

Brussels, Monday 16 April 2018

Re: Vote on Draft Resolution on a European Values Instrument

Honourable Member of the European Parliament,

I am writing to you in my capacity as President of Civil Society Europe, the Coordination of Civil Society Organisations at EU level, in view of the forthcoming vote of a draft resolution for a European Values Instrument, which has been tabled by the LIBE Committee and is due to be voted next Thursday.

We welcome the proposal, which aims at creating a dedicated funding instrument to provide targeted financial support to CSOs that are active at local and national level in promoting and protecting the values enshrined in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union, such as: the respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities and the principles of pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men.

This is in line with the European Parliament resolution on “The next MFF: Preparing the Parliament’s position on the MFF post-2020”, which was adopted last March recommending “setting up an internal European Democracy Fund for the strengthened support of civil society and NGOs working in the fields of democracy and human rights”.

It is critical that the EU engages with concrete actions to promote the values upon which it is based by reaching out to civil society at local and national level with more flexible funding tools, both to support projects and the operation of civil society cooperation. It should also support transnational actions to support cross border cooperation among associations. Such funding instrument should be complementary to other programmes that support civil society engagement and citizens’ participation at large, whether as a specific strand of a future programme or as an independent funding instrument. It should be endowed with additional funds. We understand that the European Commission will propose a new instrument called EU Values Fund that will merge Creative Europe, Europe for Citizens, the Rights, Equality and Citizenship and the Justice Programmes.

However, it is not clear how the proposal from the EP will be integrated. It is also crucial that this new merged programme is allocated sufficient funding for its different current separated components, which are currently under budgeted.

Independent civil society organisations in their diversity play a vital and indispensable role in the promotion of the values enshrined in Article 2 and area at the basis of democracy. Yet they face growing difficulties in accessing the necessary resources to perform their role, as indicated in the report on [Civic space in Europe in 2016](#) by Civil Society Europe, as well as the Fundamental Rights Agency report published this year on "[Challenges Facing civil society organisations working on human rights in the EU](#)". Both reports show that civic space is shrinking in several countries in Europe, as also corroborated by the [Civicus Civic Space Monitor](#) according to which only 13 out of 28 EU countries fully respect civic freedoms.

We therefore call on you **to support** the proposal for a resolution.

We are at your disposal for further information.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JMR'.

Jean Marc Roirant
President
Civil Society Europe