

## CIVIL SOCIETY EUROPE: SITTING IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT FOR CHANGE

Brussels, 4 February 2015



Major European Networks of Associations<sup>1</sup> joined forces to create Civil Society Europe, a permanent space for horizontal exchanges and a strong voice for paradigm shift to restore and promote the values of equality, solidarity, democracy and inclusiveness among EU Member

States and its people.

During the press launch hosted yesterday by European Parliament Vice-President Sylvie Guillaume responsible for citizenship, Jean-Marc Roirant, President of the European Civic Forum, founding member of Civil Society Europe, marked the milestone of this coordination in the European Civil Society landscape. *“Since the European Year of Citizens 2013, when this mobilisation process started, we learned to overcome our differences and our sectorial approaches, to speak out with a single voice in favour of policy change pushing forward collective interests in a society globally dominated by individual and particular interests.”*

Aspirations for change are substantial of Civil Society Europe work, uniting major European networks and platforms of associations behind shared values and a common vision for Europe, as Mr. Roirant pointed out: *“We want more social justice, we want a*

<sup>1</sup> Association des Etats Généraux d'Etudiants d'Europe – AEGEE, Association Européenne de défense des Droits de l'Homme – AEDH, Association of Local Democracy Agencies – ALDA, Civicus, Concord, Culture Action Europe, Danubiana Network, EU association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities, European Alternatives, European Citizens Action Service – ECAS, European Civic Forum, European Intercultural Platform on Lifelong learning – EUCIS-LLL, European Movement International, European Network for Education and Training – EUNET, European Network of National Associations – ENNA, European Roma Information Office –ERIO, European Volunteer Centre – CEV, International Planned Parenthood Federation – IPPF, Network of Educational associations Mladiinfo, Santé Mentale & Exclusion Sociale, Social Platform, Solidar, Volonteuropa, World Organisation of Scout Movement, Young European Federalists, International Federation for Spina Bifida & Hydrocephalus

*genuine European democracy and fair access for fundamental rights for all”.*

Civil Society Europe is determined to gain a permanent seat at the table of civil dialogue, to make sure the voice of civic associations and movements is heard, alongside the voice of the social partners and corporate interests.

Vice-President Sylvie Guillaume saluted this *“timely initiative”* which comes in a context when *“the notion of citizenship and our shared values mentioned before, are being seriously shaken over the last few years by the crisis”*. While considering this “last chance” mandate for European institutions to prove their capacity to answer citizens’ needs and aspirations, she thinks *“the spontaneous, as well as the more programmatic and organised expression of citizenship is vital and we do need to provide open and permanent space to listen to those calling for policy and political change.”*

Civil Society Europe just opened the door for this civil dialogue. European institutions are now expected to cross the threshold and start the conversation.

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**Note to editors**

**Read more in the Civil Society Europe**

**[Manifesto](#)**

**Web streaming video available [here](#)**

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