

CRTA:

20

23

**ANNUAL
REPORT**



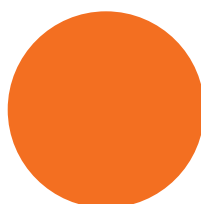
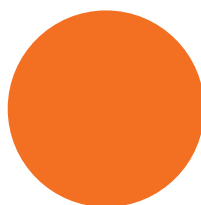
About CRTA

CRTA is a civil society organization dedicated to the development of democratic culture, democratic institutions, and the improvement of conditions for free and fair elections in Serbia. CRTA analyzes the work of state institutions, the role of the media and professional information in the democratization of society, and citizens' attitudes and beliefs about social and political processes. Since 2016, CRTA has been observing elections at the local and national levels, with the help of thousands of citizens trained to the highest international standards for citizen election observation, advocating for the improvement of conditions for fair and free elections. CRTA conducts research and proposes evidence-based solutions, on the principles of the rule of law and respect for human rights. Additionally, CRTA informs and educates citizens about the state of democracy and their political rights, encouraging them to directly engage in addressing issues in their communities and in other political processes.

In 2018, CRTA received the [Democracy Defender Award](#), awarded globally by the OSCE, for outstanding contributions to the promotion of democracy and the defense of human rights, and the international recognition of the [W. Averell Harriman Democracy Award](#) for innovations, dedication, and contribution to democracy awarded by the National Democratic Institute in 2013. CRTA also received the Commissioner for Information of Public Importance and Personal Data Protection Award for outstanding contributions to the field of citizens' rights to access information of public importance in 2018. CRTA's Director Vukosava Crnjanski received the recognition of the [Knight of the National Order of Merit](#) (chevalière de l'ordre national du Merite), awarded by the President of the Republic of France on January 19, 2023, upon the Embassy of France nomination, for persistent and courageous efforts in strengthening democracy and promoting an accountable and transparent public debate in Serbia through the years.

CRTA's online fact-checking media Istinomer (Eng. Truth-o-Meter) is a verified signatory of the [IFCN Code of Principles](#) and a verified member of the [European Fact-Checking Standards Network](#). Since 2020, Istinomer has been [Meta's exclusive local partner for Serbia](#) in combating disinformation on Facebook and Instagram.

[More information](#)



The team

By the end of 2023, the CRTA team consisted of 80 individuals distributed across thematic program departments for elections, quantitative and qualitative research, legal analytics, media monitoring, support for formal and informal activist initiatives, communications, media and field campaigns, finances, administration, and IT. Under the auspices of CRTA, an initiative the Open Parliament, aimed at advocating for a more transparent and quality work of the Parliament as a key democratic institution in the parliamentary democracy system is established, as well as the Istinomer, the first online fact-checking media outlet in the Western Balkans region.

The organization is led by Director Vukosava Crnjanski and Program Director Raša Nedeljkov.

CRTA Governing Board consists of Rastko Petaković, lawyer (Chairman of the Board), Olivera Medar, university professor, Svetlana Logar, retired university professor, Tamara Skrozza, journalist, Hajrija Bugujevci, public finance expert, Dušan Spasojević, university professor, and Ilija Vojnović, program director of the International Republican Institute, Turkey.

[More information](#)



What Marked the Year 2023?



Vukosava Crnjanski, Director:

/ AWAKENING OF CIVIL SOCIETY AS A RESPONSE TO THE SURGE OF VIOLENCE

“When violence escalated to unprecedented levels in May, people had had enough, and all accumulated frustrations due to institutional, media, political, and financial oppression surfaced. Citizens realized that violence was not an isolated incident or some system error but rather the way the system functions and thus survives.”



Raša Nedeljkov, Program Director:

/ ELECTORAL ENGINEERING, THE CULMINATION OF SYSTEMIC ABUSE OF STATE INSTITUTIONS AND LAWS

“Once again, elections in Serbia proved to be less a mechanism for changing power and more a parade of insurmountable advantages for the ruling party, acquired through the systemic abuse of state institutions and laws, aimed at preventing any possibility of change through elections. The organized voter migrations recorded in the December elections were neither legal nor legitimate and fundamentally undermined electoral equality. We are in a situation where we start to believe in the slogan stating that - if elections could really bring change, they would already be banned.”



Tamara Branković, Deputy Program Director:

/ THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AS A MIRROR OF AVERSION TO POLITICAL PLURALISM

“The ruling majority showed enormous intolerance towards the presence of pluralism in the parliament during the year, while simultaneously doing everything to mitigate the consequences of policies that control public space and media, eliminate pluralism from media and institutions, and deny the right to a different opinion.”



Pavle Dimitrijević, Director of Legal Affairs:

/ THE SEEMINGLY IMAGINARY LINE BETWEEN STATE AND PARTY

“In many cases, citizens do not make a clear and unambiguous distinction and boundary between the state and the party, leaving room for manipulation and undue influence on voters. CRTA pointed out the tendency to normalize the ‘merging of the state with the party’ and sought to inform citizens to recognize that we do not actually have a democratic environment in which elections are conducted.”



