



European
Commission



Civil Society Landscape in the European Union

Research in support of the Citizens, Equality,
Rights and Values (CERV) Programme

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*Justice
and Consumers*

Prepared by Tetra Tech International Development.
Authors: Marion Bywater, Irina Jefferies and Melanie Kitchener.
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European Commission
Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers
Unit 04: Programme and financial management
Contact: Johannes Boermann
E-mail: johannes.boermann@ec.europa.eu

European Commission
B-1049 Brussels

More information on the European Union is available at: <http://www.europa.eu>

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Abbreviations and acronyms

Abbreviation / acronym

Meaning

Abbreviation / acronym	Meaning
ACF	Active Citizens Fund
CSO	Civil society organisation
CERV	Citizens Equality Rights and Values programme
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
EEA	European Economic Area
EU	European Union
EU-13	Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia (i.e. countries which joined the EU in 2004 or later)
EU-14	Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden (i.e. countries which joined the EU before 2004 and are still members)
EUR	Euro
FRA	European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights
gGmbH	gemeinnützige Gesellschaft mit beschränkter Haftung
GDP	Gross domestic product
KÜSK	Kodanikuühiskonna Sihtkapital (National Foundation of Civil Society – Estonia)
LGBITQ	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Intersex, Trans, Queer
LSU	Landsrådet för Sveriges Ungdomsorganisationer (Swedish Youth Organisation)
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
ZVR	Zentrales Vereinsregister

Introduction

The EU civil society landscape is rich and diverse, reflecting a diversity of national traditions. It employs more than 5% of the active population.¹ Culture, history, legislation/regulation and politics shape this sector, with significant differences in the role civil society plays, the type of entity through which it plays that role, and the level of establishment and development of the sector in each Member State.

This research brings together results of an analysis on behalf of the **European Commission to gain a better understanding of the civil society landscape in the area of protection and promotion of EU rights and values.**

EU values are anchored in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU):

“
The Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These values are common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail.
”

Those values are further reaffirmed and articulated in the rights, freedoms and principles enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.² The European Commission regards it as crucial that those rights and values continue to be actively cultivated, protected, promoted, enforced and shared among the citizens and peoples of the European Union, and that they remain at the heart of the Union project, given that a deterioration in the protection of those rights and values in any Member State can have detrimental effects on the Union as a whole. Civil society has a key role to play in upholding EU values. Civil society organisations act as watchdogs and contribute to the checks and balances, together with independent courts and media.

For this reason, the European Union created the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values programme (CERV) which aims to support civil society organisations promoting and protecting EU rights and values. The EUR 1,55 billion CERV programme is the largest ever EU human rights fund inside the European Union and is intended to contribute to sustaining and further developing open, rights-based, democratic, equal and inclusive societies based on the rule of law.³ The CERV programme is divided into four strands:

- Equality, Rights and Gender Equality strand - to promote rights, non-discrimination, equality, including gender equality, and advance gender and non-discrimination mainstreaming;
- Citizens' engagement and participation strand - to promote citizens' engagement and participation in the democratic life of the Union and exchanges between citizens of different Member States and to raise awareness of the common European history;
- Daphne strand - to fight violence, including gender-based violence; and
- Union values strand - to protect and promote Union values.

Thus, researching civil society working in these areas is of particular interest to the European Commission to establish the civil society landscape and support the disbursement of the funding.

Activities in the area of EU values is, however, just the tip of an iceberg. The number of CSOs working in health and social care, culture and sport far outweighs the number of CSOs working in the area of EU values. It was important, therefore, to see civil society working in the area of EU values within its overall context. This research has shown that many CSOs working in the area of EU values are active on a single issue or a limited area. However, this is not a discrete sector. Many CSOs working primarily in areas such as health and social care, culture and sport,

which together make up a much larger segment of civil society according to this research, also become involved in fighting social injustice as part of their work.

For this research, **evidence was sought to estimate the size of the civil society sector** in each EU Member State. A range of different sources was used that included expert opinion, feedback from the sector, government representatives, and research reports and studies. The approach was to collect national data based on a single set of research questions, but the answers were not necessarily homogenous or as complete in every aspect for some countries as for others. The methodology included mapping CSOs across the EU. Data was collected both on EU-level umbrella organisations and CSOs, and on national CSOs within the 27 EU Member States. A total of 161 Interviews on the CSO landscape were carried out with a sample of EU-level organisations and with national experts, national authorities, national-level and grassroots CSOs. Pan-European CSOs were also surveyed. At national level, the research also included a literature review on the findings from existing literature on the civil society landscape in each EU Member State and responses from government officials. In each Member State, a number of individual and group interviews were conducted with experts.

Some **pan-European data was collected as a side-effect, but overall the information included here comes primarily from national sources.**

Based on the evidence collected, **France, Germany and Italy have the highest reported numbers of civil society organisations**, with around 1.3 million, 900 000 and 360 000 respectively. They are among 12 Member States with over 100 000 civil society organisations. The research suggests that there are between 10 000 and 90 000 civil society organisations in nine other Member States. Cyprus, Greece,

Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg and Malta have fewer than 10 000 CSOs. Generally, there is a broad correlation between population size and the size of the civil society sector, with Greece an outlier based on the data collected.

However, **the definition or perception** of what is a civil society organisation (CSO) **varies considerably across the Member States.** Considerable care needs to be exercised in making comparisons. Some countries' data includes foundations and charities; others does not. Many loosely formed associations are not on the official radar. What is clear, however, is that civil society plays an important role in all EU societies, even if the extent of that role varies.

Against the background of very different approaches to civil society which underline the importance of looking beyond the numbers, this research **first looks at the factors which influence the landscape.** It then contains **specific sections on the EU values sub-sector and the challenges for civil society, in particular for smaller and grassroots organisations.** The information on these challenges is particularly relevant for the purpose for which this research was carried out, as the CERV programme is focusing on local-level grassroots organisations, which find it particularly difficult to raise funds.

