

## CIVIL SOCIETY DEVELOPMENT AND ITS IMPACT ON THE DEMOCRATIZATION PROCESS IN KOSOVO

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### ABSTRACT

The process of establishing a sustainable and active civil society that effectively and responsibly participates within a democratic system of governance is crucial for transitional countries. After years of conflict and political uncertainty, Kosovo's independent status poses great challenges, including healing ethnic and political conflicts while rebuilding the nation's economy and infrastructure. The fragile society of Kosovo faces many challenges, the development of civil society is just one of them. Unfortunately Kosovo's civil society is not yet an effective and influential partner of government public decision-making. Civil society in Kosovo went through two developmental phases: the so called 'civil resistance' against Milosevic's regime in the 1990s, and the post-war period under international administration and building of democratic governance. In Independent Kosovo, problems of political and economic nature concerning the building of new institutions require the support of public discussion. The role of NGO's whose focus is political activism that tends to expand the practices of citizenship is reduced, and true public debate and coverage of all sides of important issues – elements crucial to a functioning democracy – are hampered if not prevented. Hence, the process of democratization of Kosovar society is negatively impacted. This article will explore the process of civil society development in Kosovo, from its days of origin, through the complicated political situations of the 1990s, and its increasingly active role in contributions toward the current democratization process.

**Keywords:** NGO sector development, EU integration, state-building, political activism, democratization.