Jovana Đurbabić, Communications Director:

**/ POLITICAL PRESSURES ON CITIZENS
AS AN INEVITABLE POWER MECHANISM**

“CRTA’s research showed that pressures on voters in Serbia happen almost daily, often as continuous activities over a long period, not just as isolated incidents before or on election day. The tendency to intensify pressures in the pre-election period is clearer, indicating that there are unwritten rules exposing many citizens to politically motivated pressures.”



Vojislav Mihailović, Director of Public Opinion Research:

/ FOREIGN POLICY PUZZLE FOR SERBIAN CITIZENS

“The results of CRTA’s research indicated a certain confusion among Serbian citizens regarding their allegiance to different foreign policy options. A notable duality in their approach is evident - citizens are emotionally connected to Russia, while simultaneously recognizing the economic benefits of cooperation with the West.”



Aleksandra Srečković, Media Research Manager:

**/ CHRONIC LACK OF PLURALISM
AND DOMINANCE OF A SINGLE POLITICAL ACTOR**

“The media space was marked by incendiary rhetoric and the incitement of intolerance, once again pointing to the virtual non-existence of any balanced representation of different political options and opinions. An additional indicator of this inequality is the fact that the President of Serbia addressed the citizens live over 300 times via television in 2023.”

In Focus

Through its initiatives, CRTA continued to promote accountability, transparency and citizen participation in politics. CRTA exerted efforts towards creating societal resilience against undemocratic actions and the influence of disinformation, and towards establishing a foundation for institutional accountability, transparency and openness.

Through quantitative, media, and qualitative research, election monitoring, oversight over the work of the parliament, legal analysis, the Istinomer initiative, and grassroots work with citizens, CRTA worked to advance **democratic culture** and contribute to the creation of conditions for **free and fair elections, free media** and **open institutions**.

CRTA's election observation mission provided a detailed insight into the electoral processes and activities in Serbia, identifying serious irregularities and alerting on organized voter migration as a significant challenge to the quality of elections.

Campaigns like "We Want a Brave Prosecutors" and "StrongerThanPressure" promoted judicial independence and resistance to political pressures, while campaigns such as "Observers are Key Players" and "Vote Freely" encouraged citizens to participate in democratic processes. The "Brave Voice" award was given to individuals and groups who courageously advocate for the common good.

Public opinion research findings indicated growing trust in the civil society sector and support for democratic processes, but also revealed challenges like the lack of clear positions on key issues such as Kosovo. The research also tracked changes in attitudes over time, particularly through the "Serbia Against Violence" protests, uncovering deep public concern over societal violence. One of CRTA's studies identified clientelist networks and the practice of favoring political followers or supporters, within Social Welfare Centers.

Media monitoring revealed the absolute dominance of government representatives in the media and the promotion of polarization among political actors. Conversely, anti-Western rhetoric permeated public discourse.

Support programs for initiatives addressing various public interest issues, such as environmental protection, along with educational workshops, have empowered citizens for active participation in public life and decision making processes.

The Open Parliament project made the work of the National Assembly more transparent by publishing observation findings, analyses and multimedia guides, while field actions were organized to actively involve citizens.

Istinomer fact-checked statements by politicians and public officials in traditional media, analyzed viral content on social networks, maintained a database of political actors' biographies and published analyses of key topics of public interest.

CRTA's Election Observation Mission Elections : 2023

Monitoring of the Election Campaign

The course of the election campaign was primarily monitored by two teams: the field team and the media monitoring team. The field team of long-term observers was deployed in 168 cities and municipalities in Serbia to monitor all activities of political actors in the pre-election campaign on the ground, the work of the election administration, and other election oversight institutions. The media monitoring team simultaneously monitored national television stations, providing insights into the presence of political pluralism in the media. The public was regularly informed about the campaign findings and the assessment of electoral conditions was presented on two occasions, during press conferences organized around the [First LTO Report](#) and [Second LTO Report](#).

Election Day Monitoring

December 17

On election day, CRTA's election observation mission, consisting of **more than 3,000 observers**, monitored parliamentary and Belgrade elections at 500 polling stations in Serbia and 500 polling stations in Belgrade. As in previous election cycles, CRTA organized trainings and capacitated its observers in accordance with the highest international standards for non-partisan and impartial election observation. The focus of the observation mission was on informing citizens about the quality of the electoral process, through regular public updates on voter turnout and the progress of voting, as well as on implementation of electoral procedures: at [10:00 a.m.](#), [1:00 p.m.](#), [4:00 p.m.](#), and [10:00 p.m.](#) CRTA thereby contributed to increasing transparency on election day, providing comprehensive insights into events at polling stations. Election materials reached **over one million people on all social media platforms on election day**.

Assessment of Election Day

CRTA [informed](#) the public that the findings of its election observation mission indicated serious irregularities in parliamentary and Belgrade elections at a press conference on December 18, 2023. Citizens and relevant stakeholders were informed about significant abuses of the electoral process, voting rights, laws, and institutions that affected the quality of parliamentary elections, and the fact that the results of the Belgrade elections did not reflect the freely expressed will of the voters living in the capital. This allowed the public to gain insight into the range of irregularities associated with the electoral process.