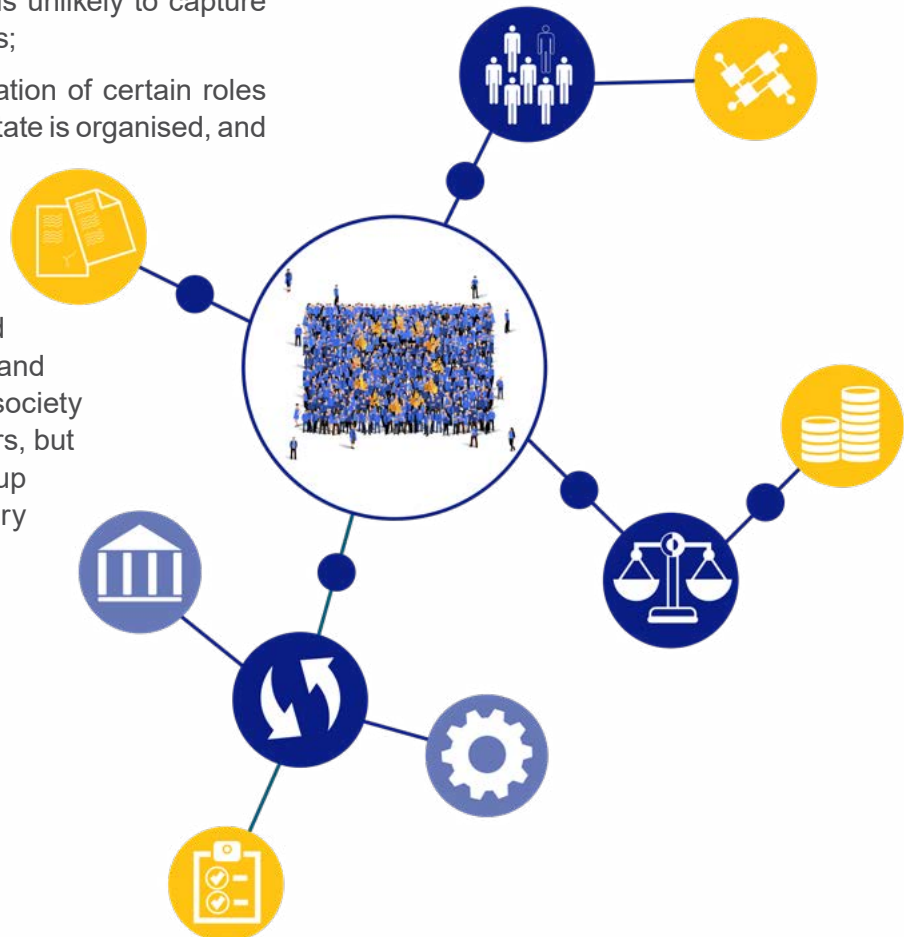


Influences on the nature and size of the civil society sector

In addition to definitions and terminology, e.g. many Member States talk about non-governmental organisations (NGO) or not-for-profit organisations rather than civil society organisations, key factors which influence the size and nature of the civil society sector include:

- **challenges in defining civil society:** there is no single definition of civil society, and the differences also affect the type of regulatory frameworks that apply;
- **measurement challenges:** not every Member State has a national registry, and where they do, it is not necessarily an up-to-date guide to the size of a sector and is unlikely to capture many grassroots activities;
- **national context:** delegation of certain roles by the state, the way the state is organised, and the role of volunteering all influence the structure of civil society;
- **the political landscape:** national strategies and dialogue mechanisms, and levels of trust in civil society can act as enabling factors, but some countries also put up administrative or regulatory barriers;
- **the mix of funding:** all Member States make funding available to civil society through grants; they also forego tax revenue through tax breaks on donations and legacies. Other channels, of varying importance depending on the Member States, include membership fees, foundations and lotteries.

These factors are discussed in more detail in the following sections.



Challenges in defining civil society

In its broadest definition **civil society is the term used for any organisational structure which serves the public interest, is democratic and independent of government**⁶, i.e. it also includes trade unions and business associations. This research focused on a narrower definition of a civil society organisation (CSO), which excluded these two last groups. Nevertheless, since there is no single definition across the Member States of which types of association, foundation, social enterprise or charity should be included, regulatory definitions, and therefore accompanying frameworks, differ.

Examples of **specific constructs which affect the definition of civil society** in the Member States⁷ include the gGmbH (gemeinnützige Gesellschaft mit beschränkter Haftung), a form of limited liability company in Austria and Germany for those wanting to run a company on a not-for-profit basis for a social purpose. This is a construct specific to those countries' legal systems. In

France, representatives of civil society perceive that the '*société à mission*' concept introduced in 2019 (Article 179 of Law 2019-486)⁸ to encourage companies to set environmental and social goals has blurred the boundaries between the profit and not-for-profit sector. Definitions of 'social enterprises', cooperatives and mutual societies pose similar problems. In Ireland, 'friendly societies', a form of mutual providing insurance and taking savings that is akin to credit unions, have charitable status. Different Member States distinguish differently between various types of CSO: Greece makes a distinction between membership associations, civil not-for-profit corporations and asset-based foundations; Italy has a catch-all category of 'third sector' entities, with the possibility of acquiring instead the status of volunteer organisation, social promotion association, philanthropic entity or associative network.

Challenges in measurement

Many but not all Member States maintain a **central register** of civil-society-type organisations. This makes it easier to establish a baseline, but it is not necessarily a determinant for having a vibrant civil society. Examples of Member States with registers include: Austria, where all associations register in a central database of associations (Zentrales Vereinsregister - ZVR); Croatia, where civil society organisations are required to register with the Ministry of Finance if they wish to receive state funds; and Czechia. Member States which do not have registers but nevertheless have well developed civil societies, include Denmark and up until the end of the last decade, Italy.⁹

The existence of a register is moreover not always a reliable baseline. In some EU Member States (for example, Bulgaria, Romania and Slovakia), the national databases are unlikely to provide a fully accurate picture of the sector. This can be either because registrants are not required to keep their data up to date and/or not all types of civil society organisation are included in the register. In Slovakia, for example, the register of non-governmental organisations¹⁰ includes entities that may have been created for a single

event or activity and are no longer active. In Greece, the civil code and other elements of the legal framework do not provide for a centralised database of CSOs, but a law of May 2020¹¹ does require the registration and certification of Greek and foreign NGOs engaged in activities related to asylum, migration and social inclusion. Bulgaria could be considered an example of good practice in the requirement to publish financial reports in the register. Italy's register is merely a list.¹²

Grassroots / loosely formed civil society organisations are typically not captured in national databases. In Ireland, Benefacts, a not-for-profit organisation, was set up specifically to provide more transparency on Ireland's not-for-profit sector. However, the Benefacts' database lists over 33 000 not-for-profit organisations but does not include an estimated thousands of unincorporated informal groups. In Germany, it is estimated that circa 200 000 civil society organisations are not registered. This is a situation likely to be replicated in other EU Member States.



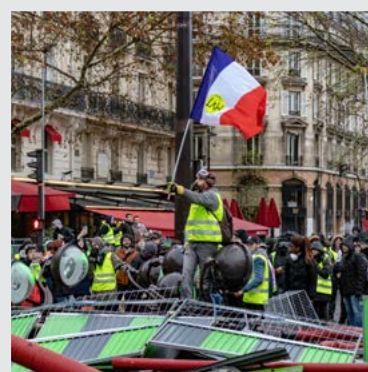
New forms of activism challenge conventional models

Many grassroots organisations are not captured in national registries including because of new forms of activism emerging. During its economic crisis, Greece, which on paper has a small civil society sector, saw the emergence of local self-help groups for migrants and those hit particularly badly by the crisis. In Poland, Free Courts (*Wolne Sąd*), a group of lawyers involved in protests in defence of judicial independence, was set up in 2017 as an informal group but did not register as a foundation until 2020. In Romania, *Viziere.ro* was a spontaneous effort using social media during COVID-19 which eventually had a network of 2 500 volunteers distributing 330 000 visors to medical institutions, closing down again when the pandemic was over.^{13 14}

An example which attracted international attention is the *Gilets Jaunes* (Yellow Vests) movement in France, which was very active in 2018 and 2019, but has only sporadically been so since then. While highly visible (both on the ground because the name comes from the hi-visibility jackets activists wore) and for its size and the media coverage it received, this was a spontaneous, unorganised movement, which used social media to organise demonstrations. It was totally outside the traditional structures of labour relations and organised civil society alike, a non-structure, which meant there was no control over the (sometimes extremist) views and statements of those who described themselves as *Gilets*

Jaunes. The movement was also marked by the social and political heterogeneity of the protesters, covering a wide variety of backgrounds, political outlooks and even demands. The *Gilet Jaunes* were the most prominent French grassroots movement of recent years, but they were not the only one: significant grassroots movements fighting climate change are *Citoyens pour le climat*, *Alternatiba* and *Youth for Climate France* (the French arm of Fridays for Future).¹⁵

Fridays for Future is an example of such a movement with an international dimension. It is the youth-led and youth-organised movement that began in August 2018 after 15-year-old Greta Thunberg and other young activists sat in front of the Swedish parliament every school day for three weeks to protest against the lack of action on the climate crisis. She posted what she was doing on Instagram and Twitter, and it went viral. Fridays for Future is active in 7 500 cities across all continents.¹⁶





National context and traditions as determinants of civil society structure

National contexts all play a role in the structure of civil society and the activities in which it engages. Some forms of social care are provided by the state in some Member States but by CSOs in others, e.g. the role played by Caritas, the Diakonie and others in Austria and Germany. This is not an indication of a gap in state provision, but of **deliberate delegation** to these organisations, which in these cases has arisen over time.

