

ACTIVIZENSHIP

The European Civic Forum's annual Review for Civil Society in Europe

Call for Nominations

Activizenship #4 – Success stories of resistance

1. What is Activizenship?

1.1. Aims and Values

“Activizenship” is a word that doesn't exist. And yet, in our sense, to be full, citizenship must be one of action, especially when citizens do not feel those elected by them are ensuring representation and defence of the common good, but also because citizenship is more than a quality assumed solely during short and punctual election periods. We consider equality, solidarity, inclusiveness and democracy the aims and values the European project needs to serve if it is about building a shared future. Many of our fellow citizens, engaged in civil society organisations or movements, bring these realities to life.

Launched in **2014**, Activizenship is a **magazine edited by the European Civic Forum**, a transnational network of over 100 associations and NGOs across Europe working to promote civic engagement, thus contributing to the emergence of a European public sphere where the role and influence of civil society are fully recognised.

Activizenship's aim is to **explore the potential** of ancient and contemporary forms **of civic, social and political activism** to contribute to renewing, rethinking and reshaping a poetics of citizenship. It also attempts to **capture current trends and transformations affecting civil society** environment in Europe and worldwide, **connect ideas**

and experiences about changing the world **from grassroots up**, prospect the role of citizens' movements, assemblies and organisations in revitalising civic and political space.

Activizenship wants to contribute to giving those who act **at local, national, European and international levels**, the confidence they need to pursue their invaluable work. This also means providing them with arguments to louden their voice and ensuring it be heard by those they wish to convince.

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1. 2. Underlying Avenues of Thought

With these aims and values in mind, as well as the European Civic Forum's general objective, that is to promote popular ownership of a European project based on the aims and values we defend, the underlying objectives of Activizenship Magazine are to provide a reflection and submit proposals on:

- **Education to Citizenship:** creating or revealing tools for the exercise of citizenship, “learning by doing”
- **Citizenship and Action:** organising for action.

How do citizens, movements or civil society organisations act? How do they develop their citizenship involvement?

- Learning from Citizenship: how citizens learn from their action? How do institutions interact with citizenship involvement, institutionalise or simply take into account citizenship activity?

2. Activizanship #4

Human rights defenders and civic organisations are increasingly under the pressure of democratic backsliding and shrinking social rights and policies in Europe today (see: <http://civic-forum.eu/publication/view/towards-an-enabling-environment-for-civil-society-in-europe>). While these challenges undermine their space of action, they often galvanise citizens to protect and expand fundamental rights (equality, inclusion, dignity, sustainability and justice) against growing political apathy, consumerism, exclusion and individualisation. Organised civil society and social movements play a crucial role in monitoring, advocating and organising resistance. And they find increasingly inspiring approaches and strategies to do so.

The European Civic Forum observes these trends through the Civic Space Watch, a platform collecting resources on threats to fundamental rights as well as positive initiatives aimed at countering these trends. The platform was launched in early 2018 and has so far gathered over 370 resources from approximately 50 local, national and European organisations active in 24 EU countries.

This year the European Civic Forum will illustrate the finding of the [Civic Space Watch](#) the stories of the activists and groups that are at the forefront the resistance. The new issue will combine the traditional layout of Activizanship with the analysis emerging from the Civic Space Watch, standing in the crossroad between a magazine and a report from the frontlines.

2.1. Selection and award

Through an [open nomination process](#), we are looking for victorious stories of activists, associations, movements or groups of citizens who fight for fundamental rights and justice for all, while also resisting attempts to deny their rights to associate, protest, speak out and act.

We are particularly interested in the transformative and emancipatory potential of these struggles, empowering activists and people in general to step from resistance to positive outcome and even systemic change.

Six of them will be selected by the European Civic Forum based on:

- 1) the effectiveness of their approach to resist shrinking of democratic spaces and fundamental rights;
- 2) the positive impact of their action on their communities as well as on the political and public life;
- 3) the general state of civic space and fundamental rights in the countries in which they operate.

The selection will also try to ensure a fair territorial and thematic representation of various challenges and diverse rights-related issues. They should illustrate some of the many ways of considering a mobilisation a success.

Selected activists will be invited to a reward ceremony in Brussels in winter 2019, and their stories will be collected in the Activizanship #4 magazine.

2.2. A Form Supporting Content

Each story will be collected in the form of an interview exploring considerations, strategies and impact of the initiative. The interviews will aim 1) to showcase the strategic approach defining their actions; 2) to understand the elements that contributed to the success of their initiatives or campaigns and their potential, long term, positive effects; 3) to

relate the human struggles behind such actions.

For each of their story, the ECF will rely on national watchdogs and resources from the Civic Space Watch to provide an analysis of the situation on the ground and a picture of the European landscape.

2.3. Dissemination

The case studies of Activizenship #4 will also be at the centre of ECF's campaigning and advocacy efforts for 2020. The magazine will be disseminated online as well as through local, national and European events and policy discussions, where the activists will be invited to share their stories. The ECF will also rely on the partnership with ARTE TV to reach a wider audience and make the case of the initiatives rewarded.

2.4. Timeline

Mid-May to mid-June 2019: Open nominations

Mid-June to mid-October 2019: Selection and collection of the stories and analyses

Late November – Early December 2019: Award ceremony in Brussels

2020: Dissemination

3. Contacts

For contributions, information, questions and other, please contact

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