

ANNUAL REPORT

20

A YEAR OF
GROWTH & RESILIENCE

25



CENTER FOR COMPARATIVE AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

Who and What We're here for

About Us / Background

ICCIS is a dynamic and forward-looking non-profit think tank with a strong regional focus. CCIS promotes international cooperation by applying international expertise to frame issues, inform decision-making and guide change, in partnership with governments, foundations, businesses, civic groups, non-profit organizations and universities.

With its very qualified expertise and consultants and excellent performance CCIS seeks to be a leading Think Tank supporting regional structures and activities, by building local capacity, strengthening and expanding its international network, ensuring financial sustainability and managing change within its organization.

Our mission is committing to being a leading civil society organization dedicated to collaborative project implementation, applied research, and capacity building at both local and regional levels.

New Beginnings Highlights

The Erasmus+ CBHE-funded CORE-ED Academy project advances inclusive juvenile justice through innovative correctional pedagogy and specialist capacity-building.



CCIS launched the “Fostering Trust and Utilization in Albania’s Data Landscape” project, strengthening trust in official statistics and fostering data-driven decision-making across sectors.



CCIS, in partnership with the National Association of the Deaf (ANAD), is implementing the project “Breaking Barriers: Empowering Deaf Youth for Inclusive Employment in Albania.



CCIS launched a collaboration with Helvetas Albania under the “Strong Municipalities” program, developing training curricula and strengthening municipal council capacities across 61 municipalities.

New COST Action

HUMAN-IT CA24167



CCIS proudly serves as Grant Holder and Lead Institution for COST Action 24164 HUMAN-IT, a major European initiative addressing digital innovation and workforce transformation. The project examines HRM, employee experience, and job market shifts, supporting evidence-based policymaking and fostering an inclusive, resilient, and innovation-driven human capital landscape across Europe.

Senior Expert Prof. Dr. Nevila Xhindi (Ph.D.) serves as Chair of the Action, as the first Albanian to chair a COST Action.

Wrapping Up: Y-O MODEL

ERASMUS-YOUTH-2023-CB



Our Youth Observers took part in the “Leadership in Action” workshop (Jan 30–31, 2025) in Skopje. Through interactive training and a study visit with young MPs, the National Youth Council, and local activists, participants strengthened their leadership, advocacy, and policymaking skills to shape youth-focused policies across the region.



CCIS met with students and young people from Shkodra for an open discussion on youth policies, as part of the YOM Project. These consultations aim to amplify youth voices in policymaking, with more sessions planned across Albania to ensure broader participation and stronger youth representation.



From 26–27 May 2025, CCIS participated in Workshop 3 of the Erasmus+ Y-O MODEL Project in Campobasso. Young leaders strengthened their advocacy skills through expert-led sessions and hands-on learning, fostering cross-border youth collaboration and empowering participants to drive meaningful policy change.

Wrapping Up: Y-O MODEL

ERASMUS-YOUTH-2023-CB



On 30 June 2025, CCIS, together with SCiDEV and the Mediterranean Center, organized a youth-led consultation in Tirana under the Y-O MODEL project. Youth Observers discussed mental health, the Youth Guarantee, and brain drain, presenting actionable proposals to institutional and civil society actors to shape youth-focused policies.



CCIS Youth Observers developed a policy paper on youth mental health, proposing recommendations to improve adolescents' emotional well-being. Creating supportive and inclusive environments across schools, communities, and institutions is key to fostering youth mental health.



U2SID – Concluding Two Years of Digital Innovation



From February 27 to March 1, 2025, CCIS participated in the final conference of the Erasmus+ U2SID project at “Fan S. Noli” University, marking the conclusion of two years of work on inclusive digital transformation in Higher Education in the Western Balkans.



CCIS participated in the successful final event of the U2SID project in Shkodra. The project strengthened collaboration across universities, businesses, policymakers, and civil society, enhanced digital skills, and created lasting economic and social impact in the region.



Fostering Trust and Utilization in Albania's Data Landscape - Project Wrap-Up



CCIS organized 8 consultation roundtables for the “Fostering Trust and Utilization in Albania’s Data Landscape” project, supported by the Embassy of Switzerland. Stakeholders from universities, businesses, media, and civil society across Korçë, Shkodër, Tirana, Vlorë, and Durrës shared valuable insights, helping to strengthen trust, accessibility, and use of statistical data in Albania.