This form of delegation can also be the result of more recent policy decisions. **Lithuania** is implementing a policy of **increasing the outsourcing of social care** (mainly to CSOs). The Plan of Action for implementing its National Progress Strategy “Lithuania 2030” includes a goal of outsourcing at least 30% of all public services by 2030. The previous NPS 2020 had a goal of 15%. This was not fully met by 2020, but significant progress was nevertheless made.¹⁷

Fields where CSOs are particularly closely involved in some Member States which elsewhere would be much less the case are education (Belgium, Ireland), health care (Netherlands), social security (France and Spain, as well as Austria and Germany as pointed out above), and culture and sports (Czechia, Hungary, Slovakia).¹⁸

The existence of **federal regions or different language communities** can affect the level at which or the way in which CSOs interact with the authorities, and the way in which civil society is structured. Austria (a federal country), Belgium (a federal country with three official languages), Cyprus (with two communities and two languages) and Germany (a federal country) are all examples of this.

Civil society often relies heavily on volunteers. In many Member States, their contribution amounts to more than 2% of GDP.¹⁹ However, just as traditions vary in the provision of social services, so they do in the extent to which volunteers provide services that might otherwise be provided by the state (at national or local level). Firefighting is just one example. In some Member States, this service is provided solely or predominantly by the state; in others, the number of volunteers can exceed the number of career fire fighters by a ratio of twenty or thirty to one.²⁰ This compounds the difficulty of making straightforward comparisons across Member States. Moreover, while the term volunteer might suggest someone giving freely of their time, this can be misleading: what to a CSO may be a volunteer may in fact be remunerated by someone else, as employers may give employees remunerated time off for volunteering, either as part of employment good practice or a statutory requirement. In Italy, the state compensates employers for the cost of lost days for volunteer training or activity to work in disaster relief, for example, and compensates associations for expenses incurred by the volunteers.^{21 22}

Reliance on volunteers often reflects lack of financial capacity to meet a payroll. The evidence collected for this research suggested that civil society in France and the Netherlands found this easier than organisations in Austria, Portugal and Slovenia, where civil society is heavily reliant on volunteers.²³ In Austria, for example, 46% of the population volunteers. However, this does not necessarily apply across the board in countries where civil society appears to be better resourced. France has a strong volunteering tradition. There are **1.1**

million associations relying exclusively on volunteers, and 170 000 associations with employees (but who often use volunteers as well). In the areas of leisure and entertainment, and defence of causes, rights and interests, and some forms of cultural activity,²⁴ these grassroots associations represent a higher percentage of all associations in this category than of organisations providing employment. The latter are, of course, generally larger organisations per se. The picture in Slovenia is similar: 92.2% of the 27 600 NGOs do not have employees.²⁵ It is generally the smaller civil society organisations that tend to be more reliant on volunteers.

Member States with a long history of volunteering and high levels of civic commitment according to the perceptions emerging in this research include Denmark, Germany, Italy, Malta and the Netherlands, among others. In other Member States, particularly in some eastern EU Member States, the culture of volunteering is more limited and / or still developing, for example in Hungary, Lithuania, Romania and Slovakia. In Lithuania only 9% of

the population volunteer, though levels of all forms of civic engagement have been increasing²⁶; rates of volunteering are reported to be low in Romania despite the Law on Volunteering which came into force in 2014 and introduced a range of benefits for volunteers;²⁷ in Slovakia there is said to be an increase in citizens' participation and volunteering, but mostly in areas such as culture, sports, or the provision of social services. In the field of EU rights and values, activism is more typical online (e.g. signing petitions, campaigns to raise awareness). Additionally, a significant part of the population in Slovakia (30%) distrusts civil society organisations²⁸. In those Member States, older generations associate volunteering with an element of compulsion by the state. Slovenia is an exception in this group as it does have a strong history of volunteering. Feedback collected for this research suggests that there is a correlation between levels of volunteering and the level of development of the civil society sector, and national strategies reviewed in this research make that link.

Influence of the political landscape

The political and the policy landscape, and the extent to which they act as an enabling factor, also influence the size and structure of the civil society sector. **A supportive political environment** is evident in some Member States, including but not necessarily through national strategies on promotion of civil society. In other Member States **the political environment appears to be deteriorating / more challenging**, particularly in areas relating to EU values and rights. The European Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) in *Europe's civil society: still under pressure, Update 2022*, noted some positive developments in 2021, including policy measures creating an environment more conducive to civil society development, but overall found that pressure on CSOs from state authorities and non-state actors is increasing. CSOs engaged in social movements and working on sensitive issues are particularly likely to report this. Sensitive issues include migration, environmental protection, women's rights, LGBTQI+ rights and anti-racism, as well as (in a few countries) children's rights.²⁹

Member States with strong relationships between civil society and government include Denmark (see Box), Finland and the Netherlands, where the word 'partnership' was repeatedly used in describing the collaboration between state authorities and civil society organisations. In Croatia, the political environment was reported to be enabling, with three specific government bodies set up to support civil society.³⁰ In Croatia, civil society has a formal role in the development of operational programmes that channel EU structural funds.³¹ In Lithuania, the political environment was reported to be improving, with legal clarification from March 2020 on the legal concept of an NGO as a public legal entity that acts on a voluntary basis and is independent of the state or municipal authorities and bodies.³²



National strategies as an enabling factor

A number of Member States have national strategies specifically designed to empower and encourage civil society development. Czechia, Denmark, and Slovenia are among those with such strategies.³³

Czechia: The Public administration cooperation strategy with non-governmental non-profit organisations for the years 2021 to 2030 stresses that **the non-profit sector and NGOs in its institutionalised form are a necessary component of a well-functioning and resilient society**. The Strategy promotes a more consistent and wider awareness of society about the non-profit sector and its partnership with public administration. This applies not only to service NGOs, but also to the activities of advocacy NGOs, philanthropic NGOs and NGOs defending the interests of their members. One of the strategic goals is to **improve public perceptions of NGOs**. The perception of NGOs providing services such as social care is positive, but views of advocacy organisations, e.g. in the areas of minorities, gender equality or the environment, are “rather negative”. Czechia wants these organisations to be seen as “critical allies” who act in the public interest and support social cohesion, or promote goals that have a clear benefit for that part of the public affected by the issues for which they advocate. The measures proposed in the strategy including increasing awareness of the benefits of NGO projects and activities financed from the state budget and communicating the outputs and results of cooperation between the public administration and NGOs. This is part of a wider effort to **create an enabling environment**, notably a favourable political and “pro-participation” legal environment for association, assembly and expression. The Strategy is accompanied by a detailed three-year Action Plan. There will be two more such Action Plans over the life of the Strategy.

