
ANNUAL REPORT

2021





***FOREWORD
BY THE
CO-PRESIDENTS***

LOOKING BACK AT ANOTHER YEAR OF PANDEMIC

At the early stage of this global crisis, we felt the pandemic was opening up, at great cost, deep fault lines in the dominant narrative about our societies, and that most people were asking (perhaps for the first time in their lives) essential questions: why are we so vulnerable? Why is the system we live in so fragile? What are the things that really matter?

For the first time in decades, the scale of values was for a moment about to tip. For the first time, a virus proved that all our criticism of the global system of power relations and politics was justified. We had hoped that this tragic and extraordinary time would produce a shift in the political arena.

It did not happen. The changes we have been asking for with our lessons from the pandemic are not materialised into policy proposals. And we are returning to the “normality” we knew before. The G20 and the COP26 proved that states are there to save big business before anything, leaving again social services and citizens behind. The European Commission maintained its opposition to the suspension of patents on vaccines.

It is true that after decades, there is a lot of public money being injected into the economy again in Europe, but in most countries, essential public services, social security and employment policies will receive only crumbs. As shown by a joint Civil Society Europe and ECNL report, the National Resilience and Recovery Plans (NRRPs) were prepared without much involvement of civic

and social partners, associations and trade unions, that witness and try to mitigate every day the vulnerabilities and precarity of life for so many people in Europe today. Moreover, these Plans often come along with the usual structural reforms, privatisation of public services and health systems.

We must seek to produce a civic and social Me-Too

The absence in our countries of a strong, visible, popular social and political representation, capable of taking into account people’s fears, needs and desires and translating them into a credible proposal for systemic change, results everywhere in the production of monsters. Distrust in politics leads to distrust in democracy and science. Without an anti-system cultural anchor, fears and the feeling of abandonment do not make the crisis evolve towards the better but towards the worse.

In civic and social activism environment, initiatives of mutual care, support and solidarity have multiplied in order to respond to the loneliness, the isolation in which a majority of people live the social problems that affect them. We must seek to produce a kind of social « me-too », giving people the

sense of collective ownership of the systemic challenges, so that individual distress becomes an issue of common good and public responsibility.

New movements for climate justice, for feminist struggles, are born global, a necessary dimension to face the challenges of the globalised world. And a new generation is finally visible. Some of the struggles carried by the new movements have 'contaminated' collective thinking: climate justice, gender justice, the fight against systemic racism.

But can we succeed in naming the alternative we want, the different society we are fighting for? Can we express this by going beyond concepts and categories that no longer speak to the majority of people, with simple language, a popular narrative, powerful images.

The reactionary gained the minds and hearts of many people in our societies by playing on fears and division. We, civil society, respond with and claim solidarity and care – for oneself, for others, for the ecosystem.

The thematic specialisation of the struggles of recent years has allowed civil society to delve into all aspects of what needs to change in society. But fragmented, we count for little. Theme by theme, we are weakened by a system that opposes one category of rights to another, the young to the old, the ecological emergency to workers' rights, native people to migrants.