CCIS joined INSTAT and partners on International Statistics Day 2025 to highlight the role of trustworthy data in transparency, development, and good governance. The project promoted data use by non-state actors and strengthened a culture of evidence-based decision-making in Albania.



Fostering Trust and Utilization in Albania's Data Landscape - Highlights

273

Total responses

2 

Questionnaires

10

Short video interviews

189

Individual responses

84

Institutional responses



CCIS presented key findings from draft policy papers to H.E. Mrs. Ruth Huber, Ambassador of Switzerland, covering civil society, media, academia, and business. The session provided valuable feedback and set the stage for the final validation and project outcomes.

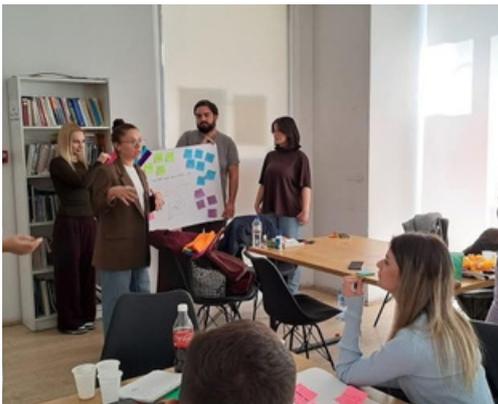
CCIS concluded the 10-month Fostering Trust and Utilization in Albania's Data Landscape project with a national validation event. The event gathered INSTAT, Bank of Albania, ministries, universities, businesses, and civil society for a constructive dialogue on evidence-based decision-making.



"Empowering Youth in Digital Democracy – EYDR Project"



"Digital Democracy Workshop – EYDR Project"
On February 22, 2025, CCIS, ANAD, and SCiDEV organized a workshop engaging deaf youth to enhance digital skills, raise awareness of digital rights, and promote inclusive participation in digital democracy across the Western Balkans.



"Youth Digital Democracy Accelerator – First Mobility"
CCIS took part in the first mobility in Belgrade, where three youth participants joined workshops and discussions on digital activism, social media campaigning, and inclusive digital skills development for youth with fewer opportunities.



"Youth-Led Policy Advocacy – EYDR Project"
After training in digital democracy workshops and mobilities in Belgrade and Oviedo, the CCIS Youth Research Group is developing its first policy paper and launching a peer-designed social media campaign to promote inclusive youth participation in digital decision-making in Albania.

Advancing AI in Education

EDUFAIR Project



"EDUFAIR – Advancing AI in Education
CCIS, as a key partner, supported AI-driven innovation and capacity building in education, collaborating with partners to promote inclusive and responsible digital learning.



"EDUFAIR – Advancing AI in Education
CCIS joined the EU-funded workshop at ULSIT, Sofia, exploring AI, gamification, and open education. The event fostered innovation, inclusion, and cross-border collaboration. Partners also prepared for the upcoming Salento workshop.



EDUFAIR – International Study Visit

CCIS participated in the International Study Visit at the University of Salento, exploring AI-powered tools for personalized learning and institutional innovation. The visit focused on ethics, innovation, and practical implementation in AI-driven education.

“Breaking Barriers: Empowering Deaf Youth for Inclusive Employment in Albania”



CCIS, in partnership with ANAD, implements “Breaking Barriers” to empower deaf youth for inclusive employment under the EU4Inclusive Labour Markets initiative. May–June meetings in Tirana, Vorë, Kamëz, and Shkodra engaged local authorities, businesses, and the deaf community, strengthening cooperation and capacity for accessible, disability-sensitive employment services.



CCIS and ANAD organized three Communities of Practice sessions on Integrated Case Management across Albania as part of the EU4LMI project. The sessions promoted intersectoral collaboration, accessible services, and staff training to support deaf youth and others facing employment barriers. This model strengthens inclusive practices and can be applied nationwide.



CCIS and ANAD held intensive workshops with the deaf community in Shkodër, focusing on career guidance, registration with employment services, and access to public programs. Participants shared their daily challenges, enabling the team to identify individual cases and propose practical solutions for inclusive employment. These sessions strengthened local partnerships between the community, institutions, and businesses.

“Breaking Barriers: Empowering Deaf Youth for Inclusive Employment in Albania”



Youth and community members actively participated in roundtables and discussions with institutions and private sector partners, resulting in recommendations for equal employment opportunities, increased public awareness, and stronger partnerships between the deaf community, public institutions, and businesses.



Workshops in Kamëz and Vorë engaged local deaf community members, focusing on career orientation, employment procedures, and identifying specific challenges. These meetings strengthened collaboration with municipal social services, local businesses, and employment offices to ensure sustainable inclusion.



In Tirana, CCIS and ANAD conducted two-day workshops with around 40 participants from the deaf community, providing career counseling, employment guidance, and solutions for accessing public programs. The sessions fostered dialogue with national and local institutions to promote inclusive employment and reduce barriers.

CCIS Highlights & Achievements 2025



DIGITCRESHE Final Conference – Skopje

CCIS participated in the DIGITCRESHE Final Conference in Skopje, engaging with experts, researchers, and creative industry leaders to discuss the future of the Creative Economy. The team also contributed to strategic discussions on sustainability, project exploitation, and future collaborations to maximize long-term impact.



CoREx COST Action Annual Meeting – Bratislava

The CCIS research team joined the annual meeting of the CoREx COST Action in Bratislava, connecting with European scholars to examine the executive triangle—executive politicians, top civil servants, and ministerial advisers. The discussions focused on comparative governance and the role of these relationships in shaping policy-making.



CoREx COST Action WG1 Meeting – Tirana

CCIS organized the WG1 meeting of CoREx COST Action in Tirana, hosting 25 researchers from over 15 countries to advance research on executive governance. The meeting facilitated the exchange of empirical findings, methodological approaches, and collaborative frameworks to better understand executive triangle dynamics across Europe.

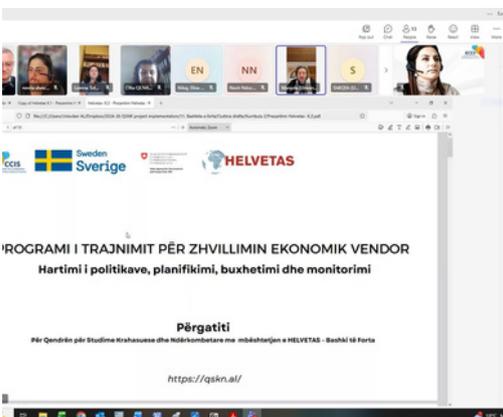
CCIS Highlights & Achievements 2025



CCIS at the Roundtable on Mobility-Driven Research & Innovation in the Western Balkans. We were proud to contribute to the roundtable “Advancing Mobility-Driven Research and Innovation in the Western Balkans” under the #IGNITA initiative.



CCIS attended the 3rd IGCOORD Conference in Lublin presenting two research papers. Our team contributed to discussions on the impact of polycrises on intergovernmental fiscal coordination and explored how effective communication can support transparent and sustainable governance frameworks.



CCIS partnered with Helvetas Albania under the “Strong Municipalities” program to develop training curricula and strengthen municipal council capacities across 61 municipalities. The initiative promotes informed, transparent, and accountable local governance through strategic policymaking and performance monitoring.

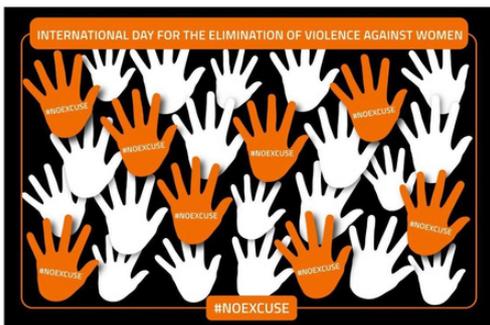
CCIS Campaigns & Advocacy



Campaign: Young, Committed, and Transformative
CCIS launched this IWD 2025 campaign to celebrate women and girls, highlighting their leadership, impact, and dedication through staff and collaborator stories.



International youth day
CCIS celebrates youth as active changemakers, supporting skills, participation, and innovation through local and regional projects like EU4LMI and Erasmus+ Capacity Building for Youth.



16 Days of Activism – #NoExcuse

CCIS joins the global campaign to end digital violence against women and girls, promoting digital safety, media literacy, and protective policies for a safer online space.



Black Ribbon Day

At CCIS, we honor the victims of totalitarian regimes and keep history's lessons alive for new generations. Through youth initiatives, we promote transitional justice, democracy, and EU values of dignity, freedom, and rights.

Gratitude, Collaboration, **and Continued Success**

In 2025, CCIS advanced inclusion, digital innovation, youth empowerment, and good governance across Albania and Europe. We thank our partners, stakeholders, and communities for their collaboration and trust. Together, we look forward to building on these achievements, driving impactful projects, and shaping a more inclusive, innovative, and equitable future.

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