

Working group on Recognition on CSOs

Context

The manifesto states that CSE will act in “*Promoting and strengthening the political recognition of organised civil society across Europe as frontrunners for, and identified with, the promotion of Equality, Solidarity, Democracy and Inclusiveness*”.

Objectives

In order to promote and strengthen the political recognition of organized civil society this working group will tackle the topic from four perspectives:

- **Technical organisation of civil dialogue**

The EESC LG has drafted, through a working group, the Roadmap on implementation of articles 11(1) and 11(2) of the Treaty of the EU, which was then adopted by the NGO Forum, organised by the Latvian Presidency in Riga, on 2/3 March 2015. The Roadmap was then widely discussed, at the Civil Society Day 2015 (16.6), notably in order to see how to implement it. This WG will co-ordinate with other actors such as the EESC LG and follow up on this work. This will be done by establishing communication channels with organisers of the civil dialogue from the EU institutions in order to identify and establish the best mechanisms both in terms of identifying appropriate partners and also the methodologies and timescales for the dialogue.

- **The evidence base for the value of civil society in Europe**

Complementing existing initiatives in this field, such as the Third Sector Impact project,

this area of work will seek to contribute to the evidence base for the value of civil society in Europe. Both the financial and social value of civil society will be considered with particular attention to the value of the efforts of individual citizens through voluntary actions and the value of the sector as an employer. Evidence concerning the impact of civil society initiatives in Europe on the promotion of Equality, Solidarity, Democracy and Inclusiveness will be gathered.

- **The Financial framework for European CSOs**

The changing situation regarding funding opportunities for European CSO operating costs and short term and long term projects will be closely monitored. Appropriate representations will be made during the preparations and discussions for the next MFF in order to ensure that both the amounts of funding available and the conditions in which is available are appropriate to the needs of CSOs. The amount and types of, and conditions for the funding should correspond to the added value that CSOs bring to promoting and supporting Equality, Solidarity, Democracy and Inclusiveness in Europe. An added value that is expected and relied upon not only by individual citizens but by policymakers who increasingly rely on the support from CSOs to prevent trends towards lesser quality of life in Europe, a reliance however that is rarely matched by the corresponding necessary resources.

The revision of the EU Financial guidelines and the revision of the Directive on State Aid will be followed by this working group in so far as it impacts on the funding of CSOs. The focus on the revision of the financial guidelines will be to aim to ensure that not-for-profit civil society organisations have appropriate financial guidelines for their needs in order to operate properly rather than being restrained in their activities by guidelines that are designed primarily with other, much larger, for-profit actors in mind.

- **The legal Status given to CSOs**

Whilst recognizing the current political deadlock for this issue the previous work on advocating for European Statutes of Association will be built upon and a new strategy for follow up and monitoring of the situation developed. This aspect of work will also connect with the aspects of the WG on Civic Space looking at the possibilities across Europe for citizens to establish and develop CSOs.

Coordination of working group:

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