

# For a better knowledge of civil society organisations in Europe

A white paper to guide future research  
in response to CSOs knowledge needs

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# Ambitions

This white paper is presented by the French Institute for Civil Society Organisations, in cooperation with the Maecenata Foundation and the Institute for Social Research.

This white paper aims to work for a better acknowledgment of civil society organisations (CSOs) – private initiatives from citizens of collective engagement in instituted organisations or informal movements – contribution to society and democracy, to foster European CSOs capacity building through research, and to bring awareness of the wide range of CSOs research topics and of knowledge gaps. Its ambition is to close the gap between research institutions, CSOs and their public and private stakeholders.

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# Introduction

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A consultation<sup>1</sup> led by the French Institute for Civil Society Organisations on knowledge needs of the non-profit and civil society sector in France revealed that the European scale was a topic that needed to be reinforced. The same observations came from other EU countries civil society researchers.

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Since the end of the Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project<sup>2</sup>, civil society research has lacked comparative studies describing the diversity of the different national sectors, their geographical conditions, developments and structures (Anheier et al 2020).

So the civil society sector on a global scale is missing **comparative data and precise information about sector size, its number of organisations and their orientation, the services provided, the effects and their socio-political integration** (Enjolras /Sivesind 2009).

1. The consultation was conducted from October 2019 to June 2020. Results (French) are accessible here: <https://institutfrancaisdumondeassociatif.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Quels-besoins-de-connaissance-du-monde-associatif-IFMA-2021.pdf>

2. The Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project was conducted under the lead of the John Hopkins University Baltimore in the years 1990–2000: For the first time the project systematically carried out quantitative surveys in the project countries to provide an internationally comparable database to civil society. Since there was no pre-existing classification system, the International Classification of Nonprofit Organizations (ICNPO) as independent taxonomy of the areas of activity of nonprofit organizations was developed. The projects definition of nonprofit organisation is primarily involved in operational and formal structure (Salamon et al. 2003)

**THIS DATA DEFICIT CAN BE EXPLAINED BY THE FACT** that the civil society sector is still not seen as a genuine social area by politics, science and the general public, and hence is not systematically taken into account, which often prevents its place in the official statistical survey system in many countries. While there are components and aspects of civil society that are monitored – such as volunteering rates or numbers of sports associations – a holistic approach is still missing (Strachwitz et al 2020: 100).

**IN ADDITION, THE EXISTING EMPIRICAL CIVIL SOCIETY RESEARCH** often cannot be compared systematically due to different research designs which subsequently lead to considerably different results when it comes for example to the numbers of donations (Schulz-Sandhof 2017). This is valid for many national research settings, but it is even more hindering in international comparison.

**WHILE THERE ARE REGIONAL AND CONTINENTAL CLUSTERS** which put their main focus on North or South America, on Africa or Asia<sup>3</sup>, there is still a substantial lack of a pan-European civil society monitor. Projects for Europe's CSOs often just consider the former soviet states as focus. The CSO Sustainability Index Explorer from US Aid for example covers just eleven Eastern European countries in its 'Europe and Eurasia' cluster, leaving all South and Central European countries out of its analyses<sup>4</sup>. This is also evident when it comes to theoretical approaches which are mainly American-centred and based on a situation that is very different from the European context.

**THIS KNOWLEDGE GAP IS ESPECIALLY REGRETTABLE** because the value of civil society is often particularly emphasised in the European Union region. As it is stated in several documents of the European Parliament, the European Commission and

the Council of Europe – such as the 1997 Communication and 2000 Discussion Paper of the European Commission, the attachment of Declarations to the EU Treaties or the White Paper on governance 2001 (Kohler-Koch/Quitkatt 2013, 2011) – civil society is acknowledged as an important factor for the stability and wellbeing of society and democracy. Civil society is also addressed in two rules of European primary law. Art. 11 (2) states: *"The institutions shall maintain an open, transparent and regular dialogue with representative associations and civil society"* and in Art. 300 (2) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) is written: *"The Economic and Social Committee shall consist of representatives of organisations of employers, of the employed, and of other parties representative of civil society, notably in socio-economic, civic, professional and cultural areas"* (Hummel et al 2020: 84).

**IN SOME ACCOUNTS**, national research has acknowledged the

fact that civil society is most important for our democracies and that civil society organisations allow citizens to take an active part in setting the political agenda. However, the knowledge gap about its scope, interaction and impact in a comparative European perspective is unsettling. Therefore, there is a pressing need to study the contribution of **CSOs and engagement to democracy** in Europe, especially considering its capacity to cope with the democratic crisis and with distrust against institutions across Europe. Next to the questions of the role of civil society in democracy and its capacity to build social cohesion, there is still a big knowledge gap about the inputs of and effects on civil society in **national and European policy-making** (Kendall/Anheier 1999).

**WE ARE LACKING SUFFICIENT MAPPING OF POLICIES** supporting CSOs and civil engagement in Europe, which could set an institutional best practice in favour of civil society and engagement

3. The international society for third-sector research (ISTR) for example has cluster in Africa, Latin America and Asia-Pacific.

4. <https://csosi.org/?region=EUROPE>

for instance. We are also missing a consistent screening of positive support devices in European law that have not transcribed into national laws yet.

**COMING FROM A PERSPECTIVE OF NOW AND THE FUTURE**, looking at the past would be also helpful for a better understanding of the needs and benefits of CSOs, because, lastly, **the history of CSOs and engagement in Europe** has not been written yet. In a period of great change, CSOs need to be better informed about their histories, origins, and the history of their plural identities to look ahead. A comparative historical approach could disclose their historical role both in terms of general interest and in overcoming great crises, and their role in determining public policies. The historical analyses of international cross-influences would also help to better understand how CSOs have been structured in each country.

**THE DERIVATION OF THE ABOVE STATEMENT** leads to at least three challenges:

- How to do research in view of so many different European perspectives?
- How to disseminate that knowledge to put it to use for CSOs?
- What is a good way to connect existing networks and data sources to foster the development of pluridisciplinary, connected to the field research?

**THIS WHITE PAPER AIMS TO IDENTIFY THE MOST PRESSING KNOWLEDGE GAPS** in CSO research in regards to CSOs' needs, and to develop a knowledge network in order to formulate methodological and application-oriented recommendations to better equip CSOs in their operational activities, and strategic and prospective reflexions. This, subsequently, will help CSOs in their relations with their public and private stakeholders and create a better framework for an active and sustainable European civil society and democracy.

**THIS WHITE PAPER IS BASED ON A WORKING GROUP ABOUT KNOWLEDGE ON THE EUROPEAN CIVIL SOCIETY SECTOR** conducted by the French Institute for Civil Society Organisations, that took place between February and September 2022. It gathered 40 researchers and practitioners from 16 countries.