Denmark: The Civil Society Strategy 2022-2025³⁴ is a sector-specific strategy and will **support civil society with infrastructure and knowledge**, and through **new partnerships**.

It will guarantee the continued funding of existing volunteer centres and of Volunteer Friday (one day set aside in September each year to promote volunteering), the creation of a civil society portal and a new advisory service to help smaller organisations apply for grants. It will continue with the Volunteer Survey and Volunteer Report that provide a knowledge base. The strategy places particular emphasis on tackling loneliness through new forms of partnership within communities and more direct involvement of the vulnerable, including as volunteers. The civil society strategy is based on the recommendations made in August 2021 by a working group of major civil society and volunteering organisations.

Slovenia: In 2018, Slovenia adopted a Strategy for developing non-governmental organisations and volunteering until 2023, which recognised that NGOs and volunteering have **a significant impact on social cohesion and solidarity**³⁵. The strategic objectives, which were complemented by a detailed Action Plan, are: 1. well-developed, effective and innovative non-governmental organisations able to properly identify and address the needs of their environment, and which respond effectively and efficiently to them; 2. connected, stable, less fragmented and sustainable non-governmental organisations; and 3. well organised and sustainable volunteering which is recognised as a value and which makes an important contribution to social well-being. The strategic objectives are being achieved through three mutually supporting concrete goals: 1. strengthening the integration and efficiency of non-governmental organisations in response to social challenges and needs; 2. strengthening the cooperation of the state with non-governmental organisations and 3. developing high-quality volunteering in all segments of society. The Strategy lays emphasis on taking a **horizontal approach to civil society across government**, in particular to strengthen the general supportive environment and improve mechanisms for cooperation between the state and NGOs.

Among the countries where challenges were highlighted in interviews with civil society about the political and policy environment was

Austria, where a reorganisation of government funding was seen by some of those interviewed to have changed priorities in a way that might reduce the viability of civil society working with refugees or in the fields of gender-based violence and equality. In the Belgian Region of Flanders, interviewees credibly suggested that there have been cases of undue political interference in the allocation of funding. In Bulgaria, several interviews and studies suggest a hostile environment, with policies initially intended to support civil society being weakened or remaining in limbo, including the Council for Civil Society Development comprised of 15 civil society organisations.³⁶

This was established by law in 2020 but not set up formally until February 2022, leading in the meantime to complaints from civil society that the government was being dilatory.³⁷

Other countries about which there were concerns included France, where the 2021 law on the respect for the principles of the Republic³⁸ is seen by a number of civil society associations as a threat to the freedom of association.³⁹ In Hungary and Poland civil society working in fields relating to EU values often mentioned in interviews the need to rely wholly on foreign funding. Civil society organisations in Hungary which want to remain independent of the government are particularly badly hit by the



definition of public benefit as performance of state, government or municipal tasks⁴⁰, whereas other countries use broader definitions of the public good or public interest.⁴¹ As a result, a large part of the Hungarian civil society sector, as it would be commonly defined, including organisations dealing with EU values, is not eligible for funding by the National Cooperation Fund (Nemzeti Együttműködési Alap), the largest national fund dedicated to funding civil society, which actively promotes government agendas⁴².

Despite these examples, the evidence suggests that overt government hostility towards this sector is not the norm, even if there is **variability**. In this context, the issue of independence of civil society organisations is sensitive and complex. Some organisations may present and

consider themselves independent but, after closer assessment, might not fulfil all criteria for independence from governments. That could be a first indication for a GONGO (Government-operated non-governmental organisation). However, for instance, receipt of government funding is very common among NGOs. Therefore, the relative proportion of this funding in organisations' budgets and how that funding is allocated is the critical issue. The presence of government representatives on an organisation's Board should raise questions as to whether the organisation is independent from the government; their involvement in grant selection processes is a clear sign of lack of independence.

Public trust as an enabling factor

Levels of trust in civil society affect the place of civil society in the civic space and is thus also an important element in the political landscape. Levels of trust are influenced by perceptions of the degree of independence from government interference, politicisation and corruption. This research identified significant variations in levels of public trust/mistrust of NGOs⁴³.

In Czechia, a 2020 survey⁴⁴ confirmed higher levels of mistrust than trust among the public: distrust 50.2%, trust 38.5%, don't know 11.2%. These positions are not necessarily based on knowledge: the Czech public has a low level of awareness of the important role played by civil society in the delivery of social services (see also the Box on Czechia's NGO development strategy). Low levels of trust are an issue, which is also relevant to other Member States. In Romania, public trust in NGOs is low and this is also matched by low awareness of the sector. In Slovakia, there appears to be a rise in levels of mistrust towards NGOs based on fears that NGOs are "spreading liberal views" and endangering traditional civil society structures.⁴⁵

In Greece, levels of public mistrust were reported to relate to irregularities in the channelling of state funds to civil society in the 2000s, a situation which has also contributed to mistrust among prospective donors⁴⁶ and the population at large. In the Wellcome

Global Monitor 2020, which measured trust in people working in NGOs or charitable organisations, 33% of Greek respondents said they had no trust at all in this group.

By contrast, in most EU Member States, the level of mistrust towards people working in NGOs or charitable organisations was below 10% (people who replied "not at all" as to their levels of trust according to the Wellcome Global Monitor 2020). The exceptions, other than Greece, were Bulgaria (21%) and Romania (12%).⁴⁷ Taking those who had "no" trust at all or "not much", there are seven countries where more than one quarter of the respondents said this: Bulgaria (a level of more than 40%), Croatia, Hungary, Italy, Portugal, Slovakia and Slovenia. **The highest levels of trust ("a lot" of trust) were in France (43%), Germany (54%) and Malta (55%).** Taking those who said they have "some" or "a lot" of trust, there are eight countries where the percentage tops 80%: Austria, Denmark France, Germany, Ireland, Malta, the Netherlands and Poland.

Member States about which a more positive perspective emerged from the research covered here included Austria, Denmark, Germany, Ireland and Slovenia, which all have traditions of volunteering. In Slovenia, for example, almost no civil society organisations work without the assistance of volunteers.⁴⁸

Availability of funding

Across the EU, **civil society funding comes from a wide range of public and private sources**, including international entities, national and local government, foundations, business and private donations, lotteries and membership fees. Civil society also benefits from tax breaks. The mix of funding clearly varies significantly by Member State. What is also clear is that funding is under threat from a shrinking civil society space, driven by budget cuts and/or deliberate policies in some Member States of not funding certain types of organisation working in the area of EU values and rights, as also discussed in the previous section. Financial support was also hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, with funding diverted to fighting the pandemic, increased competition for funding, and delays to calls for tender and proposals. (There was, however, an upside because the pandemic heightened the visibility of civil society and its role. Several of the reports and strategies referenced in this research make that point.)