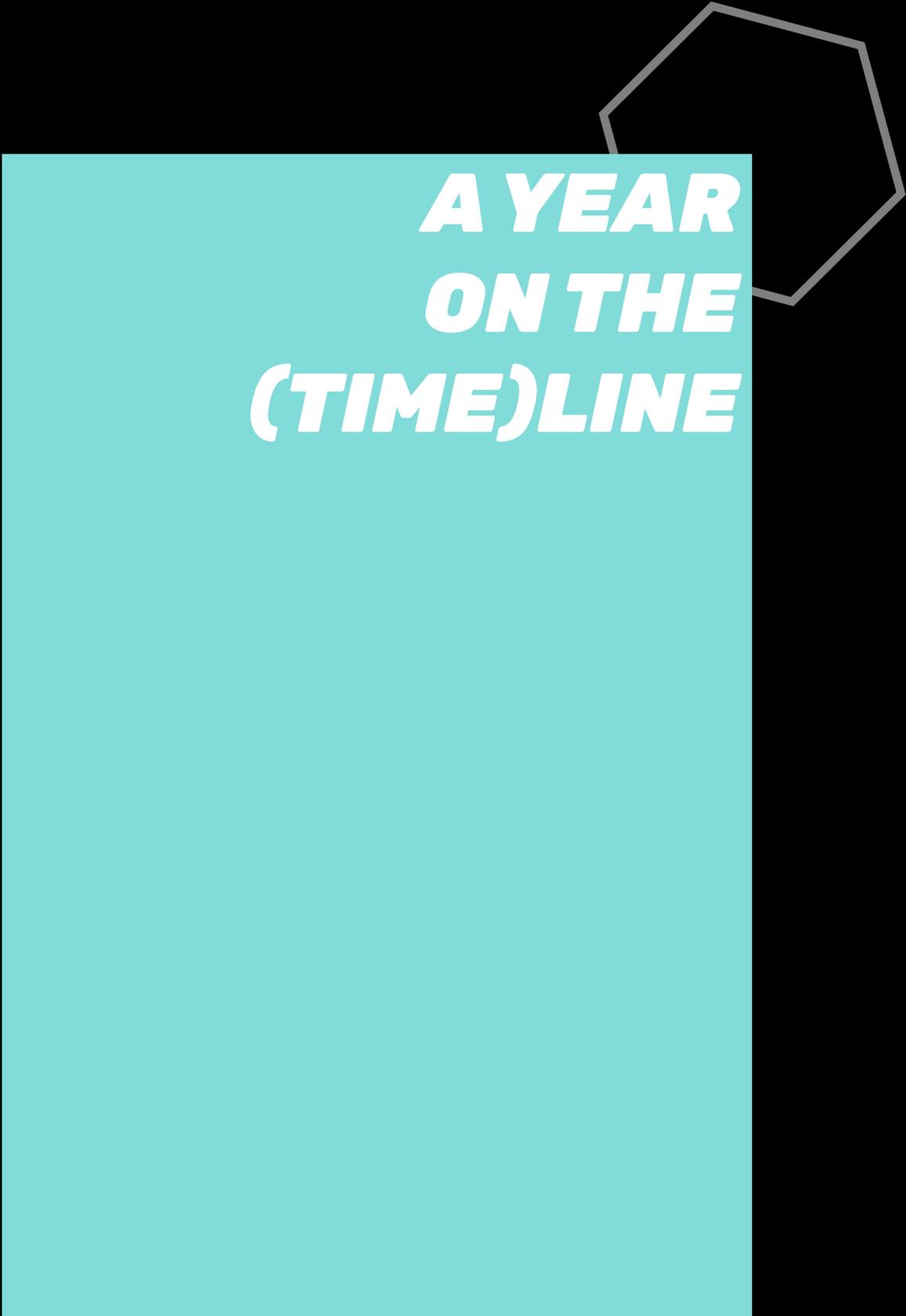
European Civil Society came together into a Civil Society Convention for the Conference on the Future of Europe (CoFoE), uniting 84 major European networks of associations, NGOs and foundations under the coordination of Civil Society Europe. As a Convention, we contributed to a great deal to the Conference's final report, and we worked in parallel on our own vision and proposals for Europe's future and the EU's role in rebuilding trust in the capacity of our democracies to build and sustain peace, to insure a decent living and a sustainable and inclusive future for all.

This unprecedented civil society mobilisation at the European level gives us the strength and legitimacy to put center stage our core values of equality, solidarity, human dignity and inclusion in the public debates and community practices in the years to come. We strongly believe that our knowledge of realities on the ground and our practices are needed to make Europe resilient and ready to face the future!

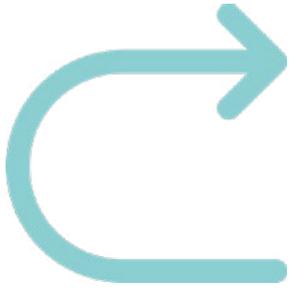
We thank our members and constituencies, as well as our staff team for the outstanding efforts and energy in bringing our vision into strong action for long term, systemic change!



Raffaella Bolini & Jean-Marc Roirant
ECF co-presidents



***A YEAR
ON THE
(TIME)LINE***



27 Jan.

ECF MONTHLY TALK
ON COFOE

03 Feb.

ONLINE KICK-OFF



Civil Society Convention for the
Conference on the Future of Europe
#CSOCofE

March

ECF RESPONSE TO EC CONSULTATION ON THE RULE OF LAW REPORT

24 Mar.

EUROPEAN CIVIC ACADEMY
ONLINE SESSION I



01 Feb.

DEFENDING CIVIC SPACE IN TIMES
OF PANDEMIC
WEBINAR WITHIN FRA PLATFORM

26 Feb.

MONTHLY TALK
ON A BASIC INCOME

23 March

SUCCESSFUL JOINT ADVOCACY
WITH DANISH ORGANISATIONS
AND CIVICUS TO REPEAL
THE "SECURITY FOR ALL DANES" ACT

20 Apr.

200 CSOS WRITE A LETTER TO THE
PORTUGUESE PRESIDENCY OF THE
COUNCIL OF THE EU ABOUT DETERIORATION OF RULE OF LAW AND
WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN POLAND



26 Nov.
ECF MONTHLY TALK
ON RULE OF LAW

23 Oct.
SECOND COFOE
PLENARY SESSION
IN STRASBOURG



13 July
PRESS CONFERENCE IN BRUSSELS
WITH THE UNION OF UNDOCUMENTED
MIGRANTS FOR REGULARISATION

19 June
FIRST PLENARY OF THE COFOE,
CSOS CONVENTION GETS 5 SEATS,
ECF SECRETARY GENERAL (CONVENTION
CO-CHAIR) PLENARY MEMBER

