

Serbia Program Summary

Since the ousting of Slobodan Milosevic in 2000, voters' dissatisfaction with lack of progress on meaningful democratic reforms has resulted in widespread voter apathy and disengagement from the political process in Serbia.

To restore the Serbs' confidence in democracy, political parties, government leaders and nongovernmental organizations must build a results-oriented political system that is responsive to a broad range of views and is more inclusive of women, youth and ethnic minorities.

The International Republican Institute (IRI) helps political parties develop and communicate a wide spectrum of clear and responsive policy options; demonstrate effective governance through issue-based coalitions and results-oriented agendas; expand participation of women, youth and ethnic minorities in the political process; and improve their ability to wage competitive campaigns.

In conjunction with these four objectives, IRI continues to conduct quantitative and qualitative public opinion research. This research includes national polls and focus groups designed to help government institutions, parties, and nongovernmental organizations understand the issues and develop responsive agendas.

Responsive Policies and Communication

Through a series of trainings and consultations, IRI helps pro-reform political parties develop and communicate issue-based policies that differentiate the parties based on how they address key concerns of citizens. IRI also helps build the capacities of think tanks, interest groups and coalitions to advance specific policy proposals that can be incorporated into parties' platforms.

Effective and Credible Governance

IRI's issue-based coalition trainings and seminars focus on helping political parties in parliament identify key issue areas on which to work together to achieve legislative results. Additionally, IRI helps local governments regularly engage citizens and deliver measurable results that are responsive to citizens' needs. At the national level, IRI facilitates coordinated action by policy think tanks, coalitions, and civil society organizations around key ministries to help them successfully implement policies on critical issues.

IRI also helps civil society organizations hold local and national governments accountable to promises made during election campaigns and to actions they take while in power.

Enhanced Participation of Women, Youth and Ethnic Minorities

IRI works with pro-reform political parties to maintain a consistent focus on enhancing the participation of ethnic minorities, women and youth into the political process. Since 2006, IRI has worked with a group of politically active women to build a network of women across Serbia to demand that the government keep its promises and act on issues important to women. The Network for Political Accountability holds regular issue-oriented roundtables and public events, highlights politicians' positions on key issues and leads grassroots advocacy campaigns.

Sustainable Campaign Capacities

IRI continues to provide pro-reform political parties at the national and municipal level with a comprehensive training program, including voter identification, pre-election coalition building, basic campaign skills, get-out-the-vote techniques, message development, volunteer recruitment, campaign planning and local and national campaign coordination. In addition, IRI works with political parties to expand the use of technology for internal communications and campaign coordination.

