



Civil Society Europe Newsletter

September 2026

Welcome to our September 2026 newsletter! In this edition, find out about what we have been up to this past month - the annual State of the Union speech, our priorities for the Democracy Shield, our upcoming 10th anniversary celebrations, and more.

What has CSE been up to?

State of the Union 2026



This month, the European Commission President took stock of where Europe is and where we're headed, in their 'State of the Union' (SOTEU) speech. Every 2 years, we coordinate the Civil Society State of the Union, a document **combining civil society's vision for a more democratic, socially, and environmentally just EU**. [Our latest edition](#) was prepared with a large number of organisations and sent to the Commission President, the College of Commissioners and other institutional stakeholders.

Our key takeaways included:

- **We must think of defence as more than just military investment.** It should include broader resilience across society, where civil society has a vital part to play. Healthcare, energy, food safety, water resilience, and inclusive social and educational policies cannot be pushed to the side.
- The **EU long-term budget must prioritise environmental protection through adequate funding**, and implement policies that align with our climate

targets.

- The EU digital space must be based on European values: this means **promoting free, open and interoperable European-developed digital technologies that respect our environment and human rights.**

[Read the full article](#)

Let's Protect Democracy - Civil Society's Priorities for the Democracy Shield



The **Democracy Shield** is an opportunity for the EU to safeguard its democratic foundations. Protecting democracy has been a core feature of our work, from ensuring civil society participation in the **Conference on the Future of Europe**, to contributing to the Commission's democracy initiatives, from the European Democracy Action Plan, to the **Defence of Democracy Package**, and the Shield itself.

Our new paper provides ways to implement the different initiatives under the Shield. Including recommendations such as supporting the goal of a European Centre for Democratic Resilience that is a focal coordination point for different aspects of the Shield; pointing that the EU's long-term budget must have a strong AgoraEU programme that allows civil society, culture, and media to thrive; or that the European Cooperation Network on Elections must be reinforced to protect Europe's electoral framework.

Our message is clear: **democracy cannot be safeguarded without civil society.**

[Read the full article](#)

Events you don't want to miss

Civil Society Co-designing Quality: Building Resilience in a Challenging Environment

Can quality build resilience in civil society organisations? As civic space keeps shrinking across Europe, many organisations are searching for more **adaptive approaches to quality management** that support learning, participation and collaboration.



On 14 October 2026, Civil Society Europe will host the event “**Civil Society Co-designing Quality: Building Resilience in a Challenging Environment**”, under the **CoQuality network**. The event will build on the findings of a CoQuality European study on quality management, and will bring together relevant stakeholders to assess how quality can promote resilience, partnership and change.

When? 14 October 2026, 9:30 - 16:30

Where? Royal Library of Belgium, Mont des Arts 28, Brussels

[Register here](#) until September 14, 2026

Civil Society at the Heart of Europe: Celebrating 10 Years of Impact

10TH ANNIVERSARY EVENT

Civil Society at the Heart of Europe:

Celebrating 10 Years of Impact

November 17th, 2026 | 17:00 - 20:00 | L42, Rue de la Loi 42, 1000 Brussels

Civil Society Europe celebrates its **10th anniversary**! For 10 years, we've worked to strengthen the voice, visibility, and enabling environment of civil society at EU level. This **November 17th**, we'll bring together **EU institutional speakers, academia and civil society** to reflect on our history and cast an eye toward the future.

Join us to celebrate this history!

[Register](#) by November 9th and explore the [programme](#).

When? 17 November 2026, 17:00 - 20:00

Where? L42, Rue de la Loi 42, 1040 Brussels

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