

## Draft report of Activities 2016

### 1. Executive Summary

The CSE plenary decided in December 2015 that Civil Society Europe would work in close cooperation with its members and with the support of its working groups on the following strands:

- exchange of good practices and capacity building
- common advocacy activities
- consolidation of the network

3 key activities were implemented

- Monitoring civic space and fundamental rights in Europe through a survey and recommendations and raising awareness of decision-makers on shrinking civic space
- Voicing civil society views on NGO funding
- Co-organisation of a European Civic Academy

CSE also started a review of the situation of Civil Dialogue in Europe in order to produce recommendations on the implementation of article 11.



## 2. Exchange of good practices & Capacity Building

### 2.1 Working Groups

2 working groups had been set up (Civic space and fundamental rights, Recognition for Civil Society Organisations,).

#### The working group on Civic Space and Fundamental Rights

This Working Group mainly focused on the preparation, dissemination and reporting of **a survey on civic space in Europe**.

The survey was accessed by 300 persons and 180 respondents fully completed the questionnaire. The report showed evidence for shrinking space in Europe and attracted attention of Civil society organisations, members of the European Parliament and the Fundamental Rights Agency.



**Civic Space in Europe Survey**  
-October 2016-



CSE organised a **workshop at the European Youth Event** in May 2016 in Strasbourg on Civic Space and Youth.



A breakfast meeting presentation was hosted in December by EP Vice President Sylvie Guillaume with key MEPs from LIBE, DROI and DEVE committees.



The report was also presented at public events: organised by ECAS, and Concord. A strategy to promote civic space in the internal and external EU agenda was also discussed by the working group. CSE also followed up on the preparations of a EP own initiative report and study on civic space in developing countries.

Through the working group, cooperation was established with the FATF NPO coalition composed of the EFC, the ECNL and Human rights and Security Collective and joint work was developed to follow up the **European Commission's Supranational Risk Assessment of Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing** and its impact on Not for Profit Organisations. A joint meeting chaired by CSE with NPOs was organised as well as a common position paper feeding into DG Justice consultation.



The working group also contributed to the **EP own initiative legislative report for an EU mechanism on the rule of law, democracy and fundamental rights** and joined forces with the Human Rights and Democracy network to promote involvement of civil society in the future mechanism as well as civic space among the indicators and themes for country reports.

### **The Working Group on CSO recognition**

worked on a definition of the **added value of civil society organisations** and as a result an **infographics** was prepared and presented to the CSE plenary.



A **survey and interviews on an assessment of civil dialogue mechanisms** on EU policies at both EU and national level was launched and partly implemented. However this work that required much more investment than foreseen could not be finalised and will continue in 2017.

Most of the work of this group was devoted to financial issues. In particular work was achieved in view of the preparation of a **common position and strategy towards a European Parliament own initiative report on the budgetary control of NGO funding by the EU budget**, and notably towards the opinions of EMPL, BUDG and DEVE Committees.



Also a **survey** targeting CSOs at European and national level was launched in view of CSE response to the Commission consultation **on the review of the financial regulations**. 49 organisations responded and the document was sent to the Commission and relevant decision-makers in the European Parliament. Also CSE organised a **workshop to prepare the civil society reaction** to the presentation by the EC of their proposal for new rules on 6 October, which was attended by several CSE members and by other organisations. Work started on the preparation of the CSE position. During the workshop first discussions among CSOs on the EC proposal for the mid term review of the Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020

## 2.2 The European Civic Academy

A European Civic Academy was held on 7-9 October in La Rochelle, in France in order to discuss issues around the erosion of democracy, the restriction of civic spaces and CSOs responses to these challenges, including fostering citizens participation, building legitimacy, work at European level. Around 180 participants attended this event. A second edition is in preparation.



## 2.3 Plenaries

3 plenary meetings were organised. The meetings allowed to have discussions and decisions on civic space, on the transparency register, funding issues, counter terrorism legislation and its implication on Civil society, as well as clarify the strategic direction of civil society Europe in addition to procedural issues.

## 2.4 Pooling expertise and provide trainings on practical issues

CSE disseminated and contributed to the preparation of trainings of the Mundo J academy targeting organisations established in Belgium on various legal provisions.

## 2. Advocacy & Campaigning

### a. Policy statements and documents:

- [CSE call for EU action to safeguard Democracy and human rights](#) (Poland) - January 2016
- [Report European Youth Event on Civic Space](#) - May 2016
- [Results of the survey on financial regulations review and input into the EC consultation](#), May 2016
- [Contribution to the EC consultation on the review of the Transparency Register](#) - June 2016
- [Following the results of the British Referendum](#), June 2016
- [Civic space In Europe Survey Report](#) - October 2016
- [Civil Society recommendations on budgetary control of financing NGOs from the EU budget](#) - November 2016
- [Joint NPO input for the European Commission Supranational Risk Assessment on Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing \(SNRA\)](#) - November 2016
- [Civil Society Europe position on the European Solidarity Corps](#) - December 2016

### **3. Consolidation and development of the network**

CSE was established in February as an international not for profit association in Belgium by a notary act and acquired legal status in March by royal decree and its statutes were registered in April.

CSE employs a full time coordinator since July through a contribution of the European Civic Forum that has also provided office space.

In 2016, two new members have joined CSE: the Green 10 and the European Network Against Racism

CSE engaged through its working group meetings and advocacy work with many organisations beyond its members.

CSE started a partnership with ALTER EU and Transparency International on the Transparency Register.

Finally CSE became a member of the Better Regulation Watchdog network.