

# POLICYMAKING IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

Creating Demand for Evidence Beyond EU Conditionality

---

Vienna, 12 July 2017

Sena Marić  
Senior Researcher  
European Policy Centre - Belgrade

# Underestimated importance of policymaking

- Evidence-based policymaking is vital for one country's quality of public services, economic performance and policy enforcement
- Effective policymaking systems prevent over-regulation, save tax payers' money and ensure best cost-benefit balance
- EU accession process is making increasing demands from the policymaking systems of the candidate countries, especially in terms of:
  - Transparency and inclusiveness of policymaking process
  - Availability and reliability of data
  - Monitoring of the achieved results

---

[www.europeanpolicy.org](http://www.europeanpolicy.org)

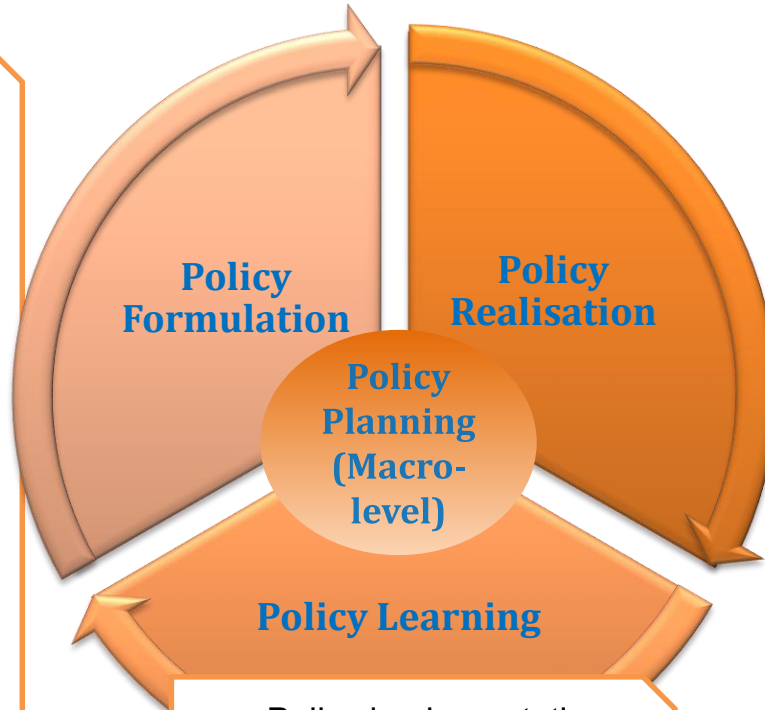
 /EuropeanPolicyCentre  
 @CEPBelgrade  
 Centar za evropske politike  
 [office@cep.org.rs](mailto:office@cep.org.rs)  
 +381 11 4082 265

# State of play in the region

- Formal requirements are in place, but the actual policymaking process suffers from lack of evidence, transparency and inclusiveness
- Public consultation timeframes are very short
- Weak analytical and monitoring capacities

# Ideal policymaking model

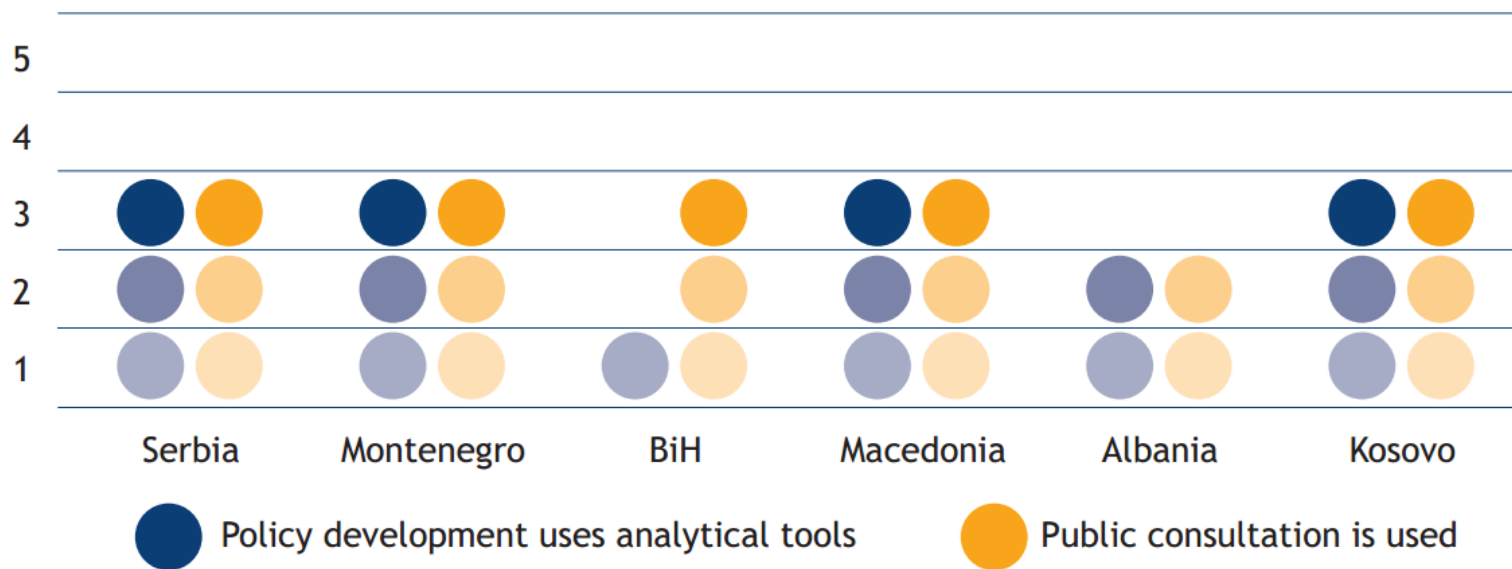
- Definition of priorities - agenda setting
- Problem recognition and analysis
- Policy design - preparation of policy proposals & formulation of policy alternatives
- Ex-ante impact assessment, incl. weighing of policy options
- Choice of policy option
- Inter-ministerial consultations
- Continuous consultations