EU funds are an important source of funding for civil society, particularly in the EU-13.⁴⁹ There was funding during 2014-2020 from the Rights, Equality and Citizenship programme, which has been superseded by CERV, with its greater emphasis on values (as the name indicates). EU Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) also support civil society, in some cases indirectly benefiting projects in the area of EU

values, mainly in areas such as gender equality, racism and discrimination. This is particularly true of the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) in the current funding period (2021-2027) and was through the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) from 2014-2020.

In 15 EU Member States⁵⁰ civil society has access to funds from the **EEA/Norway Active Citizens Fund (ACF)**. There are EEA/Norway Grant civil society programmes in all EEA/Norway Grant beneficiary states, of which the largest is for Romania (EUR 46 million) for the funding period 2014-2021 (see Box).⁵¹ There are several other quite small sources of government-funded programmes. The Baltic countries can access grants for civil society from the **Nordic Council of Ministers' Support Program** for Non-Governmental Organisations Cooperation, which awarded grants totalling EUR 70 000 in 2020 and EUR 66 000 in 2021. The **Visegrad Fund** supports regional civil society cooperation in the Visegrad countries.⁵² It does not break out these grants separately, but the total is likely to be under EUR 100 000.⁵³ **Swiss** funds for civil society in Bulgaria, Croatia and Romania between 2010 and 2024⁵⁴ amount to circa EUR 300 million.⁵⁵ These came from what is known as Switzerland's enlargement contribution, a system of funding akin to that of the EEA/Norway Grants.

The Active Citizens Fund

The EEA/Norway **Active Citizens Fund plays an important role in support for EU rights and values** in 15 EU Member States. This was pointed out frequently in the interviews for this research. The Active Citizens Fund supports civil society by strengthening its role in promoting democratic participation, supporting active citizenship and protecting human rights.

The ACF had EUR 280 million available in the period 2014-2021 for civil society projects to increase citizen participation in civic activities, support consultation between public institutions and civil society organisations in decision-making processes, raise citizens' awareness of human rights, including gender equality, empower vulnerable groups, create more effective, accountable and sustainable civil society organisations, and strengthen regional cooperation within civil society.⁵⁶ The Active Citizens Fund disburses the money through fund operators in each beneficiary state who are independent of the government. This system of fund operator in participating countries to disburse funds to smaller organisations was among the sources of inspiration for the Union Values call of the Citizens, Equality, Rights and

Values programme. The Union Values call, a novelty of the CERV programme, works through a system of bigger national intermediary organisations/consortia to channel funding to small and grassroots NGOs. That system should allow funding closer to the needs on the ground and decrease the administrative burden of smaller organisations.

The ACF is funded by the countries of the European Economic Area (EEA - Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway) collectively and Norway individually as part of a mechanism to provide grants for the economic and social development of and to strengthen bilateral relations with less economically developed countries in the EU. The EEA grants are available to countries which joined the EU after 2004 (EU-13), i.e. Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, as well as to Greece and Portugal. There are also bilateral programmes between the EEA and/or Norway which include money for civil society, but the ACF and its independence from governments are particularly important to organisations working on EU rights and values.

The picture of **reliance on international funding across the EU is heterogenous**. In collecting data for this research, Lithuania was identified as one country where funding from the state and private sources was reported to be very limited, with many in the sector looking to the EU, and EEA and Norway Grants for funding. (A planned national NGO fund may change this.⁵⁷) In Greece, civil society has become more heavily reliant on international sources since the country's economic crisis, as well as on donations and contributions by private foundations. Cyprus also relies heavily on non-government funding, international and private. In Romania, despite being a major beneficiary of the EEA/Norway grants⁵⁸, private donations – from corporates and private individuals – have become the main source of funding for civil society.

Most civil society organisations cannot nevertheless manage without some form of public funding. This may come from central, regional or local government. Exceptions are those for which it is a point of principle to be independent of public funds, but these are a minority. In some Member States, e.g. Austria, Estonia and Poland, local government plays a particularly important role in providing financial support to civil society. In Estonia, the amount of local municipality funding was reported during this research to be greater than the amount of funding from the national level.

However, there appears to be little precise data on the extent of public funding. The range from the empirical evidence collected for this research goes from a figure of 65% of the level of Irish CSOs' reliance on public funding to Sweden, where only 30% of funding is

reported to come from government. Of the remainder, 10% comes from private donations and sponsoring, and 60% from other sources, e.g. membership fees, product sales, lotteries. An analysis of the nine largest national CSO recipients in Denmark gave a figure of 25% of those organisations' total annual income coming from public funds.⁵⁹

Where health and social care have been outsourced to CSOs to a significant extent, the level of public funding is clearly significant. However, this was not always the perception of CSOs contributing to this research, who rather pointed out how such funding is never enough to cover all needs. **Insights from EU-level umbrella organisations suggest that public funding is perceived to be relatively strong and easier to access in the Netherlands and Denmark.**

As **governments generally recognise that civil society organisations receiving state funding need to be seen as independent of government to be credible**, they often set out to put themselves at arm's length from some of the funding they provide. Competitive tendering procedures are widely used. In France and Spain, in particular, this research found that civil society had in recent years experienced a decrease in subsidies from public funding relative to grants for which civil society must compete.

This has increased competition among civil society organisations and imposed additional administrative burdens. Complaints from civil society that EU and national procedures for grant applications, monitoring and evaluation are interfering with them working effectively on what they see as their priorities arose frequently in this research.⁶⁰

In France, interviewees felt there is also more competition for funds with social enterprises, which have been assuming increasing importance and have moved into some areas of activity that were traditionally the preserve of conventional civil society. Austria is another Member State which has been using more procurement compared to grants, with an estimated current split of 75/25. State support was generally perceived to be less generous, more administratively burdensome or connected with political conditions in a number of eastern EU Member States, for example Bulgaria and Romania.

Other means of ensuring a fair allocation of funds to civil society in addition to competitive tendering allowing taxpayers to allocate some of their tax to organisations of their choice is another (see Box). Funding civil society from lottery and gambling revenue is another approach (see Box).

Encouraging philanthropy through tax breaks

Private donations by individuals or corporates can be significant in some Member States, driven in part by the **availability of tax breaks on donations and legacies**. While this is a standard practice, there are many different approaches. One approach is to allow taxpayers to earmark part of their tax liability for civil society. In Italy, the civil society sector is supported by the "cinque per mille" (five per thousand) scheme. Taxpayers can choose to allocate 0.05% of their tax liability to charitable causes. The taxpayer can designate a beneficiary organisation or leave it to the government to redistribute the funds. There are more than 70 000 organisations on the list of recognised entities, of which more than 50 000 are sports groups. In 2021, more than EUR 570 million was raised for civil society in

this way. Volunteering organisations made up the lion's share, receiving EUR 331 million.⁶⁰ Slovenia has a similar 0.5% rule and a list of recognised organisations which taxpayers may nominate. This list takes a broad view of civil society that includes trade unions and political parties.⁶¹ In Poland, organisations with public-benefit status, i.e. they are carrying out "socially useful activities", can be granted 1% of the income tax from individual taxpayers.⁶² More than 10% of the Polish civil society organisations have this status.⁶³ Slovakia operates a similar system. The individual taxpayers can ask for 2% of their taxes to go to organisation of their choice, providing these are registered.⁶⁴ This can be 3% if they have volunteered for 40 hours.