**TO ENSURE THE SCIENTIFIC RIGOR OF OUR WORK** and its strategic importance for civil society, the group was steered by two members of the Institute's Scientific Committee and one of its board members:

- **Rupert Graf Strachwitz**, PhD in political sciences, Director of the Maecenata Institute for Philanthropy and Civil Society and CEO of Maecenata Foundation
- **Bernard Enjolras**, PhD and Research Professor, Director of the Centre for Research on Civil Society and Voluntary Sector
- **Claire Thoury**, President of the Mouvement Associatif

## Definitions and scope of work

Civil society, in all its forms, is a term that social science would describe as '*Essentially Contested Concept*' (Conolly 1974) – meaning an abstract idea, which has been interpreted and concretized differently depending on the point of view or political values. It is thus necessary to set a definition for its content and scope of work for this paper.

**THERE ARE MANY TERMS TO DESCRIBE THE SOCIAL PHENOMENON OF CIVIL SOCIETY INITIATIVES:** Third or non-profit sector, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) or Non-Profit Organisations (NPOs). And since civil societies rely significantly on gifts of empathy, time, and material resources, terms like volunteering and philanthropy are strongly interconnected with the concept as well as civil protest and activism.



**THE SCOPE OF THE WORKING GROUP**

covered collective engagement in instituted organisations (for example *association Loi 1901* in France, *associazioni* in Italy, *eingetragene Vereine* or *registered association* in Germany, *charities* in the United Kingdom, *sdrúžení* or *association* in the Czech Republic, *stowarzyszenie* or *association* in Poland etc.), but also informal movements. Hence the project uses the English terminology Civil Society Organisations, or CSOs, to cover these different forms of engagement.

**THE “INSTITUTED” SIDE OF THESE FORMS OF ENGAGEMENT**

consists of organisations created by citizens, working together toward the general interest and based on voluntary work. Their governance is voluntary and democratic. In other words, it is carried out by people who are not paid and who are freely involved in the association. Associative governance also implies an organisation whose

objective is to bring the collective project to life by involving the stakeholders in the decision-making process. In this respect, governance is democratic.

**ASSOCIATIONS ARE PRIVATE INITIATIVES AND DISTINCT FROM LOCAL AUTHORITIES,**

which are public bodies and fall outside the scope of our perimeter. The collective dimension of CSOs is key. The non-profit dimension is also central to CSOs, whose aim is not to make a profit. This does not prevent them from having economic activity, albeit to a limited degree. In this respect, they are different from cooperatives, which revolve around economic activity, and are also outside of our scope. CSOs include associations as well as operating foundations (in some countries)<sup>5</sup>. Within the civil society sector, certain fields entail the production of a service of general interest, bordering on the public service.

5. Operating foundations are private foundations that devote most of their resources to the active conduct of their exempt activities. Non-operating foundations, or grant making foundations, on the other side, are established to fund charitable activities conducted by others. The scope of the working group includes operating foundations when they are created and ran by a collective of citizens (beyond a sole capital contribution). It excludes non-operating foundations.

**SINCE THE SCOPE OF THE PROJECT**

**IS EUROPE** it is also necessary to define this perimeter, since Europe is more than the European Union and conceived here in a geographical rather than in an institutional understanding. Europe is understood as an area sharing some form of political and socio-cultural homogeneity. It therefore covers a wider area than the European Union, and more to the concept that is reflected by the picture of the Member States of the Council of Europe (COE), which contains 46 countries.<sup>6</sup>

**THIS WHITE PAPER IS STRUCTURED INTO THREE MAIN SECTIONS:**

The first section points out knowledge gaps of CSO considered by the participants to the working group in four major fields, which are a history of CSOs (I), Characteristics of European CSOs and political, legal and statistical overview (II), the role of CSOs in democratic societies (III) and the impact on CSOs of the evolution of policy-making (IV).

The second section proposes recommendations regarding useful field and methodological approaches for researchers, a better interaction between practitioners and researchers and recommendations to strengthen CSOs knowledge through existing resources.

The third section gives an overview of existing networks and institutions, which are active in the fields of knowledge on CSOs (research networks, CSO umbrella organisations, grantmaking foundations, knowledge hubs, etc.).

6. Recently without Russia, which was expelled due to its aggression against Ukraine.

# Priority knowledge needs for CSOs

## History of CSOs and engagement in Europe

**THE HISTORIC LEGACY OF CSOS IN EUROPE IS THE FIRST KNOWLEDGE GAP WHICH CAN PROVIDE RICH INSIGHTS FOR CSOS TODAY.** Understanding history as the foundation of the present, statements about today's characteristics is possible by looking at the specific historical development of civil society engagement in Europe. At the same time, it is also an aid for prospective





reflexions, for what should continue to be promoted or avoided.

**A HISTORY OF IDEAS** of different definitions and concepts of CSO and civil society engagement in Europe could set the ground for a comparative qualification system and analytic framework to understand and foresee current evolutions of civil society.

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**ALSO, ESPECIALLY THE VARIOUS DETERMINANTS** that led to the given diverse landscape of European CSOs are of fundamental interest. By means of a comparative study, it could be asked how geographical, but also, for example, ideological-historical conditions have produced the diversity we know today. What influences did social, economic, cultural and political conditions have on the respective formation of a country's civil society sector? What promoted and what prevented this development? In such a comparative view, however, it makes sense to not focus exclusively on different

individual aspects, but also on discoverable commonalities. This makes it possible to understand what influenced the development of a pan-European civil society as a whole and what shaped its common history. It is important to highlight what unites the countries, to distil and analyse the diversity for being able to make general statements about European citizenship. In general, it is also questionable what has led to a pan-European identity and what role CSOs played in this.

**THE CONSIDERATION OF A PAN-EUROPEAN DEVELOPMENT** can also be enriched by means of an intercontinental comparison. What does a **comparison with civil society developments in non-European countries** teach us? What has shaped civil society there and where are connecting commonalities with European civil society? Is there a relationship and, if so, what distinguishes it?

## CSO DEVELOPMENTS AND ORIGINS

are strongly intertwined with the **history of plural identities** and with the emergence of religious, secular, political and philosophical movements. A better knowledge of the history of the European civil society would help to better understand these interconnections, its international cross-influences, and its effect on overall societies.

## WHILE LOOKING AT THE HISTORY OF CSOS AND ENGAGEMENT IN EUROPE

it is possible to point out the fundamental **contributions to society** made by civil society in terms of social needs, or by asking how CSOs shaped the economy and the state, how they shaped the general zeitgeist. As Strachwitz et al. (2020: 239f.) point out, the question of the contribution of CSOs can be discussed from various perspectives. Whether from a historical economic, sociological, political or even anthropological perspective, this contribution can differ and should be recorded in a holistic approach. CSOs have contributed through history to



*CSOs have contributed through history to meet the needs of society, to the rise of ambitious public policies, and to overcome major crises.*

meet the needs of society, to the rise of ambitious public policies, and to overcome major crises, but this social legacy is yet unwritten. This contribution is also of major interest regarding big **historical turning points** such as wars, the financial crises or the Covid crisis, but also to challenges such as those posed by the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the climate crisis or forced migrations. How got European civil society shaped by such events, what was its reactive readiness to adapt, and, above all, what role did engagement play in overcoming those events?

