



# THE PROCESS OF PREPARING A CIVIL STRATEGY MUNICIPALITY OF PÉCS (HUNGARY) 2022-2026

Case studies/instruments



## HISTORY

The city has seen a dynamic development of the civil sector in the decades following the regime change. Already in the first half of the 1990s, civil society organisations were institutionalised at organisational level, which took over municipal tasks and services to a significant extent. Local civil society actors were among the first in the country to recognise the need for cooperation and joint advocacy. In 1996, they were among the first to formulate joint proposals within the framework of the Citizen-friendly Municipality Programme (USAID-UWI Network for Democracy Programme). It was also at this time that the first attempt to coordinate cooperation between local government and the civil society was made by setting up a city-wide round table, whose inaugural meeting was attended by nearly 100 civil society organisations. The organisations set up professional round tables, the purpose of which was to bring together and, to a certain extent, coordinate the NGOs operating in Pécs, to represent them and defend their interests vis-à-vis the municipality, the assembly and other municipal, state and other bodies. Within the framework of this international programme, the House of Civil Communities, one of the first in the country to open its doors to help and develop the county's civil society organisations, was established as a kind of "incubator house" for civil service providers, and the civil referral institution was created within the municipal office structure.

Unfortunately, the first civil society advocacy initiatives were not successful. Later, there were many more attempts, sometimes successful, sometimes unsuccessful. These included the Civil Strategy of the Baranya County Municipality in 2004 - based on the Scottish "Compact" model - in which mainly Pécs NGOs participated, the establishment of the Pécs Youth Round Table to shape local youth policy, the Social Policy Round Table and the Public Culture Council (now the Public Culture Round Table) established in 1997 is still actively involved in shaping local cultural policy.

## THE PROCESS OF PREPARING THE STRATEGY

At the end of 2019, the Civil Strategy of the city expired. At the beginning of 2020 - before the outbreak of the epidemic - the preparation process of a new civil strategy was started, which involved the civil organisations of the city in several circles, and



the City of Pécs entrusted the House of Educators Association with the coordination of the process.

In 2020 and 2021, there were several meetings of a significant number of the city's NGOs, including those involved in public service or other contractual relations with the municipality, but most of the participants were invited by field of expertise. The aim was for the urban organisations to formulate and discuss the conceptual approaches and proposals of the strategy in the framework of partnership and joint thinking, and to prepare the new civil strategy based on the conclusions and proposals, which included a Preamble, a Situation Analysis, the basic principles and professional principles, and the framework for partnership.

For the situation analysis, the municipality requested the most recent raw data series of the Hungarian Central Statistical Office (KSH) for 2018, which provided the basis for the analysis and contributed to the creation of a realistic picture of the current state of the civil sector in Pécs. The SWOT analysis based on the Situation Analysis is the starting point for the principles and the proposals defining the framework of the partnership.

The draft was sent to 609 NGOs in Pécs on 1 October 2021. Of the 609 organisations, 14 had submitted their comments by 15 October 2021. The responses to the opinions were prepared after lengthy consultations with the Municipality, and a significant part of the suggestions were incorporated into the strategy.

The strategy proposes transparent and forward-looking forms of cooperation for the coming period, which will serve and support the interests of the municipality and the entire civil sector of Pécs. The strategy defines the framework, while the strategy based on it will mean the expansion and operationalisation of the framework in the future.

The General Assembly of the Municipality of Pécs County City adopted the Civil Strategy on 14 December 2021.

## **COOPERATION BETWEEN THE MUNICIPALITY OF THE CITY OF PÉCS AND THE NGOs**

The Municipality of the City of Pécs formulates the following principles and profession principles in connection with the cooperation with civil society organisations in Pécs:

1. The Municipality of the City of Pécs - in the performance of its mandatory and voluntary tasks - aims at and has an elementary interest in partnering with civil society organisations - and thus strives to develop and increase its efficiency. To this end:

- Creates and develops a framework for partnership, taking steps to widen public participation (by introducing participatory - community - budgeting);
- Relies on the involvement of civil society organisations as service providers (outsourcing of mandatory and voluntary tasks to civil society organisations - e.g. public cultural tasks – under a public cultural agreement, or social tasks - under supply contracts), following existing and operational good practice, in the effective performance of its community and public service tasks, in all areas where this effectiveness can be demonstrated or established, and
- Supports the development of a service provider approach in cooperation with service provider NGOs in Pécs. Proactively supports the development of the service provider approach, knowledge, abilities and skills of the civil sector, and the expansion of the range of tasks;
- Exchanges development programmes and models, introduces service standards, develops social economy type services (e.g. generation of social enterprises);
- Conducts a needs assessment by neighbourhood; developing a service development approach;
- Organizes trainings using the community planning method;



- Supports and assists formal or non-formal initiatives and communities of small organisational size, which are the basis of democracy and self-organisation - by preserving the diversity of the civil sector, strengthening community cohesion, generating and encouraging the implementation of creative community programmes;
- Extends the possibilities of publicity towards civil society organisations (on the PécsMa website, the [www.pecs.hu](http://www.pecs.hu) and other city media, city campaigns - such as "Pécs Open" - generating civic engagement;
- Establishes a transparent and predictable rental system for the rental of municipal property owned by NGOs and for municipal property available for rental.

2. It is in the interest of the Municipality of the City of Pécs to increase the amount of development (EU and other) funds coming to the city, and to operate the results of the developments that are significant in terms of the efficiency of community and public service provision in a long-term, sustainable manner. To ensure the efficient generation and use of resources, the aim is to

- cooperation between the civil sector and local government for mutual benefit;
- joint planning of development tasks,
- building partnerships, joint resource mobilisation and implementation;
- to provide (if necessary) own resources for NGOs with high professional standards but lacking resources, by creating a so-called own resources/self-resources fund;
- planning for the long-term operation of developments in a service-oriented way, involving all sectors.

3. The Municipality of the City of Pécs, in order to perform its community and public service tasks and to flexibly handle crisis tasks, has a mobilizable volunteer base trained for special sub-tasks, coordinated by the Pécs Community Building and Volunteer Centre of the House of Educators Association and other NGOs (Hungarian Maltese Charity Service, Catholic Charity, Hungarian Red Cross, etc.). The Centre also supports and helps the development and operation of volunteering in the city.

4. The Civil Concept is defined in accordance with the existing strategic documents of the Municipality of the City of Pécs, taking into account the objectives of each strategy.