Report on Organized Voter Migration__

The public was [alerted](#) about practices that compromised the integrity of the electoral process with the aim of promoting transparency and urging relevant institutions to take further steps. A series of documented claims and findings regarding voter migration were presented as illegal and illegitimate actions, and it was assessed that this type of manipulation poses a serious challenge to the quality of elections in Serbia. CRTA provided recommendations for measures that could prevent this type of electoral manipulations.

Information Campaigns on Elections__

CRTA informed citizens several times about their electoral rights and responsibilities, through development and broad dissemination of educational campaigns within elections: [Voting Abroad](#) and [Everything You Need to Know About Election Day](#). During the election process, CRTA invited citizens to report instances of public officials' campaigning or misuse of public resources, or if they had information about vote buying and pressure on voters, through a dedicated email or phone calls. In addition to social media, citizens reported irregularities directly on election day. With **over 200 emails and 130 phone calls**, in addition to irregularities, citizens mostly had questions about voting and problems that could arise while exercising their voting rights and political pressures that occurred that day.

Educational Workshops__

In the form of a [Masterclass in Electoral Law](#), CRTA organized **a series of educational workshops for 15 graduate lawyers and law students** from the Faculty of Law in preparation for the elections. Within these workshops, young lawyers had the opportunity to engage in four modules covering topics related to active and passive voting rights, voter registers, election administration, electoral systems, the Anti-Corruption Agency, the Regulatory Authority for Electronic Media, domestic and international election observation mission, and to become better acquainted with CRTA's election observation methodology.

Recommendations__

CRTA compiled several reports on the December 2023 elections and made a number of well-founded recommendations to adequately address different aspects of the electoral process, aimed at improving conditions for democratic and fair elections and increasing transparency in elections. These recommendations primarily concerned the transparency of the Voter Registry, the work of the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government, the Prosecutor's Office, independent bodies, and political and media equality.

Complaints

As part of the observer mission, CRTA submitted [complaints](#) and reports with state authorities, as well as other inspection services, aimed at contributing to the integrity of the electoral process and strengthening democratic principles. Totalling **83 complaints** in 2023, CRTA submitted 51 complaints to the Anti-Corruption Agency, 27 complaints to the Regulatory Authority for Electronic Media, and five complaints to the Electoral Campaign Supervisory Board.

Appeals

During the election campaign, CRTA issued several public appeals to government officials, reminding them of their legal obligations, and publicly called on the prosecutor's office to respond to allegations of signature forgery for candidacy. CRTA's election observation mission sent [letters](#) to around 1,600 addresses of managers in city and municipal administrations across Serbia to appeal to their personal and professional responsibility. These appeals aimed to contribute to the integrity of the entire electoral process, prevent abuse and political pressures, and strengthen trust in institutions.

Campaigns

Brave Prosecutors

Under the slogans “We want brave prosecutors”, a **campaign** was launched based on the understanding that a kind of myth about the hero prosecutor has been created in popular culture. In order to encourage individuals in the prosecution and raise awareness about the importance of an independent prosecutorial system, **several videos featuring prosecutors** and **six authored texts** were prepared. The campaign reached **1.6 million people via Facebook and Instagram**, and the produced video materials achieved nearly **one million views** on all social media platforms.

Stronger Than Pressure

With the aim of encouraging citizens to resist political pressures and show solidarity with those who are subjected to intimidation by political actors, a campaign against the normalization of political pressures was launched. Led by the experiences of Ranka Kašiković and Stefan Vukić, the campaign through **video testimonies** shows that it is possible to say “NO” and break free from the network of political pressures. In one month, the campaign reached nearly **two million people through Facebook and Instagram**, while the campaign’s video materials garnered over **1.4 million views** on the same social media platforms.

Observers Are Important Players

Ahead of the elections, a **campaign** under the slogan “Observers are important players” was launched to inform citizens about the importance of joint citizen efforts in ensuring transparency and integrity of the electoral process. Through seven video clips, the unique profiles and roles of observers, who are an essential part of CRTA’s election observation mission, were highlighted. On Facebook, Instagram, and X (ex. Twitter), the campaign reached **over three million people**, and nearly **500 citizens signed up to observe the December 2023 elections** through a special section on CRTA’s website.

Vote Freely

Previous CRTA’s research and experiences have highlighted serious problems in the democratic process related to pressure on voters. In order to promote awareness of the importance of free voting, a **campaign** for voter turnout (“The pencil votes with heart”) was launched, emphasizing the importance of fighting for free elections and mutual solidarity. The campaign was seen by **over 850 thousand citizens in traditional media**, while it reached **over a million people on all social media platforms**.



● **Brave Voice Award**

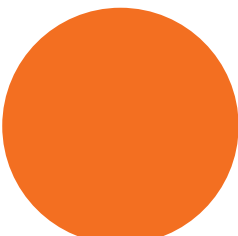
On International Day of Democracy, September 15, the “Brave Voice” [award](#) was presented, which has been awarded by CRTA since 2018 to individuals and groups who courageously fight for the common good. This year’s award was given to the informal association “Students against violence”, local activists and organizers of the “Serbia against violence” protests in Petrovac na Mlavi, activist Dragana Arsić from the “Defend the forests of Fruška Gora” movement, Ranka Kašiković from Subotica and Stefan Vukić from Požarevac who publicly spoke out against political pressures they faced at work, prosecutors Bojana Savović, Jasmina Paunović and Predrag Milovanović, former REM Council member Judita Popović, and the Local Front from Kraljevo.