02 June
PUBLICATION OF ECF/CSE
STUDY ON CIVIL DIALOGUE

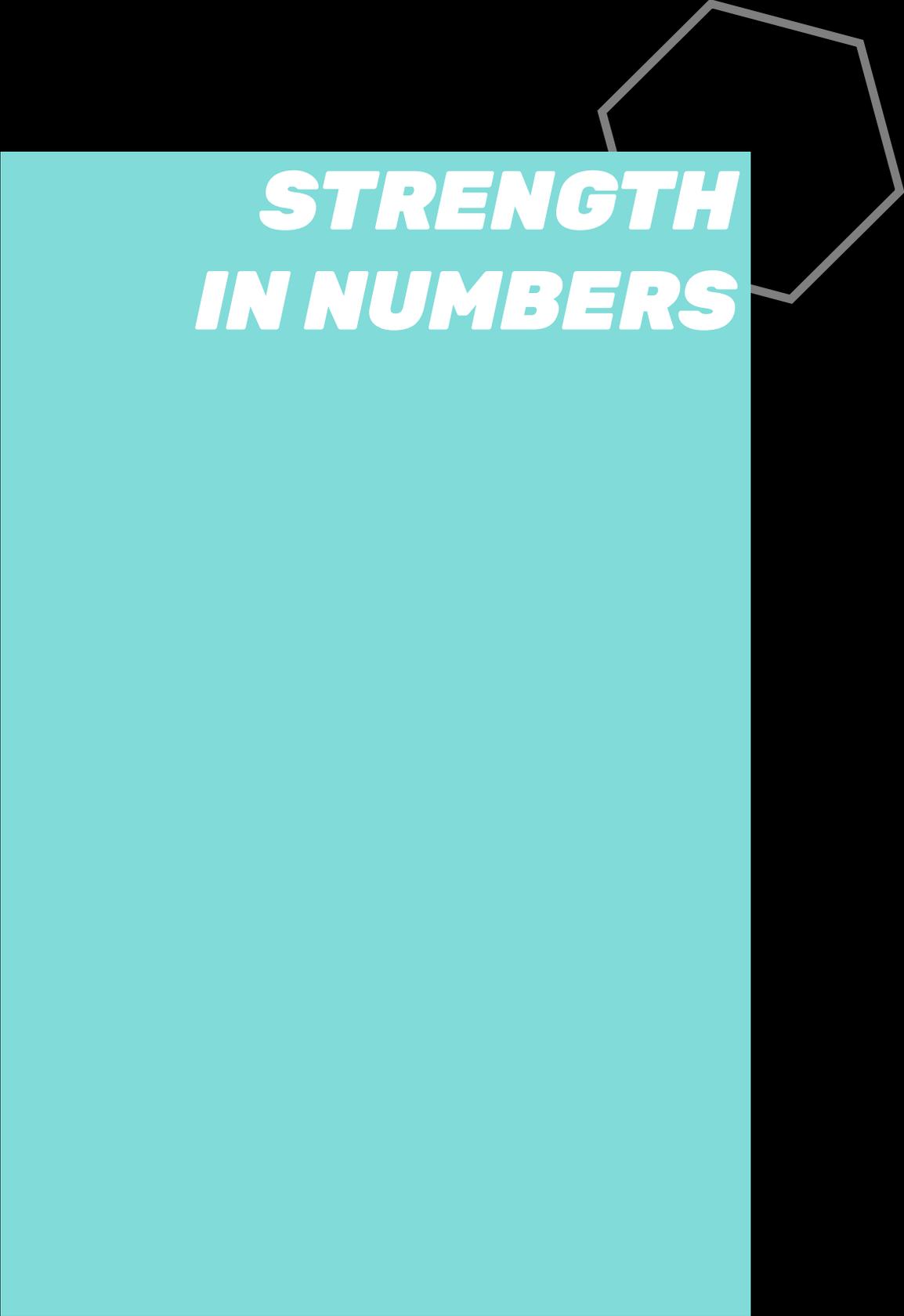
21 Apr.
HUNGARIAN GOVERNMENT RE-
PEALS THE LEXNGO, AFTER EU
COURT OF JUSTICE DECISION