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**WITH A SPECIAL FOCUS ON ENGAGEMENT AND VOLUNTEERING,** similar questions arise: how has engagement contributed to forging an active European citizenship? Historical comparative studies of the social status of engagement must contain the diversity of the geographical conditions and how it got developed and structured in different European countries. (Gil-Lacruz et al 2017, Damian 2018)

sense of being passively shaped by historical events. On the other hand, the active shaping of history through CSOs is also of interest. Through these two perspectives, not only understanding of present realities but also insights for the future of European engagement can be gained.

**THE QUESTION OF THE HISTORY OF EUROPEAN CIVIL SOCIETY** is above all the question of its individual composing and relational influencing factors. On one hand, this can be understood in the

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# Characteristics of European CSOs and political, legal and statistical overview

**STARTING FROM A HISTORICAL CLASSIFICATION OF CSOS IN EUROPE,** it is also necessary to look at its current state. A comparative approach should look at the differences but above all the commonalities of the European civil society landscape.

**IN A FIRST STEP THE MANIFOLD PECULIARITIES MUST BE CONSIDERED,** which arise with regard to a pan-European perspective in order to gain sufficient criteria and comparison categories. In doing so, it is necessary to limit



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the scope of the analysis as best as possible, especially in view of the given **definitional problems** that form such considerations in advance. It is indispensable to know what is meant by “*civil society engagement*” or “*civil society organisation*” and what these terms reveal about the respective civil society characteristics of a country. Who is a civil society actor and who is not?

**THERE IS NO UNIFORM UNDERSTANDING OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN EUROPE.** This is due to the differences in national histories, cultural traditions, the focus of work, funding, scope, and self-perception; because of these differences, the key focuses differ. For example, the focus in Eastern Europe continues to be seen mainly on efforts to achieve freedom, the rule of law, human and civil rights, democracy, and other socio-political objectives. On the other hand, in Western Europe, civil society services with different prioritisations in the social, educational and cultural sectors

tend to dominate. An exception is Scandinavia, where community building plays a central role (Hummel et al 2020: 86).

**THIS VARIETY IS BUILT ON LEGAL FRAMEWORKS,** opportunities for development and possibilities for funding. In most European countries, the legal framework for CSOs is specified by tax law. Very few separate, summarised laws or regulations exist for CSOs. However, the East and South-eastern European countries with a relatively short tradition of legal civil societies have tended to create all-in frameworks, often following US-American models. This has not always been in accordance with and tailored to the specific situation in each country and has led to difficulties. In Western Europe, the relatively seamless development of frameworks over hundreds of years has produced organic, but not always systematically updated, and contradictory, complex regulations which can be extremely difficult to apply (Hummel et al 2020: 87).

**A COMPARATIVE APPROACH THAT ESTABLISHES THE CRITERIA** for defining what constitutes a civil society organisation is needed, and in doing so, we should not exclude civil society action, that is not formalised, or ad-hoc, etc.

**THE CLARIFICATION OF TERMINOLOGY** and the qualification of CSOs are prerequisites for **statistical** and legal analysis, as well as for establishing an overview of the situation and conducting European comparative studies. In respect to gathering a pan-European approach, however, it is questionable whether it would not make more sense to focus on individual European regions instead of country borders, in which the constitution of civil society organisations largely coincides and can therefore be more easily analysed.

**OF THESE COMPARATIVE CATEGORIES,** there are already four overlaps that allow further conclusions to be drawn about the characteristics of the civil

society landscape in Europe. First and foremost, there is a need to look at the statistical methods of capturing CSOs in Europe. Accordingly, it is important to compare the respective national statistical methods with each other and to work out harmonising conditions in order to be able to better grasp the pan-European civil society sector. How is the sector's size, diversity, impact and well-being statistically recorded? It could be useful to create a synthetic overview of all national statistical surveys and research studies, to identify and merge comparable data between existing studies. Further research projects could investigate the question of how civil society engagement is measured in the countries of Europe and, above all, how the statistical methodology can be standardised for the sake of better comparability. It is also important to find out which data are not yet or only insufficiently collected and what influence this has had on existing research projects.

**FOLLOWING THE CONSIDERATION OF STATISTICAL DIFFERENCES AND SIMILARITIES**, a further category of comparison is the **legislation** that shapes civil society in each country. In addition to a basic characterisation of the legal framework in relation to civil society organisation, there is the need to look at the legal promotion of and obstacles to civil society. What are the characteristics of legislation that promote civil society? Is this legislation also transferable to other countries with their specific civil society context? The countries of the EU are characterised by a special feature: they are characterised by the general legislation of the European Union as well as by their own national legislation. So, on the one hand, the implementation of European legislation by the respective nations is of interest. What does the European Union mean in terms of promoting or hindering civil society organisations, for example, what are the favourable framework conditions for CSOs created by

European legislation? On the other hand, research observation of the impact of national civil society engagement towards the European institution should be installed.

**BOTH THE STATISTICAL AND THE LEGAL CATEGORIES OF COMPARISON** lead to the question of the **political framework** of the respective countries, which determines formal civil society organisation. This needs to be compared in more detail. A fundamental gap in knowledge that shapes the characteristics of European CSOs and that needs to be closed can already be identified here. How and through what is the relationship between CSOs and the public sector, the state, distinguished? Which political decisions promote civil society engagement, and which accents does the public sector set for CSOs? And what do already given relations teach us about the expectable future? Another issue that should be highlighted is the development of Government-operated non-governmental organizations

(GONGOs) in Europe and the hybrids area of civil society and state scope of actions.

**OF PARTICULAR INTEREST ARE THE FINANCIAL STRUCTURES OF THIS RELATIONSHIP**, i.e. the extent to which CSOs are subsidised by the state or are not taken into account, and how fiscal policies affect the civil society sector and reveal a possible relationship of dependency. This raises, for example, the question of tax deduction granted to CSOs, as they are given for example in France or Germany (Hummel et al 2020: 24). But also, regarding the possibility of using tax shares for the benefit of eligible CSOs (for example in many Eastern European states) or direct funding by the state and the resulting increased dependence of CSOs on it. This brings up the question of which CSOs are promoted in the respective countries and which are disadvantaged by a lack of financial support.

**THE LAST THREE PARAGRAPHS COMBINED END UP WITH THE INSIGHT**, that an overview of which policies and legislations is civil society subject to, is urgently needed.