● **CRTA Talks: “About Political Pressures Over a Cup of Tea”**

From February to June 2023, a [series of “tea parties”](#) on political pressures was organized, with **over 200 citizens** participating in **11 cities across Serbia**. Earlier [research by CRTA](#) showed that pressures are part of everyday life, but that not enough is being said about this issue. In addition to informing about the main findings of the research, discussions were organized with the idea of encouraging citizens to speak out on this topic and to inform them about the legal mechanisms available in cases of exposure to pressures.

● **Network Against Violence**

Together with 19 organizations, CRTA launched the Network Against Violence [platform](#). This network of civil society organizations, journalists and media against violence enabled citizens to be informed about the demands of the “Serbia Against Violence” protests, their fulfillment, and the cities and municipalities where protests were held across Serbia. The platform also contains resources such as detailed steps needed to fulfill media and security demands.



Research

Through a series of public opinion surveys in 2023, CRTA enabled a broader and deeper understanding of public attitudes and opinions regarding various aspects of democratic participation and developments on socio-political scene. Aware that citizens' attitudes and preferences play an important role in the democratic process and contribute to the transparency of the political and social environment, the findings informed further recommendations and formed the basis for advocating for positive policy changes.

| Citizens' Attitudes Towards Participation in Democratic Processes in 2022

A [public opinion survey](#), presented on the occasion of International Civil Society Organizations Day in February 2023, showed that citizens' trust in the civil sector is growing, with nearly half of the respondents believing that these organizations protect the public interest. In addition, support for democratic governance has also increased, while in 2022 every fifth citizen participated in an action to address local community issues, most often focusing on communal (49%) and environmental issues (32%).

| Political Attitudes of Citizens (February 2023)

The [research](#) results showed that there is no clear idea among citizens of Serbia about the ideal solution to the Kosovo problem and the realistic outcome of the negotiations. While emotionally leaning towards Russia and financially towards the West, the perception of Serbia's foreign policy relations and the Kosovo issue remains relatively unchanged, with Russia perceived as the most important political (34%) and security partner (42%), while the European Union is considered the most important economic partner (44%).

| Citizens' Views on the "Serbia Against Violence" Protests (June 2023)

To track possible changes in citizens' attitudes, a [thematic survey](#) conducted through focus groups, adapted to the series of "Serbia Against Violence" protests, organized after two mass tragedies in May 2023, was conducted in June 2023. The findings from the research showed that every other citizen supported the protests, and every third said they had already participated or wanted to participate in the protests. Among citizens who supported the protests, most were those not close to either ruling or opposition parties, and every fifth citizen closer to the ruling parties also supported the protests.

| Research at the "Serbia Against Violence" Protest (July 2023)

A [survey](#) conducted among participants of the 10th "Serbia Against Violence" protest in Belgrade on July 8, 2023, showed that almost half of the participants saw the success of the protests in changing the government in the next elections. The aim of the survey was to see if there had been a change in attitudes given the change in the structure of people participating and changing demands. More than half of the

respondents cited arrogance and arbitrariness of the government as the main motive for participating in the protests, while the majority also supported the formation of an inquiry committee to determine the circumstances that led to the mass killings in “Ribnikar”, Dubona and Malo Orašje

Research on Protests Against Violence (August 2023)

At the end of August 2023, a [study](#) consisting of two survey investigations was published: one of participants of the protest held on June 3, 2023 in Belgrade, and another of the public opinion of citizens of Serbia, conducted from June 10 to June 15, 2023, providing comprehensive insights into citizens’ attitudes. The findings indicated that protest participants were driven by emotions (about 60%) or a desire to support the protest against violence, and every fifth citizen felt it was important for the demands of the protests to be met. Public opinion research showed that protests were supported by citizens from all segments of society and parts of the country, with support for the protests not falling below 50% in any region of Serbia. Two focus groups were conducted to gain a clearer picture of citizens’ attitudes.

Citizens’ Attitudes Towards Violence (September 2023)

The [research](#) results showed that citizens recognize the negative effects of violence in society and highlight a reluctance of the state to effectively address this problem. Although economic issues are significant, citizens recognized the absence of social justice and corruption as forms of violence perpetrated by the state against citizens. A large number of citizens were concerned about various forms of physical and psychological violence, including structural violence that burdens Serbia.

Citizens’ Attitudes in Serbia and Belgrade (October 2023)

The [research](#) showed that half of the citizens of Serbia (47%) believe that the country is heading in the wrong direction. The main problems cited by citizens during the survey were the economic situation, poor living standards, and rising prices, with the economy as a problem for 39% of respondents. Kosovo was also highlighted as an important issue, with 23% of citizens considering it the main problem.

Research on Political Pressures in Social Welfare Centers

Ahead of December 2023 elections and International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, CRTA organized a conference to present [research](#) on political pressures and clientelist networks in Social Welfare Centers. Previous research has shown that political pressures on citizens intensify during election periods, especially on public sector employees and the most vulnerable groups. The conference brought together representatives of institutions and civil society organizations, as well as members of the international community, to stimulate public dialogue on these issues and call for responsible work of social welfare institutions. Additionally, CRTA summarized the research through an audio podcast on social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, as well as on its YouTube channel, thereby encouraging broader discussion on this issue.