- Deciding on the proposed policy
- Preparation of legal drafts or other policy instruments, including continued regulatory impact assessment (RIA)
- Coordination at the centre of government
- Further consultations

- Policy implementation
- Policy monitoring
- Policy evaluation

# Comparative assessment based on SIGMA indicators



# Role of CSOs: unused potential

- Unfavourable legal and institutional frameworks for CSOs' involvement
- Limited capacities of the CSOs to:
  - Contribute to the policymaking process with their qualitative inputs
  - To advocate for more transparent and evidence-based policymaking
- EU accession/association process requires greater CSO involvement in:
  - Policy formulation
  - Monitoring of realisation of the Action Plans and other membership negotiation related requirements

# Thinking beyond EU accession (uncertain) perspective

- The process of becoming an EU member is a great exercise and opportunity to durably reform policymaking systems

Scenario I: WB countries achieve EU membership

Scenario II: EU accession process is put on hold

- ➔ major deficiency of policymaking reform/process scrutinisers
- ➔ necessity to have a permanent regional pressure mechanism

# Centre for Excellence in Policymaking Systems in the Western Balkans (CEPS WeB)

- Six think tank organisations, members of Think for Europe Network
- Mission:
  - to promote the use of research as a basis for policy and decision making in the Western Balkans
  - by providing evidence-based and high quality contributions
  - to advance the existing policy processes.
- Vision 2025:
  - the leading independent regional centre that provides cutting edge research on policymaking
  - strong track record as a corrective factor of the existing policymaking practices in the region
  - Members form a vibrant network of researchers recognised for their expertise.

---

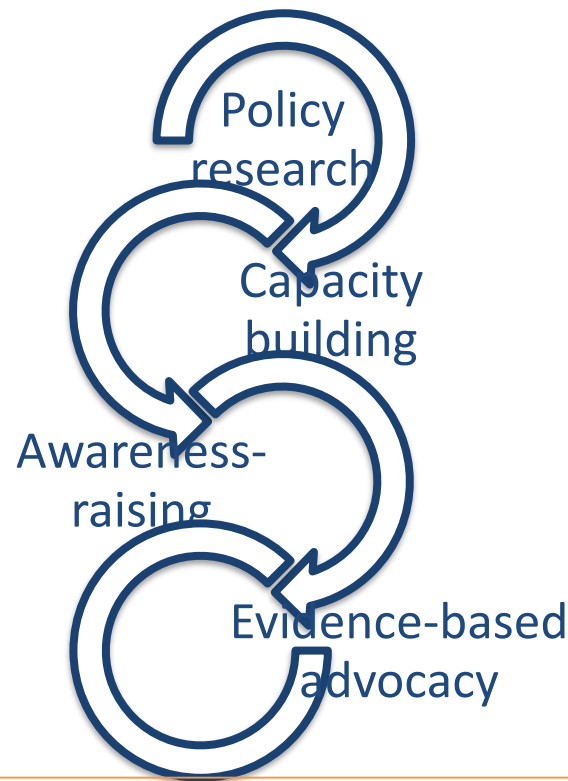
[www.europeanpolicy.org](http://www.europeanpolicy.org)

 /EuropeanPolicyCentre  
 @CEPBelgrade  
 Centar za evropske politike  
 [office@cep.org.rs](mailto:office@cep.org.rs)  
 +381 11 4082 265



# CEPS WeB engagement fronts

- **Joint research** on policymaking related topics, to mutually reinforce each other's expertise and thus raise the overall capacities of the Centre
- **Joint advocacy** initiatives directed towards the national governments, EU decision makers and other initiatives aimed at enhancing regional cooperation
- **Capacity building** activities to empower CSOs in the region



# Regional approach rationale

- Learning from each other's experience and expertise
- Stimulation of sustainable regional exchange
- Peer pressure → CSO empowerment
- Increase of advocacy potential
- Parallel, additional pressure to EU/SIGMA
- Role model for dire situation in the EU?

# Evidence-based policymaking in social policies in Serbia

- Positive role of the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit within the Serbian Government
- CSOs actively involved in formulation of Poverty Reduction Strategy and in monitoring of its implementation
- Lack of roof, long term strategic vision and document → difficulties in encompassing cross-cutting policies



Thank you for your attention!

**Sena Marić**

T : +381 11 4082 265

M: +381 63 7786 876

E: [sena.maric@europeanpolicy.org](mailto:sena.maric@europeanpolicy.org)

T: [@senamasic](https://www.instagram.com/senamasic)

---

[www.europeanpolicy.org](http://www.europeanpolicy.org)

 [/EuropeanPolicyCentre](https://www.facebook.com/EuropeanPolicyCentre)  
 [@CEPBelgrade](https://twitter.com/CEPBelgrade)  
 [Centar za evropske politike](https://www.linkedin.com/company/centar-za-evropske-politike)  
 [office@cep.org.rs](mailto:office@cep.org.rs)  
 +381 11 4082 265