

Why do we need a European civil society strategy?

Conference for a thriving civic space



1-2 June, 2022
Budapest

Reclaim
Our Civil
Space!

Organized by:



Implemented by:



The Reclaim Our civil Space! project aims at addressing the trends of democratic backsliding and shrinking civil space observed for the past years particularly in Central and Southeastern Europe. The project implemented with 9 partners in 7 Central European countries

This workshop aims at further brainstorming about the idea, the need and the potential content of a comprehensive EU civil society strategy proposed earlier as well as to discuss steps and possible joint actions towards its approval by EU institutions and to gather broader support among CSOs to this cause. In addition, we'd like to give representatives of participating Central European CSOs an overview of ongoing EU initiatives relevant to civil society and the related advocacy work carried out by European umbrella organisations.

The organisers cover the costs accommodation and travel to international participants and those coming from greater distances.

The event is free to attend, but registration is needed – please [register here!](#)

For more information contact Móra Veronika, move@okotars.hu

Looking forward to seeing you!



Tentative agenda

Day 1

10.00 – 10.15 Opening and welcome

- Veronika Móra, Ökotárs – Hungarian Environmental Partnership Foundation

10.15 – 10.30 Warm-up – brainstorming session

- In an ideal world, what would the EU do make it a better place for civil society?

10.30 – 11.30 Spark talks: updates on current EU initiatives and processes relevant to civil society

1) EU Social Democracy Action plan, cross-border philanthropy and anti-money laundering regulation

- Hanna Surmatz, Philanthropy Europe Association

2) The annual Rule of Law report of the European Commission: civic contribution and participation

- Giada Negri, European Civic Forum

3) The Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values program: a success for civil society and current status

- Anna Fedas, Stefan Batory Foundation

4) European Parliament proposal for a European Association Statutes

- Hanna Surmatz, Philanthropy Europe Association

5) Convention on the Conference on the Future of Europe: current state and evaluation

- Carlotta Besozzi, Civil Society Europe

Q&A

11.30 – 11.50 Coffee break



11.50 – 12.50 Why do we need a European civil society strategy and what should be in it? – panel discussion with

- Simona Constantinescu, Civil Society Development Foundation, Romania
- Tina Divjak The National NGO Umbrella Network (CNVOS), Slovenia
- Giada Negri, European Civic Forum
- Anna Fedas, Stefan Batory Foundation, Poland
- Veronika Móra, Ökotárs Foundation, Hungary

12.50 – 14.10 Lunch and networking

14.10 – 15.00 World café discussions about the content of the civil society strategy in 5 themes:

- legal environment
- funding
- dialogue and participation
- safe space and operation
- other issues (freedom of expression, education, etc.)

15.00 – 15.25 Report back from small groups

15.25 -15.45 Parallel initiatives

Introduction to the Recharging Advocacy for Rights in Europe project: civic solidarity for rule of law and civic space in the EU

- Márta Pardavi, Hungarian Helsinki Committee

15.45 – 16.30 Facilitated discussion

Next steps and cooperation for the civil society strategy:

- further work on the proposal
- what can participants bring in in terms of contacts, points of entry, etc.
- timeline and actions

16.30 – 16.40 Wrap-up and closing

18.00 Celebratory dinner

30 years of the Environmental Partnership for Central Europe



Day 2

ROCS partners' meeting

10.00 – 12.30 Internal discussion

- progress in the countries
- administrative and reporting issues
- next international events – Brussels, Prague

12.30 Lunch and farewell



ABOUT US

We aim at addressing the trends of democratic backsliding and shrinking civil space observed for the past years particularly in Central and Southeastern Europe.

We came together because we believe in our work and in the power of civil society to build healthier societies from the bottom up. Our organizations are from different countries with different backgrounds, but the challenges we face and the changes we strive for in this region bind us together. This project is our common effort to improve the quality of our democracies through strengthening civil society actors in Central and Southeastern Europe.

Our vision is a thriving civil space in a democratic and enabling environment, where people take action, get organized and advocate for their interests together freely, without fear or restrictions.

We believe in a society where everybody is capable of improving their own life and environment and is provided with the opportunity to live up to their potential.

Our main objectives are:

- **broadening** the grassroots basis and constituency of civil society
- **mapping**, training and mobilizing activist groups and movements
- **linking** this local level to the regional and the European
- **developing** together the outlines of a comprehensive European civil society policy