Media Monitoring and Research

Media Monitoring:

Political Pluralism, Foreign Actors

A team of media monitors, trained to the highest standards of media observation, conducted daily monitoring of media coverage. **Two analyses** were published on the representation of political actors in Serbia ("[A Year without Balance in the Media](#)", "[Political Pluralism June 2022 - May 2023](#)") and **one analysis** regarding the representation of foreign actors in Serbian media ("[CRTA Media Monitoring: A Story Against the Western Side – Monitoring Foreign Influence, July 2022 – June 2023](#)"). During this one-year period, **over 29,962 media pieces and over 2,750 hours of television programs** were reviewed. As part of disinformation monitoring, the team also conducted regional monitoring of the most influential regional media and participated in a door-to-door campaign that analyzed the effects of exposure to manipulative media content.

The results of the media monitoring showed an absolute dominance of government representatives in central news programs (on average 95%), biased reporting, and encouragement of polarization among political actors. Another significant finding was that President Vučić addressed the nation live on television more than once daily during this period. Anti-Western rhetoric towards the EU, US, and NATO permeated public discourse in 2023, with a constant increase in Serbian media, while Russia was predominantly portrayed positively.

Based on the findings collected during media monitoring, **45 complaints** were submitted to the Regulatory Authority for Electronic Media in 2023.

Research:

Media Habits and Mapping Media Relevance

As complementary activities to daily media monitoring analyses, the media research team conducted a study on media habits, research on media relevance, and an experimental study (published within the "[Media Analysis 2023 – Recognizing Relevance and Importance of Media](#)"). Findings showed that television remains the primary source of information, especially for socio-political topics, with public broadcaster RTS enjoying the highest trust. The lack of media pluralism contributed to bias in reporting. Based on these findings, the

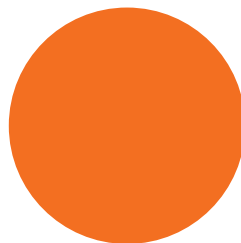
study emphasizes the danger of information manipulation and underscores the need to enhance media literacy, critical thinking about media content, and the development of strategies to combat information manipulation in the Serbian media space

Defunding Disinformation Report

In collaboration with colleagues from the Balkan Free Media Initiative (BFMI) CRTA provided the contribution to the report on defunding disinformation in the Balkans ([CRTA BFMI Defunding Disinformation in the Balkans](#)).

Daily Media Briefs

For the second consecutive year, **over 300 media briefs** were prepared, including daily summaries of leading television news and newspaper front pages, as well as potential information manipulation. Through condensed media reporting analyses shared via mailing lists, interested actors were promptly and efficiently informed about key events, political trends, and public debates in Serbia. These summaries contribute to a better understanding of political and social dynamics in Serbia.



Citizens Have Power

Support Programs for Initiatives

Through support programs for local initiatives, CRTA has continued to empower citizens and encourage their active participation in public life, to help citizens engage in decision making processes and defend the public interest. The main goal of these activities is to inform, educate, and mobilize citizens to actively participate in decision making processes and advocate for societal changes.

In 2023, **20 initiatives** addressing various topics of public importance were supported, including environmental protection, protection of cultural heritage, water management, abuses in the healthcare system, and others. These initiatives primarily received legal and expert assistance related to these topics.

A summary of the activities of initiatives working to strengthen democratic culture and enhance citizen participation is available through the [“Citizens Have Power” section](#) of the CRTA’s website, including the examples of initiatives such as [“Moms are the Law”](#), [“Polekol: Right to Water”](#), and more.

Educational Workshops: School of Parliamentarism

Inspired by the participants’ experiences in the [Democracy Academy](#) educational program, CRTA organized the School of Parliamentarism for 25 young participants, including students, journalists, civil society and political activists. Through educational workshops, young people became familiar with the structure and functioning of the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia, as well as the available parliamentary mechanisms for greater citizen participation in the work of the parliament.

The workshops aimed to inform participants about the importance of independent, transparent, and accountable work of the Parliament through theoretical and practical work with appropriate mentoring support.

As part of this activity, discussions with Members of Parliament and a visit to the institution were organized. The School of Parliamentarism in 2023 covered four thematic areas:

- 1 / Parliament as the Foundation of the Rule of Law,**
- 2 / Assembly, Civil Society and Citizens: Power and Influence in Improving Citizens’ Lives,**
- 3 / Transparency of the Parliament and the role of media,**
- 4 / Simulation of the Work of the National Assembly.**



OPEN PARLIAMENT

Monitoring the Work of the Parliament

In 2023, the Open Parliament Initiative continued to monitor the daily activities of the Serbian Parliament, analyzing various processes from the perspectives of transparency, accountability and participatory governance. This effort resulted in the publication of 50 transcripts, 5,766 speeches, 215 voting records, 206 committee session reports, and 161 texts of adopted laws. Additionally, 19 articles were published on the Cenzolovka portal. The initiative also launched an Instagram profile for Open Parliament, with over 100 posts, and increased its presence on other social media platforms (270 tweets on Twitter, 143 posts on Facebook, and 26 videos on YouTube).