09 Dec.
ONLINE
POLICY DEBATE
ON RULE OF LAW

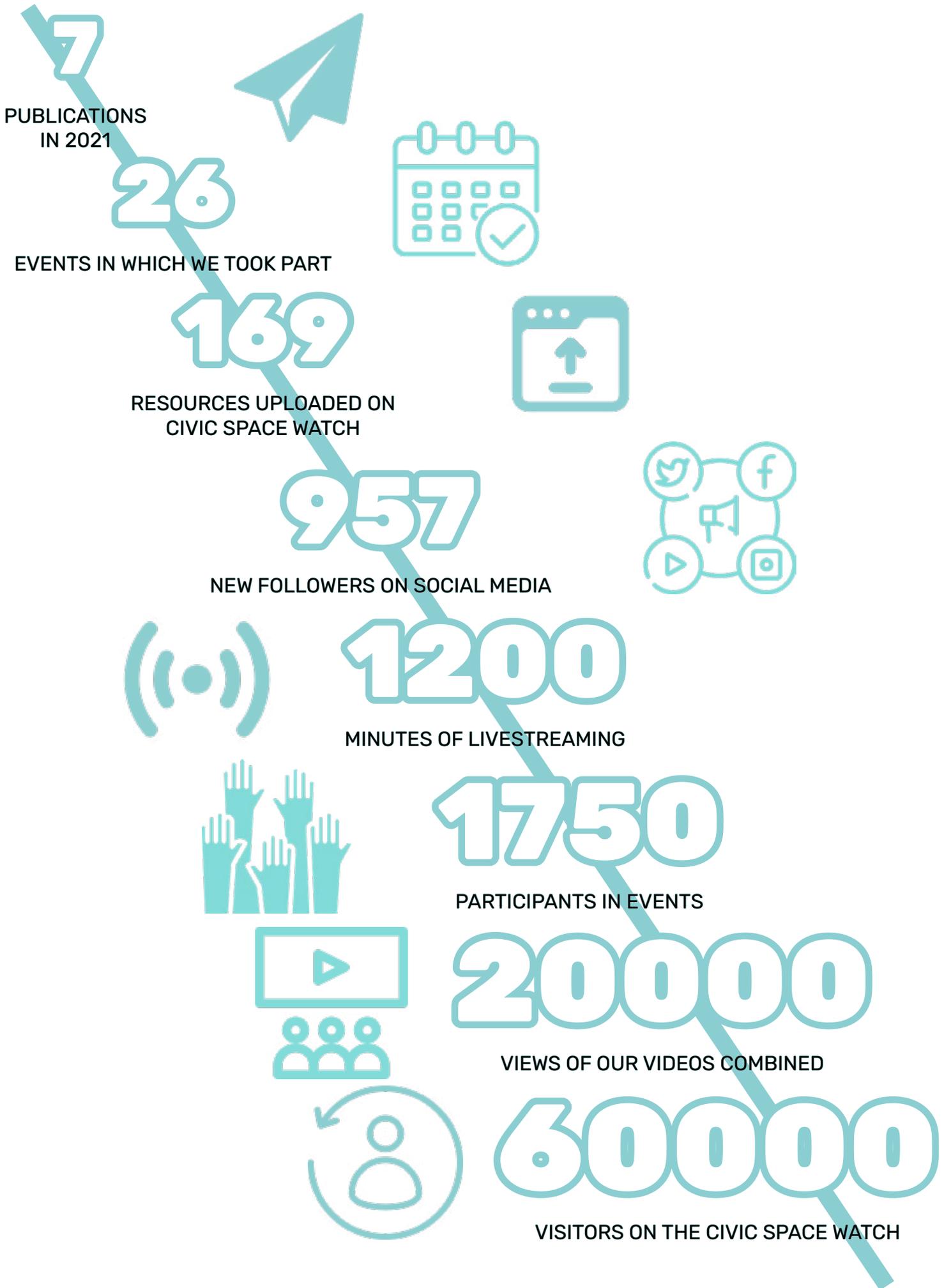
27 Oct.
EUROPEAN CIVIC ACADEMY –
SESSION III ONLINE

25 June
ANNOUNCING THE 6 LAUREATES OF
THE CIVIC PRIDE AWARDS

02 June
EUROPEAN CIVIC ACADEMY
ONLINE SESSION II

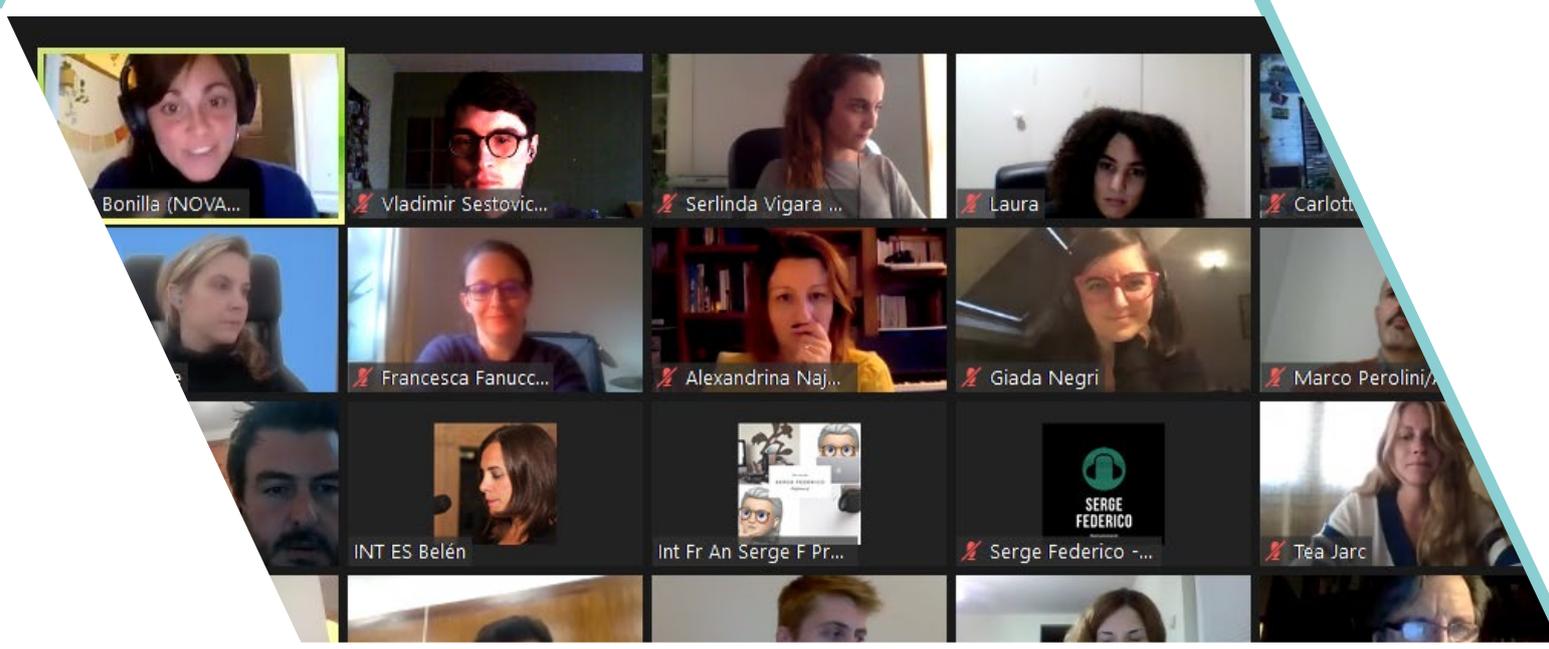


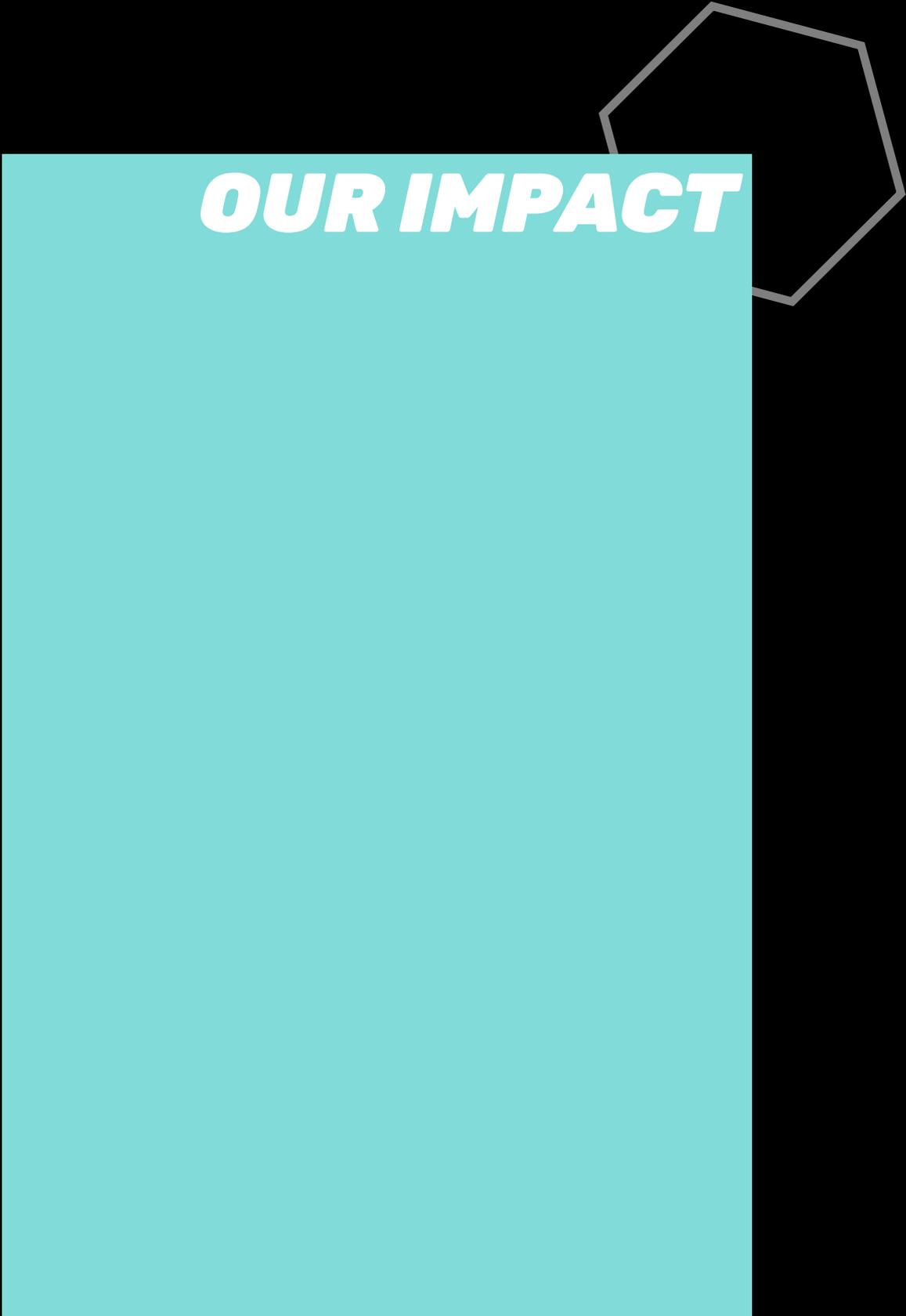
***STRENGTH
IN NUMBERS***



1 YEAR, 2 WAYS

FOR MEETING AND EXCHANGING





OUR IMPACT

TOWARDS A VIBRANT CIVIC SPACE: WE CAN CELEBRATE SOME VICTORIES FOR RIGHTS!

As the awareness of the shrinking and shifting civic space phenomenon grew, creating new needs and opportunities, the ECF has increased its advocacy, policy and capacity-building work, becoming more and more recognised as a leading voice on civil society issues, connecting grassroots actors to EU and international policy-makers and academia, and building bridges between different forms of civil society.

At the European level, we are witnessing a momentum to carry out advocacy towards the EU institutions regarding civil society. Today the European Union has unprecedented tools to foster and protect democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights, such as the European Rule of law toolbox, the European Democracy Action Plan (EDAP), the Strategy on the European Charter of Fundamental Rights.

Following the growing institutional attention to civic space, including two European Parliament's reports on civil society and an upcoming report of the European Commission on civic space in the framework of the Charter of Fundamental Rights, and the outcomes of the Conference on the Future of Europe, we have solid bases to call for a more proactive European civil society strategy.

At the national level, we have contributed to the successful mobilisations of civil society in several countries. As a result of the collective endeavours, civil society can claim important victories: in Slovenia, the illiberal government of Janez Janša was ousted; in France, several measures of the law on Global Security were removed; in Denmark, the threat of ban on assemblies was overcome; in Belgium, the movement of undocumented people became visible across Europe... We can celebrate these and many more civil so-