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Lottery/gambling funds as a source of CSO funding

Lottery/gambling funding is a source of funding for civil society in a number of EU Member States, including **Belgium, Cyprus, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland and Sweden**. Generally, these lotteries are run under the auspices of the state, but the Netherlands is one example of a highly developed charity lottery sector, where lotteries may be run by private companies. Netherlands is one of six EU Member States where charity lotteries exist alongside national lotteries.⁶⁵

In **Belgium** in 2021, EUR 200 million was made available by the National Lottery for civil society projects. This is civil society in the broadest sense of the word. Some of the funding goes to major cultural organisations and more than 40% is earmarked for development aid. Statute largely defines which organisations receive funding, e.g. the Red Cross and the King Baudouin Foundation, but a small amount is available for calls for proposals from small projects. This was EUR 3 million in 2021.

In **Finland**, part of the profits of the national gambling and lottery organisation, Veikkaus Oy, goes in grants to CSOs. The grants are awarded via the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (EUR 27.2 million in 2021), the Ministry of Education and Culture (EUR 360.4 million) and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health (EUR 292.4 million). Grants for health and social welfare activities are awarded via the Funding Centre for Social Welfare and Health Organisations (STEA), which reports to the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.⁶⁶ Some STEA grants go to civil society organisations working in the area of EU rights and values.

In **Luxembourg**, the Œuvre Nationale de Secours Grande-Duchesse Charlotte runs the national lottery and redistributes profits to civil society. It distributed EUR 21.7 million in 2020. As in Belgium, there are statutory requirements on the use of this funding, including an allocation of 50% to state bodies providing social care and benefits. The remainder is split between eight organisations which receive recurring aid and one-off grants to civil society.

In the **Netherlands**, the national lottery, the Nederlandse Loterij, distributed EUR 80 million to civil society in 2021. This is less by a factor of more than five than the EUR 465 million distributed by a lottery set up as a social enterprise, the Nationale Goede Doelen Loterij. The Nationale Goede Doelen Loterij runs the Postcode lottery and the Vriendenloterij (Friends lottery)⁶⁷. The parent enterprise, Novamedia also runs the post code lotteries Germany, Norway, Sweden and the UK. Novamedia is the world's third largest private charity donor.^{68 69} The Dutch operation distributes more to civil society in the Netherlands than the total in all the other countries in which Novamedia operates (EUR 360 million). One of the beneficiaries in the Netherlands highlighted by the Nationale Goede Doelen Loterij is Dona Daria⁷⁰, a Rotterdam-based CSO, which works on community development, including providing training on promoting equality and fighting discrimination. Many organisations receive funding year-on-year: Since cooperation with Dutch refugee organisation, VluchtelingenWerk Nederland began in 1990, this CSO has received more than EUR 300 million.⁷¹

Private foundations make significant contributions to civil society. The Open Society Foundation (OSF), for example, is very active in funding activities against racism, discrimination, and other human rights issues in a number of EU Member States. Some of the most notable Polish civil society organisations, such as the Stefan Batory Foundation, which promotes democracy and seeks to professionalise and legitimise civil society, were created with the support of the Open Society Foundations (OSF) and US funds, e.g. from USAID. However, large international foundations such as the OSF have recently begun to change their funding priorities and are withdrawing support from countries in the European Union to focus their resources elsewhere. The same is true of USAID, which is focusing in Europe on EU Enlargement and Neighbourhood countries.⁷² National foundations, operating on a smaller scale, are generally not in a position to take over this role, thus leaving a funding gap particularly in the eastern EU Member States. That said, **some private national foundations in the EU do fund projects in other Member States**, for example, those made by German foundations, e.g. to civil society organisations or for capacity-

building in Bulgaria and Romania. Some of these projects promote cross-border co-operation in eastern and southeastern Europe, and with the Balkan states.⁷³ For instance, Austria's Erste Stiftung funds a Reporting Democracy investigative journalist project in central, eastern and southeastern Europe.⁷⁴

Another form of private funding is **transnational giving by individuals**. These donations are normally not eligible for the same tax deductions as national philanthropic contributions. Through a platform developed by the Swiss Philanthropy Foundation and Belgium's King Baudouin Foundation, private and corporate donors from the following countries are now able to make transnational donations: Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Romania, Spain, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.⁷⁵

National foundations may not be able to fill the funding gap left by the withdrawal of some international foundations from eastern EU Member States, which built up civil society in the post-enlargement period (i.e. from 2004 on), but they **remain critical to civil society funding** across the EU, including in the EU-14 (see Box).



The role of foundations in funding civil society

Foundations themselves can be seen as organisations falling within the definition of civil society, but they **play a major role as funders in a number of Member States**. Their tax status can confer special advantages and attract funding, e.g. the rate of inheritance tax on legacies to the **King Baudouin Foundation** in Belgium is lower than for legacies to many other civil society organisations. The Foundation distributed EUR 133 million in 2021. Foundations can also act as a buffer between government and funding of civil society, as is the case of German foundations with historic roots in political parties, e.g. the **Friedrich Ebert Foundation (Social Democrats)**, the **Konrad Adenauer Foundation (Christian Democrats)**, the **Friedrich Naumann Foundation (Liberals)**. These obtain most of their funding from central and regional government. They fund projects in and outside Germany. Within the EU, they are active in a number of eastern EU Member States. The **Fondation de France** is a hybrid that both funds projects directly and acts as an umbrella service provider to more

than 900 other foundations. It distributed EUR 197 million in 2021. Governance is in the hands of a board representing major financial and business groups and the French government. The **Fondation de France** is funded by donations, legacies and as the beneficiary of life insurance policies. There are tax incentives for designating the **Fondation de France** as the beneficiary of a life insurance policy. Banking foundations are major players in Italy (where there are almost 90). Their income comes in large part from dividends from the banks of which they were originally part, but from which they have now been formally unbundled. They generally fund projects in the catchment area of that bank. **Fondazione Cariplo in Lombardy** distributes EUR 150 million each year. In Spain, the foundation landscape is dominated by a single banking foundation, **Fundación La Caixa**, which spent EUR 295 million on social programmes and grants via calls for proposals in 2021 of a total of EUR 494 million of social investment.⁷⁶

Where they are not the beneficiary of formal long-term partnerships with Member States under contracts to provide services, CSOs tend to suffer from **a lack of consistency in the availability of funding**. Funding is often project-based, providing support for a specific time-limited purpose rather than covering general operational costs. Typically, it is easier to obtain funding for practical tangible issues (e.g. providing shelter for migrants) rather than for advocacy for policy change and awareness-raising (e.g. protecting

migrants' rights), limiting their ability to tackle long-term root causes. This is a particular challenge for CSOs that engage in both providing services and advocacy, as it means their respective areas of work have unbalanced budgets. Project-based funding is also not suitable for much of the work done by those CSOs that, for example, need to keep lawyers, psychologists or other specialists on a payroll to provide essential or emergency services.



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Challenges for smaller organisations

Accessing funding is particularly challenging for small, grassroots civil society organisations, which find it hard to identify which funding programmes and grants are available, and often lack the capacity to apply for this type of funding. That is particularly the case of local organisations which are not part of national or pan-European platforms or umbrella organisations. Those organisations often provide capacity-building for their members on how to write proposals for funding. All CSOs can potentially face **administrative hurdles**, but they **are often especially difficult for smaller/ grassroots organisations** with less administrative capacity and reliant on volunteers without the necessary type of experience. Such organisations typically have little capacity and few services to support the submission bids or

fundraising. They have to find time and money to write proposals, which is a sunk cost. They may face competition from larger organisations that are better resourced and better able to absorb these costs. In France, the move to increased use of procurement is perceived by some interviewed for this research to have hit smaller organisations disproportionately, although some have found a solution in joint tendering.