The public also had the opportunity to stay informed through a new section on the website providing a concise overview of all parliamentary facts ("[All About the Parliament](#)"), periodic reports ("[Annual Report on the Parliament](#)"), and special analyses ("[How Parliamentary Groups Vote](#)", "[What is an Interpellation](#)", etc.). Furthermore, a new [website](#) dedicated to the Inquiry Committee, for addressing the issues around mass killings in May 2023, under the auspices of Open Parliament was launched, providing insight into the committee's duties, members, activities and related documents. The primary goal of these activities was to enhance public understanding of parliamentary work and establish regular communication between citizens and their elected representatives.

Multimedia Guides:

Parliament Under the Magnifying Glass, Parliamentary Notebook

A total of 37 editions of the Parliamentary Notebook ("[Parliamentary Notebook: Race Against Time](#)", "[Parliamentary Notebook: Signs Along the Way](#)", etc.) and three editions of Parliament Under the Magnifying Glass were published. Through these guides, the public was provided with a concise overview of all parliamentary activities, the applicability of parliamentary rules, and expert knowledge related to the work of the Parliament.

Original Shows and Articles:

Open Studio of Open Parliament, Confined in Parliament

In 2023, the Open Parliament Initiative launched a new original show ("[Open Studio of Open Parliament](#)") and a new series of original articles ("[Confined in Parliament](#)"). The series of six articles "Confined in Parliament", launched just before the 2023 elections, covered a wide range of topics, including the role of Members of Parliament and the Parliament. In seven editions of the Open Studio of Open Parliament, discussions were held with Members of Parliament, political scientists, legal experts, students, etc. Through this new video format, viewers could participate live and ask questions on topics such as judicial laws, vocabulary and behavior of MPs, Parliament and the issue of femicide, etc. Additionally, several original articles and analyses were published, such as "[Guide for Journalists](#)" and "[Analysis of the Process of Adopting Judicial Laws](#)".

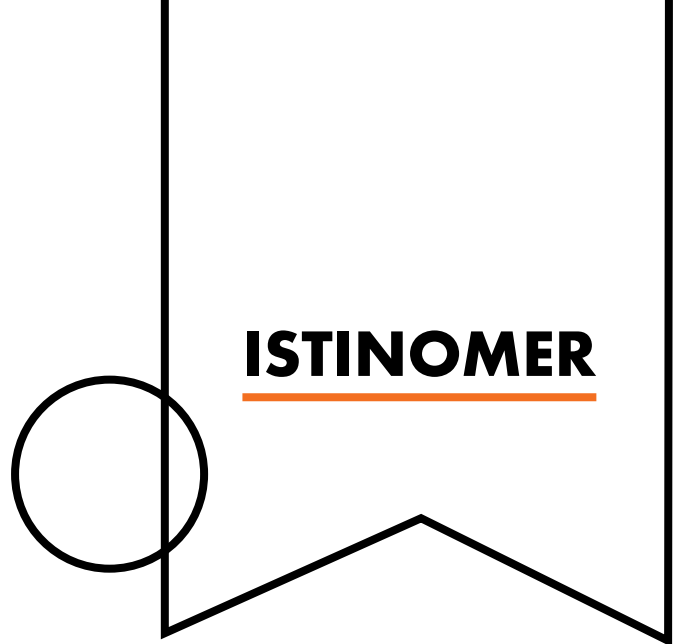
Fieldwork:

Open Parliament Street Actions

Through 30 street actions across Serbia, Open Parliament asked citizens "[What \(should\) be done in the Parliament?](#)". This initiative stemmed from CRTA's public opinion research, which revealed dissatisfaction with the work of the Parliament (41% dissatisfied) and the perception that MPs care more about party than citizens' interests (72%). Through discussions and **1,572 messages sent by citizens to MPs**, the need for greater accountability and adequate representation of citizens, as well as oversight of the Parliament's work, was emphasized.

Appeals

Open Parliament continued to appeal on topics of public interest and, on March 8, 2023, [called on](#) institutions, especially the Parliament, to take an active role in combating femicide, demanding systemic solutions to the national crisis in which nine women were killed since the beginning of the year.



Exposing Information Manipulation

Istinomer has been fact-checking public information and manipulations to support an environment where truth, transparency and accountability are valued. A total of [25 statements by politicians and public officials](#) in traditional media on topics of public interest were verified: elections, protests, sanctions, the economy, infrastructure projects, etc. The Istinomer team evaluated statements for truthfulness, consistency, or fulfillment of promises, while also drawing attention to instances of the abuse of facts in the public sphere. In anticipation of the December 2023 elections, the [Pre-election Promises Notebook #Elections2023](#) was published. Using digital tools, 240 viral content pieces on the Facebook social network were verified, mostly related to events on battlefields, natural disasters and public health issues. Through its newsletter, Istinomer shared **50 concise analyses**, pointing out information manipulations in politicians' statements, media and social networks.

Informing about Political Actors

Based on publicly available information, Istinomer maintains and updates a [database of biographies](#) of political actors in Serbia. Biographies of political actors are searchable by name, position, party, profession, education and location.