**ADDITIONALLY, A CONSIDERATION OF THE SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS** of European CSOs must face two complementary problems. Civil society is characterised by a constant shift. It always reacts to external **changes**. This can be illustrated, for example, by the Covid crisis, but also by the ongoing Russian war of aggression on Ukraine, which has changed civil society engagement across Europe. CSOs take a passive or even active, i.e. generating, stance on new challenges. It is precisely this circumstance that makes it difficult to take a comprehensive look at the current state of CSOs and civil society engagement in Europe. Moreover, such changes are often the result of informal movements or organisations that play a key role in some European countries. Following the first

problem, the question therefore also arises as to how the current characteristics of European CSOs can be described coherently without neglecting the changes taking place in **non-formal CSOs**.

#### **FORMAL CIVIL SOCIETY INCLUDES ORGANISATIONS THAT HAVE LEGAL STATUS.**

Informal civil society is the unorganised civil society, which is composed of groups of people or movements that operate on an unpaid and voluntary basis, without a legal framework. While there are various studies and data on organised civil society, different methodologies and definitions often mean that studies cannot be compared with each other. Data on informal civil society is almost non-existent.

**SINCE THERE IS OFTEN A FUNDAMENTAL MISUNDERSTANDING** of and about informal engagement, the understanding of formal and informal civil society should be examined more closely. It is important to analyse which forms of engagement can be adopted

in civil society organisations and elsewhere, and which of these forms of engagement hold together. It is also important to examine how these different forms of the organisation fit together and who is addressed, by which form. So it turns out that new forms of mobilisation, which are often more informally organised, are sometimes perceived as more effective than associative forms. It would be useful to look at this in more detail and explore how young people perceive associative organisations, as they are less likely to commit to organisations for the long term. Therefore, informal engagement should not be seen as isolated, because it fits in there, however it is unknown territory. It must be seen as complementing, reacting or interacting with the more formal organisations.

**ESPECIALLY IN CHALLENGING TIMES, civic engagement** is indispensable for the functioning of society, strengthening social cohesion and enhancing individual quality of life. Individual engagement helps to

involve people. Civic engagement is understood to be individual action that is characterised by voluntariness and an orientation toward the common good. While the data on civic engagement is relatively large, different methodologies and definitions are used, which makes comparability difficult. Therefore, there are still many gaps in our knowledge.

**REGARDING SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT,** it would be interesting to document on a micro level the sociological profiles of volunteers, and their evolutions, and to study the levers used to broaden the base of volunteers. What needs to be distinguished is the engagement of individuals in different regional areas and the consequences of current changes in the national context, which provide information about engagement. The focus is on questions of drivers, processes and motivations for engagement. Thus, a central motive, in addition to altruistic reasons, is self-related motives, such as community building. Based on this, cultural

influences and differences in engagement can be identified, and we can also observe how engagement is perceived overall and how these perceptions change and evolve. From this, it is also possible to analyse the ways in which younger people manage to find their place in civil society organisations. The **focus on young people** is important because they often develop new forms of engagement as traditional engagement opportunities are less appealing to them. Comparing new and traditional forms of engagement provides an opportunity to understand how engagement can be positioned across generations and why new forms sometimes prove more effective than traditional ones. These and other changes, as well as tensions of civic space, need to be studied in relation to engagement. On a meso level, it would also be interesting to examine the relationship between citizens and associations through the notion of civic engagement in organisations and spaces created by citizens.



### CIVIL SOCIETY HAS AN EXTREMELY HETEROGENEOUS STRUCTURE.

Therefore, no generalised statements or findings can be made about the **financing of CSOs**. **Funding and resources** often depend on the legal form, organisational size, degree of professionalisation and areas of activity of the organisations. Many organisations operate with little money and pursue their activities through volunteerism. They finance themselves through donations and membership fees. However, there are also financially stronger organisations that are also significant from an economic and labour market perspective. These apply to some extent to welfare organisations which act as service providers. One way of financing them is through market income, such as entrance fees or services. So, while some organisations are financially well positioned, the situation is precarious for others. Reflection on funding models is therefore essential, as the public and private funding models can have a great impact on civil society's priorities.

**IT IS THEREFORE INTERESTING TO EXPLORE** what new private forms of CSO funding exist and to what extent they meet the needs of civil society by opening up spaces that are independent of sponsors and their own priorities. In this context, it is important to determine what distinguishes private philanthropy, and what constraints and opportunities it brings with it. It would be useful to analyse the actual effectiveness of competitive bidding among CSOs – which has developed through public funding mechanisms – and to compare such methods to ones that foster cooperation between CSOs.

**BEYOND AN ECONOMIC ANALYSIS OF CSOS**, one also needs to investigate their **socio-economic models**. CSOs models differ from other types of organisations as they mobilise a diversity of resources – economic resources (business models), but also resources that are of a volunteer nature, as well as cooperations and alliances. Such conceptual approach to socio-economic models is recent (Dor

2020) and it allows the different forms of resources mobilised by associations to be weighed against each other, in a framework that is more comprehensive than the traditional concept of business model. This approach also has the benefit of shedding light on how CSOs operational modalities generate societal value, as well as on how their socio-economic model is connected to their socio-political function. It is important to better understand the interplay between CSOs ability to mobilise a diversity of economic, volunteer and alliance resources on the one hand, and their ability to detect emerging needs, to invent new solutions, to call out and inspire public policies, and to create spaces for social ties and democratic deliberation on the other.

**THE LAW HAS DIFFERENT EXPECTATIONS** of the various **legal forms** and prescribes in different ways how an organisation must be structured and organise itself. For example, an association must have a board of directors that

legally represents the association. The board of directors is bound by the members in its actions. In some associations the members are strongly involved, in others, they are only sponsoring members. An association is a very democratic form of organisation. Foundations, on the other hand, are very hierarchical. They are also represented by a foundation body. However, there are no members and thus legally no participation outside the founder's will. Both have advantages and disadvantages. Besides, due to evolutions in engagement and in institutional environments, associations have been complaining for some time that they are losing members and that at the same time younger people in particular are less willing to commit to an association. Also, decision-making can be more complex. It is therefore important to consider and analyse not only the legal framework but also the internal organisation and participation of the members.

**IT WOULD THEREFORE BE USEFUL TO STUDY** how the associations themselves see the need for discussion, change and development, and how they themselves assess current developments. Linked to this is the question of sizes of organisations, i.e. which **organisational form** and mechanisms are suitable in order to be able to operate. For which organisations is a smaller structure advisable, and for which is a larger one? In doing so, it is also important to consider the opportunities for participation. CSO's cultural diversity and frame of reference could be a subject of study in itself. For example, one could analyse which advantages this diversity brings to civil society organisations and which risk factors are associated with it.

**FURTHERMORE, THE BENEFITS OF PROFESSIONALISING ORGANISATIONS CAN BE ANALYSED.** The Covid pandemic, for instance, has led to an increased digitalisation of civil society. Due to necessity, as direct contacts were limited, civil society adapted to the situation. At the same time, there was often a lack of know-how and digital infrastructure, which was strongly linked to the degree of professionalisation and financial resources (Schrader 2021). A prospective study of new forms of engagement (informal, digital, etc.) would allow us to shed light on the future of organised civil society.

# CSOs Contribution to democracy, social trust, and basis of civic space

**EVERY SOCIETY NEEDS THE PARTICIPATION OF ITS MEMBERS AND ENABLING THIS PARTICIPATION IS THE MOST IMPORTANT TASK OF CIVIL SOCIETY.** The involvement of CSOs is particularly emphasised in theories of democracy but also



in terms of social cohesion and trust, and as the basis of the self-organised civic space.

### WHEN IT COMES TO THE DEMOCRACY-BUILDING CAPACITY OF CIVIL SOCIETY,

especially participatory and deliberative approaches of democracy, theory emphasises this. **Participatory models** strive for the broadest possible participation in as many policy areas as possible. Deliberative approaches focus on rational consultation and decision-making processes in which equal opportunities for participation for all are created in debates that are as free of coercion and domination as possible (Hummel 2017). Civil society actors and structures are regarded as the central engines of democracy in both traditions of thought. As early as the 17<sup>th</sup> century, thinkers such as Alexis De Tocqueville emphasised the practice of social cooperation in civil society. Under the concept of social capital, Robert Putnam also derives the thesis that social capital is formed in the association

system of a society, which is composed of networks, trust and norm formation and enables coordination and joint action. The idea is that civil society is stronger at resolving conflicts and problems (Hummel 2017).

### BOTH TOCQUEVILLE AND PUTNAM COMBINE THIS SOCIAL COMPETENCE WITH DEMOCRATIC QUALITY:

they conclude that the stronger a civil society, the more robust the democratic system, since the social norms of solidarity promoted in civil society also produce pro-democratic behaviour. Citizens learn to solve problems together with other citizens on a small scale and thus gain a better understanding of political cooperation and democratic procedures. They can then abstract these skills from their isolated, local civil society action to the societal level as a whole and apply them to 'big politics'. In addition, the pluralism or voice function of CSOs is democratic legitimacy for marginalised groups. In late-modern society, which is pluralistic

and multicultural (Reckwitz 2019), the integration of this diversity and the balancing of interests of socio-cultural milieus increasingly poses challenges to state structures. Therefore, civil society is often highlighted as a place of integration and participation, but also of the formulation of interests of unheard groups (Lang 2013) This is linked to the recognition that most CSOs are committed to specifically modern values and issues such as universal human rights.

## The democratic role of civil society organisations

Although this **contribution to democracy** is often highlighted, the concrete role of CSO in policy-making, its role in social representations or public debate is often underexposed, on a national level as well as on a European level, and hence presents a big gap of knowledge.

**IN MANY REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACIES,** which focus on the voter and the elected, the role of **intermediaries**, such as CSOs, is often not quite examined and the way collective citizens can influence, affect and act on democracy on a daily basis, is disputed. It is also questionable how CSOs' political roles evolve over time, and how this affects their influence on democracy. In what ways are CSOs recognised and considered legitimate in this matter, and what are the levers of such legitimisation?

**WHEN IT COMES TO ADVOCACY,** the role of CSOs in representing the interest of the common good is often accentuated. Yet there is minimal data and research about the scope, the processes and the impact of this as well as the knowledge about how this role is challenged by socio-economic transformations, digital media, and the rise of populism and illiberalism. A further investigation about the specific added value of CSOs, compared to a direct

relationship between public authorities and citizens, and an analysis of how the relations between civil society and public authorities evolve in times of broad disenchantment with politics, are both needed. The differences across European countries regarding the advocacy role of CSOs at national levels need to be displayed. How do associations advance the law? Between inspiration, interpellation and instrumentalisation, what is the nature of the relationship between CSOs and public authorities?

**SINCE THE INCLUSION OF CSOS IS ANTICIPATED** as an instrument of a good governance set-up, as stated for example in the EU White paper of governance (EU 2001) it is arguable to strengthen the **political role** of CSOs – but still, there is no sufficient research about the way this could and should happen. How can the institutional dialogue with the organised civil society, on national as well as on European parliament level, be reinforced?

**IN TERMS OF SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS**, it is not explored how CSOs identify social problems in society, how they contribute to the advancement of law and shape social representations. Against the background of data that indicates a rather social homogeneity of CSOs, in terms of paid and volunteer staff – and even more so in boards of directors, how can the inclusion of people who are not included in the traditional work of CSOs be successfully implanted? Can CSOs come up with new ways of fostering inclusion, for instance by including the beneficiaries of their actions in their governance, and through horizontal governance mechanisms?

## Democratic Crisis and Populism

Democracy is under siege these days and it looks as if the orientation towards democratic progress has lost its unquestionable

self-evidentness. The prospects for democratic systems of government, it seems, have darkened, and must be defended against voters' apathy, contemporary populist and technocratic threats. An authoritarian populism, which is characterised by the marks of aggressive nationalism (Schäfer/Zürn 2021) can be seen as an overarching trend internationally and also all over Europe.

**FOR CSOS THESE DEVELOPMENTS CAN BE INTERROGATED FROM VERY DIFFERENT ANGLES:** what are the consequences of the **democratic crisis** for them? Are there any connections between the democratic crisis and CSOs, in a sense of accelerator or decelerator? What particular role do CSOs play across countries and overall in Europe, with regard to the rise of populism and the far right? Beyond acclamation, it is to investigate empirically what kind of potential and capacity civil society has to build up a firewall against anti-democratic developments. Are grassroots organisations that work

to promote social cohesion among a diversity of populations, and that work towards a permanent mobilisation of dialogue and co-construction, a way to overcome political polarisations?

**IN TERMS OF SOCIAL COHESION AND TRUST**, national and international surveys have shown that CSOs are trusted intermediary bodies (Edelmann 2022). At a time when democracies are going through a crisis fuelled by a lack of trust, how do they contribute at the individual level to citizenship and institutional trust?

More research should be done about the so-called '*uncivil society*', and the question of whether certain CSOs in Europe are obstacles to democracy, building a formal base for the far-right movement.

## Contribution of CSOs to democracy in Europe

Unfortunately, there is no (subordinate) term for a charitable CSO in primary EU law. The slogan that civil society means the same thing as a charitable organisation under national tax law, as it is expressed for example in Germany, would probably meet with incomprehension at EU level (Hummel et al 2020). Instead, the EU Commission interprets the term “civil society” comprehensively, including within the legal context of Art. 11 (2) TEU, among others, “professional consultancy agencies, in-house lobbyists and independent consultants, [...] including law firms, trade unions, [...] trade associations, [...] and academic institutions” (ebd. 87). The specialty of the charitable sector should be made more visible in the public eye, and especially to the EU bodies, as it differs from all other lobby actors because it exclusively, directly and

selflessly fulfils idealistic purposes within a specific legal framework. This is of decisive importance for its positioning within European law, e.g. under the law for CSO as well as procurement and state aid law. The ‘General Provisions’ for a **European legal framework for charity** has yet not been established and creates a big necessity for more knowledge to understand the ways in which CSOs contribute to a form of active citizenship, institutional trust and democratic vitality on a European scale. But it would also clear the path to gain more knowledge about the extent to which European authorities include CSOs’ experiments and collective voice when designing and implementing European policies. A European legal framework for CSOs would also allow to better account for the contribution of CSOs and engagement, and its part in the general interest to society at the European level. Whereas CSOs irrigate the life of citizens and every aspect of the **general interest**, no data or theory is

available so far to account for such contribution in Europe. In what ways do CSOs contribute to the commons, and influence and **transform society**? How do they contribute on a collective scale to the structural development of civil society and to citizenry, and thus to democratic dynamism at the European level? Little is known about the ways CSOs and public services fit together when working for the general interest.

**CSOS HAVE MANY FUNCTIONS FOR SOCIETY.** It can deliver social services (e.g. helping the needy and vulnerable), can create advocacy (e.g. advocacy for nature conservation) or watchdog functions (e.g. consumer protection) and political participation (e.g. protest movements), but can also help community building (e.g. amateur music groups) or provide self-help (e.g. patient self-help) (Strachwitz 2021).

**BUT WE KNOW LITTLE ABOUT THE EVOLUTION** of the **contribution**

**of CSOs to society**, particularly regarding the double institutional (State/delegation of public services) and economic (market/social entrepreneurship) isomorphism. How can the tension that comes with CSOs’ dual role as economic producers and contributors to democracy be analysed? What specificities do they hold, between state and market? In what way do they help influence and transform society?

**CSOS ARE OFTEN CONCEIVED** as seismographs for **social problems** and needs because they are deeply rooted in society. But how do CSOs identify those ‘weak’ signals in society, how do they transform or accelerate this to publicly debated issues? There is a need to study the evolutions of public policies in the light of innovation brought up by CSOs. In which ways do public authorities rely on CSOs to meet growing, unmet needs – including social needs? In what ways do CSOs innovate and voice social matters? How do CSO produce **social innovation**? What is for



example the role of volunteers in detecting unmet needs of CSOs beneficiaries?

**ESPECIALLY IN THE TIME OF CRISIS**, CSOs contribution is acknowledged as well as praised. But what are the effects of a crisis on the work of CSOs; for example, the restriction of the civic space during a crisis like Covid 19? During such crises, do public authorities consider civil society as an executioner of strategies designed by the State or rather, is civil society perceived as able to contribute to the reflexion and to design strategies to tackle the situation?

**IN ORDER TO FOSTER** the **recognition of CSOs**, one ought to examine the issue of their **legitimacy**. What is it based on? Where does the recognition of CSOs from their stakeholders (public authorities, partners, beneficiaries of their action, citizens, ...) come from? It is also important to clarify how recognition is built up and how it is related to the size of the organisation, especially in the case of smaller organisations, but also in the context of evolutions of the civic space, what the barriers and levers of their legitimacy across Europe are. Another focus could be on the repeated representation of CSOs in culture, films, literature, and media, and analysing how this cultural invisibility limits people's fair understanding and appreciation of the CSO's contribution to society.

# Evolutions of public policies and their impact on CSOs

**NEXT TO THE NORMATIVE QUESTIONS OF THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN DEMOCRACY AND SOCIAL CAPITAL**, there is still a big knowledge gap about the effects on civil society in national and European policy making. Neither is there a sufficient mapping of



**policies supporting CSOs** and engagement in Europe, which could set institutional best practices in favour of CSOs and engagement for instance, nor do we have a consistent screening of positive support devices in European law that haven't transcribed into national laws yet. These measurements would help to evaluate the Status quo, additionally prospective analyses that could shed light on the effects and impact of current European policies on CSOs over the next 10 or 20 years.

**IN MANY EUROPEAN COUNTRIES,** CSOs seem to be increasingly dependent on public authorities, and private and public sources of funding have different impacts on civil society and on its priorities. A reflexion on funding schemes and their evolutions is thus needed. Indeed, independence often conflicts with public funding on the one hand, on the other a sustainable public funding is often a prerequisite for a strong CSO environment.

**WITH THE RISE OF PUBLIC PROCUREMENT AND PUBLIC SERVICE DELEGATION CONTRACTS,** public institutions have been increasingly central in funding allocation decisions for CSOs. This evolution has created a situation of dependency toward public funding. Beyond these financial constraints, there are increasingly demanding **regulations** regarding transparency and accountability. One needs to analyse such constraints and institutional burden, and the way they can impair CSOs action and political role, especially for smaller organisations and for those active in the political field.

**FURTHERMORE, CURRENT INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENTS TEND TO STANDARDISE AND UNIFORMISE MODES OF ACTION:** is this a desirable and positive trend, or a threat to CSOs? In this context, it would be beneficial to better document the cultural **diversity** and the variety of frameworks for CSOs, and to analyse whether such diversity is an asset or a

risk for CSOs. It would also be useful to analyse the evolution of public funding, and especially the generalisation of funding through calls for proposals, and to challenge the assumption that competition between CSOs is more useful and effective than cooperation.

**AS AN ALTERNATIVE SOURCE, private funds and philanthropy** are of big importance. Can such types of fundings meet civil society needs by giving way to more independence toward public funders and their own agenda and priorities?

**INCLUDING STAKEHOLDERS' PERSPECTIVES** when studying CSOs, as well as the issue of cooperation between CSOs, companies, and public authorities, it should be considered how such interplays evolve, and what the effects of public policies on these evolutions are. Public policies that frame the **interplay** between CSOs, private businesses and public authorities should also be tested for their ability to create favourable

conditions for such cooperations. An analysis of support mechanisms for CSOs in comparison with other models (institutional, limited profit models) within public policies could also be useful.

**THE MARKET, AND ESPECIALLY THE SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP MODEL,** also tends to influence and impact CSOs. CSOs are committed to generating impact, following a return-on-investment rationale, which has led to the development of managerial and mercantile practices within governance boards, funding strategies and evaluation mechanisms. How important is this trend within CSOs? How is it induced by public policies and by private funding? How does the social entrepreneurship model impact CSOs, especially their socio-political function? While the Covid 19 crisis has economically weakened CSOs, they have been praised for the many ways in which they helped the people face the economic and social effects of the crisis (Breschard and Covelli, 2022).

Beyond the role of social R&D that CSOs actively play in times of crisis, do public authorities perceive CSOs as social innovators? Do they provide a favourable environment to support such role?

**CAN THE MULTI-CRISIS CONTEXT** (economic and financial, ecological, war, energy, democratic, territorial crises) and the global transformations of society that it both induces, and calls for, lead to a different distribution of responsibilities between public action and collective citizen action? What prospects could this paradigm shift open, both for political recognition of the societal and democratic function of CSOs, and for a better **collaboration between public policies and citizens' initiatives**, for example at the territorial level?

**FINALLY, THE EUROPEAN CONTEXT** is now open to reflection on the legal framework for civil society organisations. Following the adoption of the Lagodinsky Report by the European Parliament, discussions on the **statute for European associations** are underway in the European Parliament<sup>7</sup> and have led to a strategy on the matter. Given the normative nature of this work, it will be important for the CSO sector itself to contribute to the establishment of its own reference framework, and to contribute to transnational knowledge work to better qualify CSOs and their societal and democratic contribution.

# Recommendations for a better knowledge on, and recognition of CSOs contribution to society and democracy

# Methodological recommendations for researchers

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## 1. USE WIDE RANGE OF APPROACHES AND DESIGNS, BUT AIM FOR COMPATIBILITY IN DATA AND VARIABLES

In a first instance, documenting national situations and definitions could help to highlight common features and differences.

A future knowledge programme should develop a **multi-level analysis**: it is important not to only have national or European level studies, but also to analyse local and comparative dynamics to see how CSOs operate at multi-levels (micro, regional, national). It also could encompass the macro-level (analysis of regulatory frameworks), meso-level (analysis of working methods), micro-level (analysis of volunteering) for example.

One also needs **multidisciplinary approaches** (sociology, political science, economics, history, anthropology, law and many more) to acquire a better, more comprehensive knowledge of CSOs.

As we do lack knowledge on CSOs and engagement mechanisms at the local level, a **wide range of methods** (case studies, participatory research, ...) should be anticipated.

A **comparative approach**, by establishing criteria for defining what constitutes a civil society organisation, can lead to an excessively normative pitfall. In order to overcome this problem, it would be useful to try and use field experiences as a starting point to qualify what is specific to CSOs.

A **cross-country comparison** of the democratic role of CSOs and its transformations/challenges would constitute an innovative axis of research, while **communication studies** could document CSOs' communication strategies and shed light on their capacity to mobilise people.

## 2. TRY STANDARDISATION AND STATISTICAL COHERENCE

In support of these comparative studies, the conditions of developing **comparative law** and of **harmonising national statistics** should be discussed.

A comparative law to understand European CSOs realities in their geographical diversity seems to be a fundamental approach that is currently lacking, and it is a prerequisite to map out the favourable institutional policies and associative liberties across European countries.

In order to establish a European CSO overview, that would include the sector and engagement weight,

one must first **cross-reference national statistical methods**, and analyse the conditions for their harmonisation. In order to do so, it might be useful to draw a synthetic mapping of all national statistical surveys and research studies and to identify common data and reconciliation issues between existing studies.

## 3. DO HANDS-ON RESEARCH

Participatory research approaches in this context would be beneficial to both researchers and civic actors. Such methodologies provide a great opportunity to test out theories on the field, and provide a space for civic actors to share experiential knowledge with scientific communities. These "hands on" contributions are a great lever to bridge the gap between researchers and CSOs, but also have the potential to impact the scientific field by renewing approaches, theories and concepts.

They are a strong lever for CSOs who take part in the research, as they provide a framework for

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critical thinking, a space to analyse one's organisational mechanisms, impact, or even strategy, through a scientific lens.

Engaging civic actors from the very beginning of the research also enables to collectively imagine dissemination techniques and

formats that will suit both the researchers' and the civic actors' needs. As such, the impact of participatory research is even more powerful, as it penetrates not only the scientific world, but also society as a whole.

## Disseminate knowledge

### 1. USE WIDE DISSEMINATION STRATEGIES FOR OUTREACH TO THE PUBLIC

Find ways of bridging, for example by publishing in different languages of research. The rhythm of CSOs and academia are different, and practitioners lack the time to read, to dive into complex things and to nourish themselves from studies. Writing short reading summaries and sharing them can be a solution. Providing funding for the creation of short and **multilingual 'easy-access' summaries of research findings** would be needed, making it more accessible for everyone. The implementation of a network of "research-activists" for translation of "ready-to-use" research findings would be suitable. Short and easily digestible formats, interactive workshops, infographics, short videos etc. should be used.

For networking, there should be continually **interactive conferences**, as well as a digital platform that CSOs, researchers and stakeholders can use. An **interactive digital knowledge platform** could list pre-project proposals and ongoing projects from researchers and CSOs, in order to facilitate networking and transnational collaboration among researchers, and between researchers and CSOs. Summing up the new inputs on the platform, or on social media on a weekly basis could be a good way of dissemination. An 'annual' meeting on a key theme could also be a good way for interconnection and dissemination between practitioners and researchers.

Research can help CSOs develop capacity building and in order to do so, they need access to knowledge and research findings. Many research studies aren't accessible due to language or to



We are happy  
to announce

# a digital library with over 600 publications on CSOs in Europe

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[www.zotero.org/groups/4922952/csos\\_in\\_europe/library](http://www.zotero.org/groups/4922952/csos_in_europe/library)

poor understanding of the purpose of research: what is it for, why doing it? Is not anticipated enough and should be supported. A **change of perspectives** on both sides (CSOs and academia) should be enabled, for example by involving practitioners in research activities and researchers in practical activities, and by involving researchers and academia in CSOs membership. EU-CoE partnership on youth for example has a triangular approach in which they always include three types of actors in each process:

- 1) youth policy researchers,
- 2) youth organisations and
- 3) public institutions responsible for youth policy.

This could be replicated with CSOs.

## 2. COLLECTING EXISTING DATA AND STUDIES AND FACILITATING THEIR ACCESS TO A WIDE PUBLIC

There is quite a lot of data and findings from studies at different levels, but no specific platform or space where all this information can be gathered, whether it is grey or scientific information. One needs to **centralise this information**, make it accessible, and ease its use, think about how to disseminate the findings among practitioners in order to reinforce common, collective knowledge.

## Put research in education

For a strong civil society, it is important to **establish the recognition of CSO contribution to society and democracy in the existing education system**. This must include school-, university- and adult- education, but also training in the sector of state administration and authorities, and in-house-training of CSO itself.

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In order to do so, one could work with universities on developing **courses and curricula on European civil society for schools and community colleges**. To promote civil thinking and consciousness it should become part of the lifelong learning programmes of EU and national initiatives.

**Professional training organisation for CSOs** should be more connected to research. It appears that professional training is mainly done by umbrella CSOs to their members, so one needs

to create bridges between them and researchers so they can include research findings in their curricula.

To allow a change of perspectives and a better cooperation in the logics of state authorities and civil society, one also should **establish training programmes** on 'how to communicate with civil society' **for employees of ministries and public authorities**.

## Create a good framework for implementation: boundless and sustainable

**WE ARE CONVINCED THAT KNOWLEDGE ON CSOS** is a key lever to a better awareness of their contribution to society and democracy, and for the implementation of favourable conditions to support their action. Yet, CSOs and their stakeholders tend to have limited access to knowledge material. Furthermore, they tend to underestimate the lever of development they represent. In the light of these current limitations, it appears necessary to implement **strong advocacy strategies** toward CSOs and their stakeholders to encourage them to use knowledge and research materials as a lever for their actions, and with the ambition of fostering democracy.

**TO FACILITATE COOPERATION WITH ACADEMIA**, umbrella organisations could be a useful resource to **connect academia to CSOs**, which could help spreading surveys, fostering partnerships, disseminating research findings to CSOs, etc. Cooperation must start between the national and the European levels: most CSOs don't understand the importance of European studies for them at the national level yet. This could work out of a logic of co-construction, trying to aim towards a common agenda.

**THE TOPICS OF CSOS AND OF THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO DEMOCRACY** are still insufficiently addressed by European research. It is important to further address this topic – as well as CSOs' knowledge needs – among international

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academic circles. To this end, it is important to structure an **academic network** that is connected to society, as well as a **European strategy regarding research on CSOs**. Such strategy should be articulated with European priorities aimed at improving interactions between research and society, such as the Pact for Research and Innovation in Europe. Such network could benefit from easier access to funding opportunities and calls for papers on CSOs and democracy, and could in turn facilitate transnational scientific collaborations.

**We hope that this white paper and the digital library we set up will help raise awareness among and on CSOs, as well as on the need for a European research network. We believe that it could also be beneficial to connect this emerging network to practitioners who have been active in promoting CSOs contribution to democracy and society, to form a broader knowledge network bringing together researchers and practitioners.**

# Join the movement!

- › Do you believe that fostering knowledge on CSOs is a key lever for CSO capacity building and democracy?
- › Do you want to share your thoughts on that with us? To add references to our digital library?
- › Are you interested in joining a knowledge and research network on CSOs in Europe?
- › Would you like to take it a step further and offer operational or financial support to this project?

**Then get in touch with us!**



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# Appendices

## OVERVIEW OF EXISTING NETWORKS AND SCIENTIFIC RESOURCES

Our working group has started mapping out networks and institutions active in the field of knowledge on CSOs (networks, CSO umbrella organisations, grantmaking organisations, knowledge hubs, advocacy groups, think tanks, media, ...). If you wish to tell us about an organisation that is not listed, please get in touch: [contact@ifma-asso.org](mailto:contact@ifma-asso.org)

### Austria

- Nonprofit- and Social Entrepreneurship-Research at WU, Vienna
- SciShops

- Lang Prometheus Foundation
- Lifelong Learning Platform
- REVES Network
- Social Economy Europe
- Think tank Pour la solidarité
- Open Society Foundation (see also Germany and UK)
- Volonteurope
- King Baudouin Foundation
- CIRIEC
- Standing Working Group (03) of the European Group for Organizational Studies (EGOS)

### Belgium

- Amsab-ISG
- Ariadne
- Centre d'Economie Sociale (Centre for Social Economy) - HEC Liège
- Centre for European Volunteering
- Civil Society Europe
- Collaborative Engagement on Societal Issues (COESO)
- EMES Network
- European Center For Non-Profit Law
- European Civic Forum
- European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)
- European Students' Union

### Bosnia and Herzegovina

- South East European Youth Network

### Bulgaria

- Bulgarian Center For Non-Profit Law

### Czech Republic

- Centre for Nonprofit Sector Research (Centrum pro výzkum neziskového sektoru, or CVNS), Masaryk University

### Denmark

- Center for Civil Society Studies at the Department of Business and Politics, Copenhagen Business School

### Europe

- Technical Assistance for Civil Society Organisations (TACSO)
- Networking European citizenship education (see also Germany)
- ALDA - European Association for Local Democracy

### Finland

- Fingo

### France

- Association pour le Développement des Données sur l'Économie Sociale (ADDES), France

- Collectif des Associations Citoyennes
- Euradio
- Institut français du Monde associatif - French Institute for Civil Society Organisations
- Le Mouvement associatif
- Coordination SUD
- RIUESS, Réseau Inter-universitaire de l'Economie Sociale et Solidaire
- OECD Observatory of Civic Space

### Germany

- Maecenata
- Stiftung Bürger für Bürger
- Center for Social Investment (CSI), Ruprecht-Karls-Universität, Heidelberg
- Civil Society Center (CiSoC), Zepelin University, Friedrichshafen
- Center for Civil Society Research at WZB Berlin
- International Civil Society Centre
- Networking European citizenship education (see also Europe)
- Open Society Foundation (see also Belgium and UK)
- Scanning the Horizon

## Hungary

- Fondation Ökatars Hungarian Environmental Partnership

## Netherlands

- EuroClio
- Center for Philanthropic Studies, Vrije Universiteit (VU), Amsterdam
- Porticus

## Norway

- Institute for Social Research

## Romania

- Civil Society Development Foundation (CSDF)

## Spain

- Social Economy News
- Revista española del tercer sector

## Sweden

- Swedish CSO Ideell Arena
- Stockholm Center for Civil Society Studies
- European Civil Society Press

## Switzerland

- Fondation Charles Leopold Mayer
- SSE Knowledge Hub for the SDGs
- Institute for Research on Management of Associations and other Nonprofit Organizations, Verbandsmanagement Institut (VMI), Université de Fribourg/ Universität Freiburg, Fribourg

## Turkey

- NGO Research Centre (STKAM), Marmara University
- Koç University Center for Civil Society and Philanthropy Research (KÜSİTHAM)

## UK

- Charities Aid Foundation
- Institute for volunteering research, University of East Anglia
- Intrac for civil society
- Public Services Governance and Management, University of Bristol
- The Young Foundation
- Open Democracy
- Open Society Foundation (see also Belgium and Germany)
- Centre for Charity Effectiveness at Bayes Business School (Bayes CCE), City University of London
- Voluntary Action Research Group, Sheffield Hallam University, Sheffield
- The Third Sector Research Centre (TSRC), University of Birmingham
- The Centre for Voluntary Sector Leadership (CVSL), Open University Business School
- Yunus Centre for Social Business and Health, Glasgow Caledonian University

## Ukraine

- Center for Civil Liberties



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