An example of **a Member State which has recognised the importance of capacity-building** for these small organisations is Estonia (see Box). Denmark's Civil Society Strategy 2022-2025 also recognises the challenges small organisation face in applying for funding with plans to set up advisory services to help with grant applications (see Box).

Capacity-building as an enabling factor

Lack of capacity, both in terms of size of staff and the ability to free staff to bid for grants, but also in terms of the knowhow needed to make applications is a widespread problem for smaller civil society organisations in particular. **Estonia's National Foundation of Civil Society (KÜSK)** is paying particular attention to this in its Strategy for the Years 2021-2024.⁷⁷ **Competence is one of the Foundation's four core values** (alongside compassion, cooperation, and honesty and transparency). Providing a support centre for the development and the support of civil society is one of its three roles (alongside acting as a financial backer and a loudspeaker for civil society). With a view to empowering leaders and organisations, KÜSK offers

support with the development of efficient cooperation models and distributing them. NGOs, communities and local governments across the country are eligible for advice and support in launching, developing, and finding support for their initiatives. The Foundation aims to be proactive, ambitious, and community-based in offering consulting services. It provides training for consultants in order to level the quality of the service across Estonia. Capacity-building is also part of the role it sees for itself as a loudspeaker for civil society. In that role, it empowers local advocacy by differing between nationwide and regional NGOs/organisations in applicant rounds if necessary.

Reporting is also often a heavy administrative burden for small organisations. Large grants (e.g. EUR 60 000 and above) are difficult to manage for small organisations, many of which operate on a volunteer basis on an annual budget of less than EUR 10 000⁷⁸. Furthermore, their annual income is often extremely variable, meaning that grant requirements that consider their income from previous years can be restrictive – for example, by disqualifying organisations that received an exceptional donation on one occasion.

For smaller organisations **even the registration process may be an administrative burden** because of the cost and/or complexity. Portugal is an example of good practice in facilitating registration. The Portuguese Institute for Registries and Notaries provides a simple, expedited way to legally form and register civil

society organisations, making it possible for any group of citizens to create a legal entity by means of a single administrative act, with minimal bureaucracy and with an administrative fee of only EUR 300. This fee is waived in the case of youth or student organisations.⁷⁹

Funding constraints often mean **smaller organisations are forced to rely more on volunteers** who do not necessarily have the requisite skills **than they would like to**. Volunteers can be an important resource as discussed earlier in this research. They are often highly committed to the organisations they are helping, but they nevertheless introduce an element of uncertainty into long-term planning,⁸⁰ particularly as there is also a trend away from long-term commitment to volunteering only on a short-term basis.⁸¹

Civil society active in promoting and protecting EU values and rights

The research looked at **whether civil society is active and/or receives funding specifically in the areas of EU values**, and in which areas in which Member State/s in particular – to the extent it was possible to find information. The EU rights and values issues funded by the CERV programme such as promoting the rule of law, democracy and fundamental rights including equality and gender equality, rights of the child and European remembrance and fighting racism, xenophobia, hate crime and hate speech, gender-based violence and violence against children.

The picture that emerged indicated that **the topics which receive particular attention reflect national context and history**. For example, migrant crises in Greece have resulted in introduction of a register for organisations working in this field. A highly publicised child abuse and murder scandal in Belgium in the 1990's saw the emergence of a particular emphasis on children's rights. CSOs dealing with issues affecting immigrants are strong in Luxembourg, where almost half the population are foreigners (47%).⁸² Many NGOs in Cyprus are involved in efforts to resolve the dispute over sovereignty over the northern part of the island. Roma rights are a major issue for CSOs working on EU values in Romania and Slovakia. In Sweden, there are CSOs devoted to the rights of the Sami people.

In general, CSOs working in the area of EU values are often either **small, single-issue organisations** or CSOs that tackle one or more of the EU values in conjunction with the provision of services. There are no CSOs devoted to the promotion of all EU values, as described above, together, but most countries do have CSOs covering human rights in general which can be considered a horizontal topic under EU values.

The single-issue organisations often find it harder to raise public funds than CSOs providing service provision. As smaller organisations, they find it hard to compete with generally larger and better resourced organisations better able to handle the administrative procedures and absorb the costs of applying for public funds.

The challenge for smaller organisations in general, and therefore of organisations working in the area of EU values, of applying for public funds means that they are **more reliant than larger organisations on other sources of funding**. In Austria, for example, a finding from this research was that a very significant amount of the funding for CSOs working in the area of EU values comes from donations. German organisations working in the EU values field were found to be highly reliant on donations and funding from foundations. Elsewhere, CSOs promoting and protecting EU values were perceived to be **particularly reliant on funding from other countries**. This was the case of many eastern EU Member States, but was reported also to be the case in Finland, Malta and Portugal (with the EEA/Norway Grants cited by the sources used as a vital source of funding in the case of eastern EU Member States, Malta and Portugal). The Netherlands stood out for the fact that CSOs working in the area of EU values were reported not to have difficulties accessing public funds, while in Sweden it was reported that there are well funded large organisations covering the main EU values.

Related to the framework of EU values, the topics of **democracy, data protection, good governance, anti-corruption and the rule of law**, are less covered by civil society organisations, in Belgium, Denmark, Greece or Sweden. However, these topics tend to be



regarded as important for CSOs in eastern EU Member States. In the case of Denmark, several sources suggested that fewer civil society organisations work on democracy, good governance and anti-corruption due to high levels of public trust in government. The feedback from Luxembourg suggests that there are fewer civil society organisations working on governance and anti-corruption than elsewhere (in relative terms).

Feedback from EU-level umbrella organisations suggests that **data protection** lacks funding and support because it requires specialist technical capacity and expertise. CSOs often lack the expertise to focus on issues relating to the relationship between fundamental rights and new technologies (such as the right to privacy) even if it would typically fall within their field of activity.

In the areas of **gender equality, children's rights, disability, racism and LGBTQ+ rights**, violence against children was felt to be under-represented by CSOs in Cyprus, while gender equality is regarded as an important issue. In Germany, there is less coverage and a gap in funding for the victims of violence and hate, as well as for media freedom, but these topics are emerging. In Greece, the civil society sector is mostly present in the fields of fundamental rights as a whole, and equality, and children's rights in particular. The topics of racism and xenophobia are comparatively less well represented. In Portugal, fighting racism and for LGBTQ+ rights were regarded as particularly prominent. In Slovenia, coverage of the EU values fields was considered to be uneven, with a higher focus on human rights, democracy, equality and non-discrimination and gender-based violence than other topics.

Working in the area of LGBTQ+ rights poses particular challenges in some EU Member States such as Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania and Poland according to this research. There have been instances of defamation campaigns, right-wing media attacks and threats to staff. There is evidence that an increase in aggression in society appears to be a wider phenomenon. In Sweden, there has been an increase in cases of threats and harassment against civil society workers, especially those working in the fields of LGBTQ+, women's rights, violence against women, migrant rights, and children and young people according to Sweden's national youth organisation (Landsrådet för Sveriges Ungdomsorganisationer - LSU).