Analyses

A total of [187 analyses](#) of key topics in public focus in the past year in Serbia, the region and the world were published by Istinomer. A part of the analyses was dedicated to elections and uncovering various types and mechanisms of electoral manipulations. An article raising questions about the validity of the Voter Registry and potential system abuse was published, analyzing examples where an unusually large number of voters are found in a relatively small area ([40 voters in 58 square meters](#)). Some other election analyses include [Election Campaign from the Perspective of Istinomer: Lies, Manipulations, Targeting and Cheering](#), and [Who Are the Candidates for MPs?](#). Additionally, [30 episodes of the Retrovizor](#) (Eng. In the Review Mirror) series were published.



Other Achievements

Awards

Director of CRTA, Vukosava Crnjanski, was **honored** with the National Order of Merit of France in 2023. Established by Charles de Gaulle in 1963 as a decoration for special merits, military or civilian, the order represents one of the two French national orders, along with the famous Legion of Honor. This recognition highlights the activities led by CRTA's Director for the past twenty years, acknowledging the significant contribution to the essential understanding of democracy in Serbia, with an emphasis on its fundamental values such as media independence and political pluralism.

Internship Program

More than **20 young individuals** went through **CRTA's internship program**, covering all the topics CRTA deals with. Through this program, young people gained practical experience and skills in areas such as fact-checking, quantitative and qualitative research, election monitoring, media monitoring, and tracking the work of the Parliament. Additionally, they had the opportunity to work on their research projects, allowing them to explore key topics such as accountability and transparency in society.

Contributions

CRTA contributed to international reports by providing expert comments and comprehensive analyses. Detailed contributions were prepared for reports of the European Commission and the European Parliament on Serbia's progress, covering all relevant information, analyses, and recommendations related to the electoral process, media situation, and the work of institutions in Serbia.

Group and Bilateral Meetings

Representatives of institutions, European countries, the United States, Canada, and the international community - such as the European Parliament, the European Commission, the European External Action Service, the Council of Europe, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, and others, were regularly briefed on the results of CRTA's election observation and advocacy, research on citizens' attitudes, media coverage, institutional work, and other topics relevant to the state of democracy in Serbia through **dozens of group and bilateral meetings**. These stakeholders were also informed about the recommendations arising from CRTA's research, and their support for democratic reforms covered by these recommendations was sought.

Conferences and Events

Throughout 2023, CRTA organized various types of events. **Over 1,500 people** attended **10 events**, which can be categorized into several categories, including educational workshops, field actions, press conferences, ceremonies, and other events.

Organizational development

Within the previous year, CRTA continued to build the internal capacities of its team in both program and financial and administrative areas.

In this regard, CRTA was engaged in an ongoing review and updating of its internal rules and procedures, and has improved capacities of its team members for internal and external communications, including better understanding of audiences and users of diverse platforms and tools. CRTA also continued with an independent research processes, through intensified implementation of public opinion and focus groups surveys, aimed at the assessment of attitudes and perceptions of both general population and different target groups regarding diverse aspects of democracy that are in the focus of CRTA's operations, and focusing on areas emerging as crisis drivers in a society.

As part of the organizational development, CRTA launched another round of the comprehensive internship program for youth interested to acquire knowledge and capacities in programmatic and financial areas of CRTA's expertise, and equip young generations with tools and skills for the effective and efficient engagement in civil society.

Considering that the previous period was marked by CRTA's intensive engagement in election observation and advocacy, CRTA focused its capacities on further expansion and building of the network of activists and civil society organizations from different parts of Serbia. In this regard, along with provision of consultancy, funding, expert and mentorship support to local organizations, CRTA directly engaged with members of its widespread election observation network. CRTA also ensured the engagement of around 500 election observers through the crowdsourcing campaign. As a result of an ongoing communication and exchange, established quality relations and firm partnerships and trust, CRTA's election observation network included more than 3,000 individuals, some of which have also been engaged not only in the election-related activities, but in other CRTA's initiatives aimed at addressing democratic challenges outside the election process.

This investment enabled CRTA to expend and strengthen network, build its resilience further, support longer-term sustainability, as well as to achieve higher accountability of the organization both internally and among the public and different stakeholders.

A Year in Numbers

4.004
media mentions
covering CRTA,
Istinomer, and
Open Parliament

More than
3,000
observers
monitored the
December elections

337 posts on
Facebook, **208** posts
and **602** stories
on Instagram,
744 tweets/posts
on Twitter/X

7 public opinion
surveys published

343
daily briefings
and special analyses
on media reporting
and media manipulations

365 days
of monitoring political
pluralism in the media
and representation
of foreign policy
actors

Total Reach:

Facebook: **1,838,273**

Instagram: **2,288,821**

Instagram impressions: **4,723,092**

Follower Growth:

Facebook - **15.5%**

Instagram - **75.9%**

Twitter - **22.1%**

45 complaints
submitted to the Regulatory
Body for Electronic Media

50 transcripts of plenary sessions of the Parliament, 5,766 MP speeches and 215 voting records documented, 206 committee meeting reports and 161 texts of adopted laws published

187 Istinomer analyses published, 25 statements by politicians and public officials evaluated, 240 viral content pieces on social media assessed