ciety victories which show that when we act together, we are stronger than fear!

GROWING RECOGNITION FOR OUR WORK AT THE INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL

The European Civic Forum is increasingly recognised as a prominent voice and stakeholder in the field of civil society and civic space both by European and national organisations and by policy-makers. This is evidenced by the requests of involvement and expertise on European and national matters, the responsiveness of high-level representatives of institutions, movements and civic organisations to our activities and the growing referencing of our work in institutional, research and policy reports and studies.

During 2021, we have continued to strengthen our dialogue with European institutions, including the European

Parliament, European Commission and the European Agency for Fundamental Rights. This is exemplified by the fact that the ECF was invited to play a role in a number of high-level events organised by civil society actors

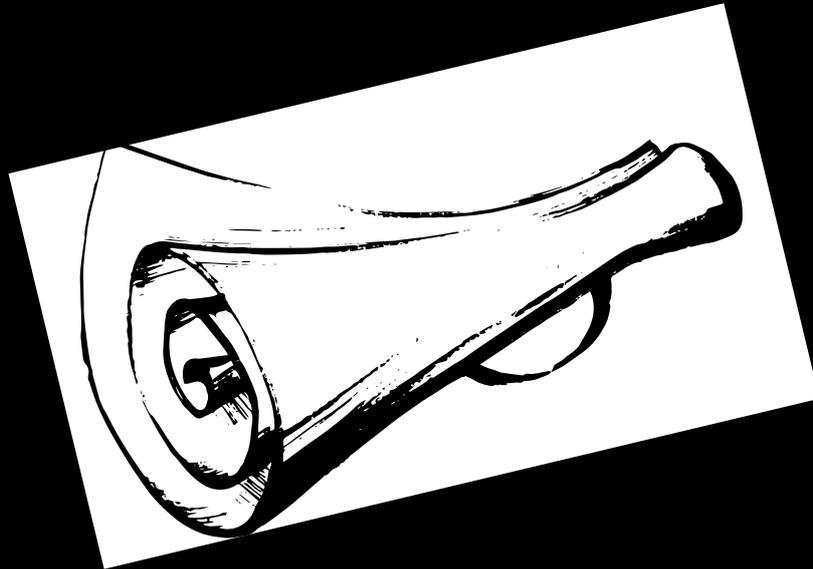
and institutions, such as the European Parliament LIBE Monitoring group on rule of law, democracy and fundamental rights "Exchange of views on the Civil society space in the EU, in particular the right of association" in April 2021; CERV civil dialogue week in May 2021 and several events and hearings organised by the EESC including the hearing on the Statute for the European Association, the conferences on "Civil society perspectives on the European Rule of Law Mechanism" and Civil Society Organisations: Key Actors for the Future of Europe in November 2021 and the FRA webinar on the rule of law report organised in December 2021...

