

Civil Society Programme at the Annual Meeting 2016



25 years of transition: The role of civil society in central and eastern Europe and Central Asia

A fireside chat between Sergei Guriev, Professor at the Sciences Po Paris (incoming EBRD Chief Economist) and

Biljana Radonjic Ker-Lindsay, Head of Civil Society Engagement at the EBRD

Wednesday, 11 May 10.00- 11.30
CSO Meeting Room 1, Level 2

Civil society, operating in the space between public and private sectors, has played an important role in socio-political and economic transition processes around the world, including the EBRD's traditional countries of operations. In 25 years since the establishment of the EBRD, civil society's contribution to transition has varied across the post-communist transition region. In some countries, the work of civil society organisations (CSOs) has contributed to more democratic political systems and more open market based economies as a 'reputational actor' performing a 'watchdog' function and as a generator of 'social capital' necessary to sustain the change process through the difficult early years. In other countries, the focus of CSOs has been on providing a variety of social services particularly to disadvantaged and vulnerable people negatively affected by the transition process. Many civil society actors have been operating in restrictive regulatory environments, and have relied heavily on international donor funding.

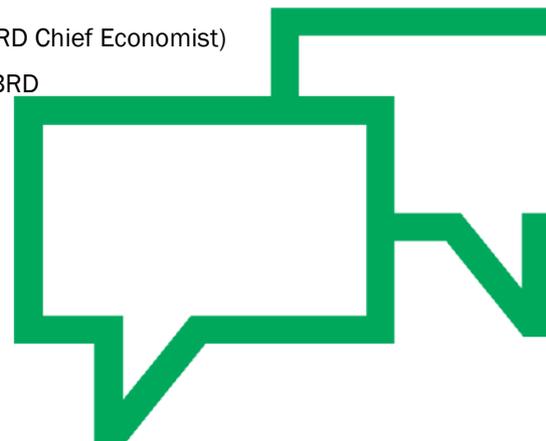
What has been civil society's input into promoting good governance, sustainable development and economic inclusion in EBRD's traditional region over the past few decades? What are the key lessons learned, from both its successes and failures that can be applied to other countries embarking on a transition process? What steps could be taken to increase the role of civil society in promoting positive changes in societies and economies?

The discussion will look back at the key achievements and setbacks of the civil society sector in contributing to transition since the Bank's establishment. It will also reflect upon the challenges ahead for civil society in building well-governed, sustainable and inclusive economies and societies.

The event will be open to all participants of the Annual Meeting and Business Forum.

Speakers

- ▶ Sergei Guriev, Professor of Economics, Sciences Po Paris (incoming EBRD Chief Economist)
- ▶ Biljana Radonjic Ker-Lindsay, Head of Civil Society Engagement Unit, EBRD



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**Sergei Guriev, Professor of Economics,
Sciences Po Paris**

Sergei currently teaches economics at Sciences Po and is soon to become EBRD's Chief Economist. He was an active figure in civil society in Russia until 2013 having taken part in economic policy and political debate and written columns in Forbes Russia and the leading Russian business daily Vedomosti. He remains a regular contributor to the columns in New York Times, Financial Times, Washington Post, Project Syndicate and Moscow Times. Sergei was also one of the founders of the Association of Russian Economic Think

Tanks and a board member/chair of the private charitable foundation Dynasty. He was also a member of boards of major Russian financial institutions and advisory councils of a number of not-for-profit organisations in Russia, Europe and US; as well as a long-term affiliate of the World Economic Forum. Sergei was a tenured professor of economics and rector of a private university New Economic School in Moscow from 2004 to 2013 and also held visiting positions at M.I.T and Princeton University in the US.

Sergei has Dr. Sc. (habilitation degree) in Economics and PhD in Applied Math from the Russian Academy of Science, and M.Sc. Summa Cum Laude from the Moscow Institute of Physics in Technology.



**Biljana Radonjic Ker-Lindsay, Associate
Director/Head, Civil Society Engagement,
EBRD, London**

Biljana is in charge of EBRD's institutional engagement with civil society. In this capacity, she advises senior management, Board of Directors and relevant EBRD teams on civil society issues in the Bank's investment projects, strategies and policies. Biljana also oversees the Bank's on-going outreach, dialogue and consultations with civil society. She is leading her team's management of technical cooperation funds aimed at enhancing capacity of local

community groups and grassroots civil society organisations in the EBRD region. Before joining the EBRD in 2006, Biljana co-founded and ran Civilitas Research, an independent strategic consultancy and think tank dedicated to socio-political and business research in South East Europe and Eastern Mediterranean, based out of Cyprus.

Biljana has an MA in International Relations from the University of Indianapolis, US & University of Nicosia, Cyprus and a BA & MA in English Literature from University of Novi Sad in Serbia.