50 weekly Istinomer newsletters

37 weekly newsletters on the work of the Parliament

Over 1,500 questions and messages for MPs collected during 30 street actions across Serbia

25 participants of the School of Parliamentarism

20+ interns participated in CRTA's internship program

Support provided to 20 civic initiatives across Serbia

15 participants attended educational workshops on electoral law

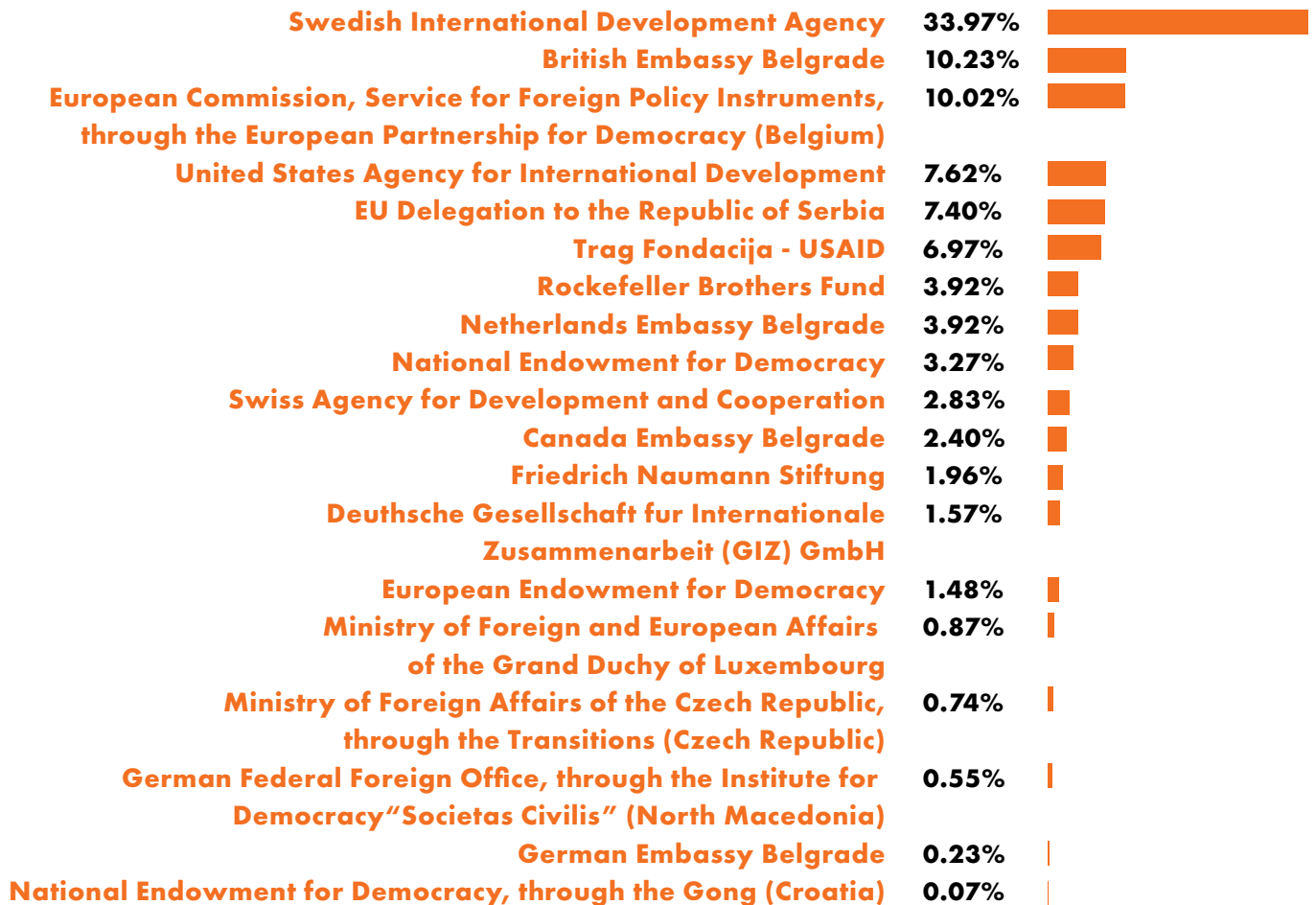
Expenses and Revenues

Expenses

Total: € 2.296.400,00



Revenues



Partners

- British Embassy Belgrade
- Canada Embassy Belgrade
- Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
- EU Delegation to the Republic of Serbia
- European Fact-Checking Standards Network
- European Endowment for Democracy
- France Embassy Belgrade
- Friedrich Naumann Stiftung
- German Embassy Belgrade
- Google
- Microsoft
- Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg
- National Endowment for Democracy
- Netherlands Embassy Belgrade
- Rockefeller Brothers Fund
- Swedish International Development Agency
- Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
- United States Agency for International Development
- European Commission, Service for Foreign Policy Instruments, through the European Partnership for Democracy (Belgium)
- German Federal Foreign Office, through the Institute for Democracy “Societas Civilis” (North Macedonia)
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, through the Transitions (Czech Republic)
- National Endowment for Democracy, through the Gong (Croatia)
- United States Agency for International Development, through the Trag Foundation (Serbia)



CRTA: