

Open letter: CSOs call on MEPs to adopt the European Parliament's proposals to amend the EU Treaties and on the European Council to convene a Convention to revise the Treaties

Brussels, 21 November 2023

Dear Members of the European Parliament,
Dear Permanent Representatives of EU Member States,
Dear President of the European Council Charles Michel,

Civil society organisations across the European Union have been calling tirelessly for a reform of the EU for several years. [Many CSOs actively participated in the Conference on the Future of Europe \(CoFoE\)](#) from 2021 to 2022, and since then, [we have been following up](#) on the CoFoE conclusions' implementation and continuously supporting civil society and citizens' participation in EU democracy.

Civil Society Europe (CSE), together with the signatories of this letter, calls on the Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) to adopt the [Constitutional Affairs \(AFCO\) Committee's report on proposals of the European Parliament for the amendment of the EU Treaties](#) during the Plenary session on the week of 20 November. This report is an important follow-up to the Conference on the Future of Europe and other efforts to improve the EU, especially EU democracy. Although we do not fully agree with all of the report's proposals, we still think it marks a significant step forward that merits support.

We also call on EU Member States, through the European Council, to trigger Article 48 of the TEU, thereby convening a Convention to revise the EU Treaties. Civil society organisations (CSOs), including those in the candidate countries, **should be invited as participants to such a Convention and be involved in all phases of the latter's preparation**, including the agenda-setting phase and the preparatory meetings on the draft of the Treaty changes.

Overall, MEPs and Member States should **strengthen the AFCO report's proposals concerning democracy, civil dialogue (i.e. dialogue between institutions and CSOs) and fundamental rights**, as has been called for by CSOs across the EU. This can be achieved by making ambitious proposals to better and fully include CSOs and citizens in EU policy- and decision-making processes, including when it comes to reforming the EU Treaties. Such ambitious proposals would also guarantee the respect and implementation of fundamental rights.

Among other things, we think **it is essential to strengthen [Article 11 of the Treaty on European Union \(TEU\)](#)** through the establishment of an inter-institutional civil dialogue agreement that would recognise civil dialogue as an essential element of EU participatory democracy and harmonise standards for civil dialogue, and by establishing a legal framework for the involvement of CSOs—including those in candidate countries where appropriate—in the decision-making process of the Union.

Treaty change should advance in parallel with enlargement processes to make sure to keep the reform momentum both in the EU and in pre-accession countries. Reforms on both sides are key to prepare the future enlarged EU for the challenges of today and tomorrow.

At this moment in time, the priority is for the AFCO Committee's report to be adopted in Plenary and for the European Council to trigger Article 48 (TEU). After this, **we, as CSOs, will gladly work with all stakeholders to put forward deeply needed and more ambitious reforms on democracy, civil dialogue and fundamental rights.**

For more information about CSOs' vision and recommendations, we encourage you to read the [Civil Society State of the Union 2023 report](#), launched on 6 September 2023 and developed by nearly 50 CSOs within Civil Society Europe's [Working Group on the Civil Society State of the Union](#).

List of signatories

European Environmental Bureau (EEB)

Europa Festival

SOLIDAR

Volonteuroppe

Democracy International

The ECI Campaign

Centre for European Volunteering (CEV)

Natura Comune

Eurogroup for Animals

Social Platform

Culture Action Europe (CAE)

European Students' Union (ESU)

British in Europe ASBL (BiE)

Michael Culture Association (MCA)

Philanthropy Europe Association (Philea)

Young European Federalists (JEF Europe)