15

POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS ON CIVIC SPACE

THE POSITIVE NARRATIVE ON THE ROLE OF CIVIC ACTORS IN THE CRISIS ADOPTED BY THE ECF HAS BEEN WIDELY TAKEN UP BY CIVIC ACTORS, MEDIA AND GOVERNMENTS.

WE WERE MENTIONED IN MEDIA SUCH AS EURACTIV, POLITICO, BRUSSELS TIMES, FRANCE24, MEDIAPART, DEUTSCHE WELLE, RTBF, BX1, BRUZZ CORRIERE DELLA SERA, ARBEJDEREN, THE SLOVENIA TIMES



THE CONFERENCE ON THE FUTURE OF EUROPE – NOT WITHOUT US!

While initially no role was foreseen for civil society in the Conference on the future of Europe, a wide and diverse coalition of 82 European networks came together under the Civil Society Convention powered by Civil Society Europe (CSE) and has finally been allocated 5 seats in the COFOE Plenary. This coalition-building exercise is unprecedented in terms of convergence of European civil society on a policy agenda for change.

ECF Secretary General was elected co-Chair the Civil Society Convention on the Future of Europe, together with Milosh Ristovski, Secretary General of JEF Europe, supporting the overall coordination, the participation in the CoFoE plenary and the the horizontal convergence across thematic areas. ECF contributed to the Convention cluster on Democracy and European life.



The CSO Convention partnered all along the process with the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), and coordinated with the EESC and the European Movement International to ensure that civil society and social partners' voices are heard from multiple perspectives and well represented in the Plenary.

We are grateful to all ECF member organisations which engaged into the process, either by sitting in the Plenary as a national citizen or contributing to the Convention clusters and the public debate through labelled events and/or submitting ideas on the multi-lingual platform.

We will continue to follow the developments ensuring that the European institutions respond to the COFOE recommendations for a civil society strategy and structured civil dialogue.

THE NEW CIVIC SPACE WATCH WEBSITE IS LIVE!

During 2021 the Civic Space Watch website was remade to improve the navigation and accessibility of resources. The novelties of the website are:

- Focus on the positive stories and victories of the sector;
- Better tools to filter the database of resources;
- Better showcase how to use the tool for action.

Together with the new website came also a new logo, which reminds of a magnifying effect, as does Civic Space Watch on the state of our civil liberties.

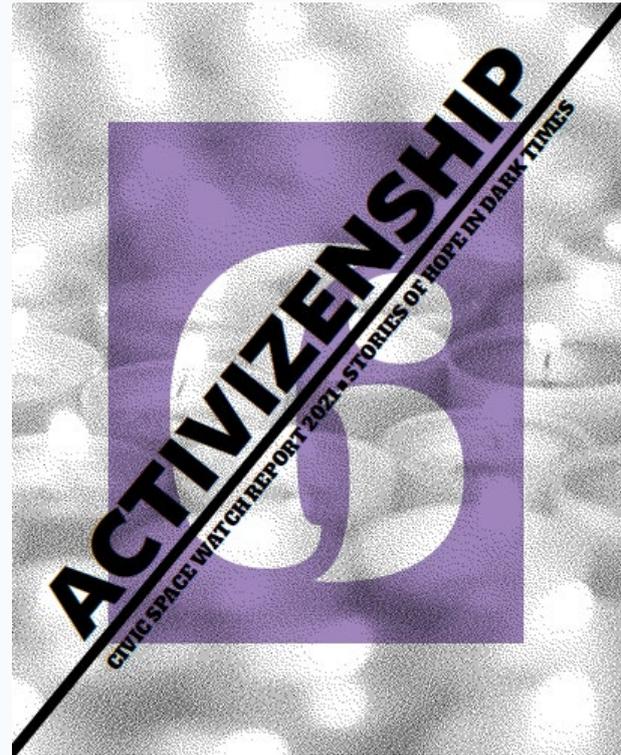


Since the launch in 2018, through the Civic Space Watch, **ECF collected over 1000 resources, analyses and alerts** from across Europe and launched numerous initiatives aimed at promoting the work of civic organisations. The Civic Space Watch is now identified by numerous stakeholders and decision-makers as a reliable source of information on civic freedoms in Europe. We count more than 30000 visitors on the website in 2021, of which 87% were new users. We increased the contacts and exchanges with civil society from countries and/or constituencies and vulnerable groups under pressure that were under-covered in previous years, particularly the migrants and LGBTIQ communities. We hope to continue strengthening our cooperation with associations representing these groups and contribute to centering their voices in the institutional debates.

