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Civil Society Europe Newsletter July 2023

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The latest news, updates, events and more on civil society in Europe!

What has Civil Society Europe been up to?

Launch of the EP elections campaign 'Civil Society for EU'

On 6th June, Civil Society Europe launched the 2024 European Parliament election campaign, '**Civil Society for EU**' in collaboration with Social Platform and many other civil society organisations. The campaign aims to put **civic space and civil dialogue on the agenda of the 2024 elections**. The campaign calls on the future European Parliament and European Commission to take concrete steps to ensure (1) a safe and enabling environment for civil society, (2) an EU mechanism to protect civil society (3) adequate funding for civil society, and (4) a more open, transparent and consistent civil dialogue.

Read the campaign manifesto

Annual General Assembly

On Wednesday 21st June Civil Society Europe held its **Annual General Assembly at which a new President and Board were elected**. The new President of the Board is Gabriella Civico, Director of the Centre for European Volunteering. The rest of the Board members are:

Patrizia Heidegger, The Green 10 (Vice-President)
Judit Lantai, JEF Europe (Vice-President)
Giuseppina Tucci, Lifelong Learning Platform (Treasurer)
Nicholas Aiossa, Transparency International EU
Martina Corti, SOLIDAR
Laura de Bonfils, Social Platform
Alexandrina Najmowicz, European Civic Forum
Piotr Sadowski, Volonteuropa

We are very excited to welcome our new Board and looking forward to working closely with them to protect and develop the role of civil society organisations in Europe.

We also said goodbye to our outgoing President, Jean-Marc Roirant, and celebrated his commitment and contribution to the work of Civil Society Europe and the role of civil society in the EU in general.

Accountability Session: degrowth for civil society organisations

The business session of our General Assembly was preceded by an **accountability training session on degrowth** delivered by Nick Meynen, Senior Policy Officer at the European Environmental Bureau. The workshop focused on the **evidence behind degrowth** and the growing **receptiveness to degrowth among EU policymakers**, as demonstrated by the Beyond Growth conference held in the European Parliament in June. The session finished with a discussion around how to **communicate the message of degrowth as civil society organisations** in which participants emphasised an **intersectional approach** to degrowth.

The workshop was part of an ongoing initiative of Civil Society Europe to organise accountability training sessions for our member organisations in order to share best practices and reinforce the accountability of civil society organisations in the EU.

Civil society submission to the Rule of Law Report

Civil Society Europe coordinated a **joint civil society submission to the Commission 2023 Rule of Law report** focusing on horizontal trends on **civic space and proposing country specific recommendations**. The report which was published in early July and reviewed by the Civic Space Working Group, contains several recommendations for Member States to improve civic space. Civil Society Europe has continued to engage with

the Commission to determine how CSOs can contribute to the process in a more structured way going forward.

Civil society meeting with Commissioner Jourova on the Defence of Democracy package

On 6th July, Civil Society Europe coordinated a meeting between Commissioner Jourova and a coalition of civil society organisations on the preparation of the **Defence of Democracy package** which is currently underway. As a follow up of the [statement](#) signed by over 260 civil society organisations, the European Commission decided to postpone its plans in order to carry out a **fully fledged impact assessment**. During the meeting we provided examples of the undue impact of the legislation on the civil society sector and on the EU's ability to continue to support civil society and human rights defenders doing advocacy work outside Europe. We asked questions on the **choice of legal instrument, and on the impact assessment process**. We also raised concerns around the effectiveness of the proposals in addressing undue influence on electoral process and discussed possible other solutions.

Joint letter on removal of Commission officials' contacts from the Whoiswho directory

On 8th June, Civil Society Europe and Social Platform published a **joint civil society letter** to Commissioners Hahn and Jourova on the **removal of contact details of Commission officials from the online Whoiswho directory**. The removal of contact details of all staff members below Head of Unit level represents a major **step backwards in terms of institutional transparency** at a time when transparency needs to be strengthened. The letter, signed by over 110 European civil society organisations, calls on the European Commission to **restore these contact details** to the directory to ensure access to information is made public as an essential prerequisite for meaningful civil dialogue and democratic participation

Read the letter

Webinar on AML/CFT

On 6th June, Civil Society Europe held an event in collaboration with Philea on the **impact of EU Anti-Money Laundering/Countering the Financing of Terrorism legislation** on the cross-border **activities of associations and foundations**. In the context of current negotiations on the next AML/CFT package, this session sought to identify best practices and solutions to the unintended obstacles associated with the legislation for associations and foundations.

Read a report of the meeting

Civil Society Europe's reaction to the Commission's proposals

on social economy

In June, the Commission made a **proposal** for a Council recommendation on social economy. We welcome the proposals put forward by the Commission to leverage the **untapped potential of the social economy** through a coherent legal framework, taxation systems that do not hinder the development of the social economy, **removal of obstacles to cross border philanthropy**, encouragement of **socially responsible public procurement** and full use of state aid rules, and **increased awareness** about the social economy and its contributions.

EnTrust Corner

EnTrust roundtable discussion

On 28th June, we hosted a **roundtable discussion based on some of the findings of the EnTrust research project** specifically related to the **development of (dis)trust throughout individuals' lives** and the current state of **political (dis)trust in certain European countries**. The research was presented by Lenka Štěpánková from Masaryk University, Czech Republic and Manos Tsatsanis from the University of Athens, Greece. The discussion panel included Camille Dobler, Head of Research at Missions Publiques, Kristof Papp, Senior Policy Officer at the European Youth Forum and Srd Kisevic, Team Leader for democracy, citizens' electoral rights and consular protection at DG JUST.

Entries for the EnTrust creative contest will soon open

The EnTrust creative contest, '**A Europe We Trust: visions of European youth**' will soon be open for submissions! The contest takes place within the framework of the EnTrust research project and calls on **young people aged 13-19 living in the EU member states and candidate countries to share their vision for the future of Europe** in a creative visual format. The deadline for submissions is 8th October and three winners will be invited to Brussels to attend an awards ceremony and visit the EU institutions. **Stay tuned for more information.**

Opportunities you don't want to miss

Civil Society Europe is recruiting a Policy and Project Officer!

Civil Society Europe is recruiting a **Project and Policy Officer** to join the team. This

individual will be tasked with **monitoring developments** in civil society's role in democracy, civil dialogue, trust in governance and transparency at EU level, contributing to the **development of common positions** among organisations in our network, **drafting policy papers** and more. We're looking for someone with at least 2 years' experience in a similar role, a post-secondary degree in a relevant field and strong writing, communication and digital skills. **The deadline for applications is 18th August and the expected start date is 4th September.**

Read the full job ad

In other news...

Survey on pro bono services for civil society organisations

Pro Bono Europe is an initiative by The Good Lobby that **connects civil society organisations with professionals that are passionate about making a positive impact**. It is a network of experts, including law firms and public affairs consultancies, willing to volunteer their services on a pro bono basis. In order to improve this service, **the Good Lobby would like to improve their understanding of civil society needs** beyond legal, to understand how public affairs, advocacy, communication and collaboration with other civil society organisations might support the accomplishment of their mission. To allow the Good Lobby to gain an insight into the needs of civil society and develop this service, **please fill in a survey**.

Fill in the survey

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