural Resource Charter that describes the ingredients needed to harness the opportunities created by natural resources for development: <http://www.naturalresourcecharter.org/>.

MOBILITY

“In the long-term, provided that visa facilitation and readmission agreements are effectively implemented, gradual steps towards visa liberalisation for individual partner countries could be considered on a case-by-case basis” (p.7)

The inclusion of possible visa liberalisation in the Communication is a welcome step. Visa facilitation and liberalisation processes of the past show how technocratic steps can be changed into a positive political imperative. In the Western Balkans the EU held out visa liberalisation as an electorally attractive reward and clearly defined the conditions to obtain it. The Commission closely monitored progress and issued regular status reports. This transparency started a healthy process of regional competition. The lessons to be taken for the Partnership are clear. Difficult reforms are possible if accompanied by explicit and detailed conditions, by achievable short-term goals so that politicians can show the electorate results, and by transparent reporting to allow the public to compare progress in neighbouring countries and put pressure on governments.

A sustained effort to keep up with the neighbours in a visa liberalisation process that is conditional will require states to recruit, train and keep experts in a range of policy areas. That, in turn, might reduce the temptation for every new government to conduct a wholesale clear-out of the bureaucracy. In this way, a competitive and transparent visa liberalisation process will promote more professional, politically neutral administrations.

Visa facilitation, which is a shorter term goal, is likely to be linked to analysis of supply and demand for North African workers. In the longer term, mobility partnerships will be needed to respond to the demographic realities of ageing Europe compared to the youthful profile of North Africa.

The recent past has shown that bilateral EU Member State agreements with North African states on migration have undermined existing continental agreements. The Joint Africa-EU Strategy and its thematic partnership on migration provide the forum for the development of joint and coordinated EU-AU migration policies. As a result, the EU has committed to supporting the implementation of the 2006 Tripoli Declaration on Migration and Development, the establishment of the Migration Information and Management Centre in Mali and of migration observatories throughout Africa. The objectives of the migration partnership are to facilitate mobility and free movement of people in Africa and the EU and to better manage legal migration between the two; to address the root causes of migration and refugee flows; to find concrete solutions to problems posed by illegal or irregular migratory flows; and to address the problems of migrants residing in EU and African countries. It is important that the EU approach to migration issues in North Africa takes account of the whole continent.

Annex:

Ten transition lessons from the work of the Open Society Foundations

March 2011

1. Local ownership is essential. The future stability and sustainability of democracy depends on people feeling that they own the transition, and are responsible for the strengths and weaknesses of their own democracy. If people blame international intervention or foreign governments for what goes wrong, their politicians will avoid taking responsibility.
2. Sequence reforms carefully. If elections are held too early or quick reforms are bungled, transition can get a bad name and leaders lose their credibility. It is worth taking the time to get political institutions right at the start. Therefore transition assistance has to invest in medium and long term, and not just back the first leaders who emerge. Media should be able to operate freely for a sustained period to help ensure the emergence of an informed electorate. Establishment of core elements of the rule of law and citizen security are priorities. Free and fair elections are vital but cannot ensure consolidation of democracy by themselves.
3. Prioritise rule of law and transitional justice. How citizens are treated by the forces of law and order is a litmus test for how accountable the new regime is to them, so it must be the first priority. Transitional justice in various forms – including, where appropriate, legal accountability for past crimes and comprehensive truth processes - is vital to invest new state structures with public trust and prevent unresolved animosities from prolonging cycles of violence. Ratification of international human rights instruments and the development of a national strategy for implementing them are urgent tasks. It is never too early to nourish a legal culture which makes clear that all are equal before the law.
4. Reform the constitution after a broad debate. New constitutions should be informed by a broad national debate, including on what elements of the previous order enabled the misuse of power. Inclusive discussions help deepen commitment to reforms, and are essential if measures such as the separation of powers, judicial independence and enshrining of human rights within the constitution are to be meaningfully applied. Careful consideration should be given to whether a parliamentary system, a presidential system, or a hybrid, is most appropriate in different circumstances. The success of new public institutions created by a constitution is enhanced where competent, experienced persons of integrity assume leadership roles. Constitutional courts had a significant role in protecting and advancing constitutional rights in Hungary, Estonia, Bulgaria, Poland and Slovenia, for example. In a different part of the world, the Constitutional Court in South Africa has played an immensely important role.
5. Ensure thorough review and reform of the security sector. The sooner that the security sector comes under democratic civilian control, the faster reforms will gain traction. Well trained and de-politicised security forces make the difference between peacefully managed dissent and escalating violence. External support works if it builds on a national programme aimed at establishing democratic control. OSF's experience of police reform in Africa, Latin America and Europe shows the need to diagnose local security needs, evaluate police performance, and involve both affected communities and the police themselves in developing systems of crime prevention and accountability.
6. Support a deep and wide civil society. An active civil society is essential for good governance. OSF has often started by funding NGOs because they are among the first authentic voices of local opinion to emerge in the aftermath of authoritarian rule. They steer public demands and hold public authorities accountable for their actions. NGOs and other civic organisations are also vital sources of energy, expertise and innovation in building effective social and political institutions. OSF entrusts its local foundations, run by local experts, to determine needs and means of support, especially to reach outside capital cities.
7. Build the capacity of independent media to be watchdogs. A free and independent media enable civil society to hold governments to account. Pluralism relies on diverse voices in any society. Countries in transition need support for indigenous media outlets, including digital media, that promote democratic values and demonstrate editorial professionalism and independence; develop training for current and future media professionals; monitor and defend journalists' rights; a free and open regulatory environment; and support the development of professional membership-based media associations.

8. Promote transparency. As a common source of widespread frustration with authoritarian regimes, corruption merits immediate attention in the transition. If the public sees an evident fall in corruption, people are more confident about longer-term anti-corruption reform agendas and national integrity systems, as we have found in South-East Europe. International donors can encourage citizens to fight corruption by supporting reforms of political party financing, education, public health and the judiciary. Transparency may not lead to immediate good governance, but it gives citizens the information to demand improvements.
9. Bring women into democracy. Open societies require the early involvement of women in solving political, economic and social problems. Crises can represent a window of opportunity for the creation of gender-inclusive democracies. Early gender assessment helps to ensure women's participation in governance, from restorative justice to designing the new political set-up and diversifying voices within it. Network-building and international outreach of women are notoriously underfunded and neglected. OSF supports women's political participation as an integral part of democratisation because our experience shows the tendency for some transitions to backlash on women. Often women get an initially prominent role and then are marginalised in post-crisis transition. If women are excluded, democracy fails.
10. Invest in the next generation of leaders. Many of today's Central and East European leaders worked for Open Society entities or had Soros scholarships. We worked with the first generation of emerging politicians to change constitutions and build new institutions, while promoting professional development for young people who would emerge later to run them. OSF has invested in bringing the best national experts into the public service system. In Albania, Georgia, Serbia, Slovakia and now in Moldova, we assisted governments to attract and retain highly skilled professionals from the diaspora or non-governmental sector. A system of incentives is combined with in-house training, internships in European public institutions and scholarships for young civil servants. To reduce brain drain and ensure a higher return of graduates to the country, we negotiate special placements with governments. Beneficiaries commit to working in public service for at least 3 years, while governments guarantee permanent positions for them in state institutions.

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