The approach to **European remembrance** is yet another area where national history plays an important part. While the Holocaust as a European event does generally receive attention, national disputes or wars in which the population was particularly engaged colour the view or emphasis on European remembrance as opposed to remembrance of other historical events in a number of countries. In Sweden for instance, the reported low level of engagement with European remembrance may reflect its neutrality in both World Wars. Historic distortion and a nationalistic shaping of memory politics poses a rising challenge for organisations promoting a critical view of national and European histories.

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Conclusion

Civil society is a complex area where even the definition of what is civil society is challenging. While it is possible to say that civil society is active in every Member State, the data on what exactly that means is not comparable. History and national context determine many aspects relating to the structure and operations of civil society, further complicating comparisons. This applies to the extent to which civil society provides health and care services for the state, the political and policy environment, the degree of reliance on volunteering, the channels through which funding flows, and the specific EU rights and values for which civil society fights and/or receives funding. In most of the Member States with a less developed history of organised civil society, often – but not only – those in eastern EU Member States, there is a strong commitment to catch up.

The overall picture is one of a **generally highly developed, highly diverse and very rich sector**, frequently supported by significant level of individual social engagement by volunteers, and thus a key contributor to social cohesion. Civil society plays a key role in many Member States in delivering social services. It plays an essential role in fighting for EU rights and values, sometimes in difficult circumstances of a shrinking civil space. It is at the same time a sector which has **considerable unexploited potential for mutual learning and exchange** across the EU from its very diversity and richness.

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- 43 The 2021 Edelman Trust Barometer also found variable levels of trust in the sector. Edelman reported a global fall (in a sample of 27 countries around the world) in levels of trust in NGOs of 57%, but in Germany and Italy, despite their strong traditions of volunteering and a well-established civil society sector, fewer than 50% of the public trust NGOs (46% and 48% respectively). In the four other EU countries looked at, more than half the population trust NGOs, though not always by a large margin: Spain (51%), France (52%), the Netherlands (53%) and Ireland (55%).

- ⁴⁴ Survey conducted by the Research Department of the Institute of Sociology of the CAS, v.v.i. Centre for Public Opinion Research (CVVM).
- ⁴⁵ Survey conducted by Hlas občianskych iniciatív in 2019.
- ⁴⁶ Chrysostomou, Apostolos (2015), *When the state fails: the rise of informal civil society organisations in Greece*, Lund: Department of Political Science, Lund University
- ⁴⁷ <https://cms.wellcome.org/sites/default/files/2021-11/wgm-public-file-covid-crosstabs.xlsx>. This is a global monitor which includes all EU Member States except Luxembourg.
- ⁴⁸ Cyprus, Czechia Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia
- ⁴⁹ Member States which joined the EU in 2014 or later.
- ⁵⁰ Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia.
- ⁵¹ https://eeagrants.org/archive/2014-2021/programmes?field_topics_programmes_target_id%5B162%5D=162&field_status_target_id=All&page=1
- ⁵² Czechia, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia
- ⁵³ <https://s3.eu-central-1.amazonaws.com/uploads.mangoweb.org/shared-prod/visegradfund.org/uploads/2022/06/VF-annual-report-digi.pdf>
- ⁵⁴ Funding for Bulgaria and Romania ran to 2020 only.
- ⁵⁵ <https://www.eda.admin.ch/deza/en/home/sdc/activities/cooperation-eastern-europe.html> and <https://www.eda.admin.ch/content/dam/schweizerbeitrag/en/documents/Projekte/Zivilgesellschaft-Bulgarien-Rumaenien-EN.pdf>
- ⁵⁶ <https://eeagrants.org/topics-programmes/culture-civil-society-good-governance-and-fundamental-rights-and-freedoms/civil>
- ⁵⁷ <http://www.3sektorius.lt/pilietines-iniciatyvos/naujienos/2020-08-12-vyriausybe-patvirtino-kaip-veiks-nvo-fondas>
- ⁵⁸ <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/374111602685815317/pdf/Rapid-Assessment-of-Romanian-CSO-in-the-Context-of-COVID-19.pdf>. This report states that there has been a gap in EEC/Norway Grants. The research for this research suggest that this is the result of procedural delays not a removal of or cut in funding.
- ⁵⁹ Satspuljen, SSA-reserven og økonomien i den frivillige sociale sektor. Dansk Erhverv. 2021.
- ⁶⁰ <https://www.agenziaentrate.gov.it/portale/-/comunicato-stampa-9-giugno-2022>
- ⁶¹ https://cof.org/country-notes/nonprofit-law-slovenia#_end4
- ⁶² Under Polish law, a public benefit organisation (organizacja pożytku publicznego) is a non-governmental (private, not-for-profit) organisation carrying out socially useful activities within the sphere of specific public tasks (e.g. social assistance, professional integration of socially excluded persons, charity work). <https://www.ekonomiaspoleczna.gov.pl/Public,Benefit,and,Volunteer,Work,Act,567.html>
- ⁶³ B. Charycka, M. Gumkowska, *The Capacity of NGOs in Poland – Key Facts*, Klon/Jawor Association, 2018
- ⁶⁴ <https://cof.org/country-notes/nonprofit-law-slovakia#deductibility>
- ⁶⁵ <https://www.novamedia.com/who-we-are/organisation>
- ⁶⁶ The Finnish Ministries of Justice and Education also provide funding to support civil society working in some CERV fields.
- ⁶⁷ The Vriendenloterij specialises in funding civil society operating in the area of culture.
- ⁶⁸ <https://www.novamedia.com/what-we-do>
- ⁶⁹ <https://publicaties.postcodeloterij.nl/jaarverslag-2021-postcode-loterij-en-vriendenloterij/page/78-79>
- ⁷⁰ www.donadaira.nl
- ⁷¹ <https://www.postcodeloterij.nl/goede-doelen/overzicht/vluchtelingenwerk-nederland>
- ⁷² <https://www.usaid.gov/where-we-work/europe-and-eurasia>; USAID still operates in Cyprus supporting reconciliation between the two communities.
- ⁷³ These are random examples. <https://www.hss.de/weltweit-aktiv/europa/bulgarien/> <https://www.freiheit.org/de/termine?event=3LCCK>
- ⁷⁴ <https://www.erstestiftung.org/en/activities/reporting-democracy/>; <https://www.boell.de/de/europaeisches-geschichtsforum>
- ⁷⁵ <https://www.transnationalgiving.eu/how-does-it-work>
- ⁷⁶ <https://fundacionlacaixa.org/documents/10280/9557111/annual-report-la-caixa-foundation-2021.pdf/418399f2-91ce-f5b1-8843-eda3a3de9b1b?version=1.0&t=1650628604944>
- ⁷⁷ https://kysk.ee/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/031221_Lisa-4-Kodanikuu%CC%88hiskonna-Sihtkapitali-strateegia-2021-2024-1_1899_ing.pdf
- ⁷⁸ Interview with European Civic Forum.
- ⁷⁹ <https://justica.gov.pt/Servicos/Registar-associacao>
- ⁸⁰ Inter alia: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/337538558_How_can_NGOs_prevent_volunteers_from_quitting_The_moderating_role_of_the_NGO_type
- ⁸¹ <https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/volunteers-citizens-building-future-europe-own-initiative-opinion>
- ⁸² <https://www.statista.com/statistics/584915/population-of-luxembourg-by-nationality/>

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