This database of resources fed into a number of research activities (including 56 number of updates to the CIVICUS Monitor) and 9 publications (accessible here) as well as many advocacy activities.

In particular, our flagship publication is the annual **Activizenship #6 – Stories of hope in dark times** which showcases the challenges civil society faced throughout the year under study and emerging pan-European trends, through interviews with inspiring activists on the front-lines and case studies. The great diversity of stories and voices of civic actors is indication of our commitment to reach out to groups that are often unheard.

As every year, we awarded the outstanding stories told in this report because we believe that in a context of growing challenges against rights and democracy, it is crucial to recognise and praise the tremendous civic energy that stands for equality and solidarity and strives to defend the democratic foundations of our living together.



BELGIUM: L'Union des Sans-Papiers pour la Régularisation



POLAND: Shipyard Foundation, National Federation of NGOs, Stefan Batory Foundation



HUNGARY: Civilization Coalition



DENMARK: Action Aid, Amnesty International, Nyt Europa



BULGARIA: Denitsa Lyubenova, Deystvie



FRANCE: Observatoires des pratiques policières

13 200 2500

CONTRIBUTORS

PAGES
(OF RAW MATERIAL)

READERS (IN 2021)



November 2021

CIVIC SPACE IN THE EUROPEAN ROLE OF LAW FRAMEWORK

the inclusion of civil society in the consultation and follow up of the European rule of law years on



Towards an open, transparent, and structured EU civil dialogue

society's views on challenges and opportunities for the implementation of Article 11 TEU

1200

**SIGNATORIES OF
OPEN LETTERS
IN 2021**

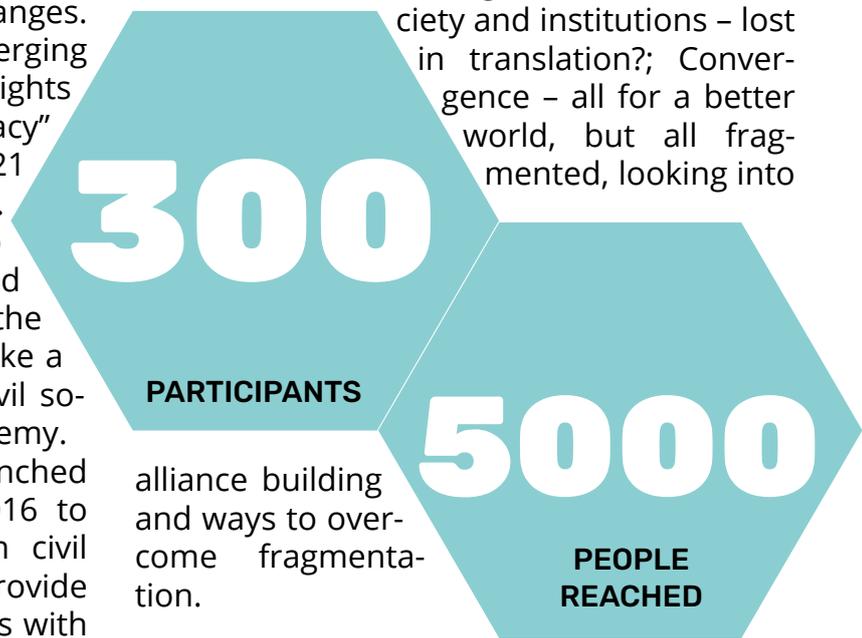


2021 was inevitably marked by the Covid-19 pandemic, which led to a change in the initial plans. However, ECF successfully organised all its planned activities, opting for online meetings/events when needed.

STRENGTHENING SOLIDARITY AND CAPACITY-BUILDING IN THE NETWORK FOR BETTER IMPACT

In 2021, we organised 11 capacity-building events and sharing of practices exchanges. Some were aimed at reacting at emerging threats, such as the event “Anti-rights groups: a challenges for EU democracy” organised in the context of the 2021 Fundamental Rights Forum of the FRA. Others were aimed at taking a step back from the every-day challenges and threats to fundamental rights to bring the reflection at the systemic level and take a moment to look at how we act as civil society, such as the European Civic Academy. The European Civic Academy was launched by the European Civic Forum in 2016 to connect and build bridges between civil society and academic agendas, to provide space for civil society actors to discuss with academics and identify priorities and possibilities for collaborations related to the role of CSOs in enhancing civic and democratic spaces in Europe.

our societies. During three online sessions we looked at the following topics: Inclusion – For the people, with the people, focusing on the internal practices of diversity, inclusion and representation within civil society and civic movements; Dialogue between civil society and institutions – lost in translation?; Convergence – all for a better world, but all fragmented, looking into

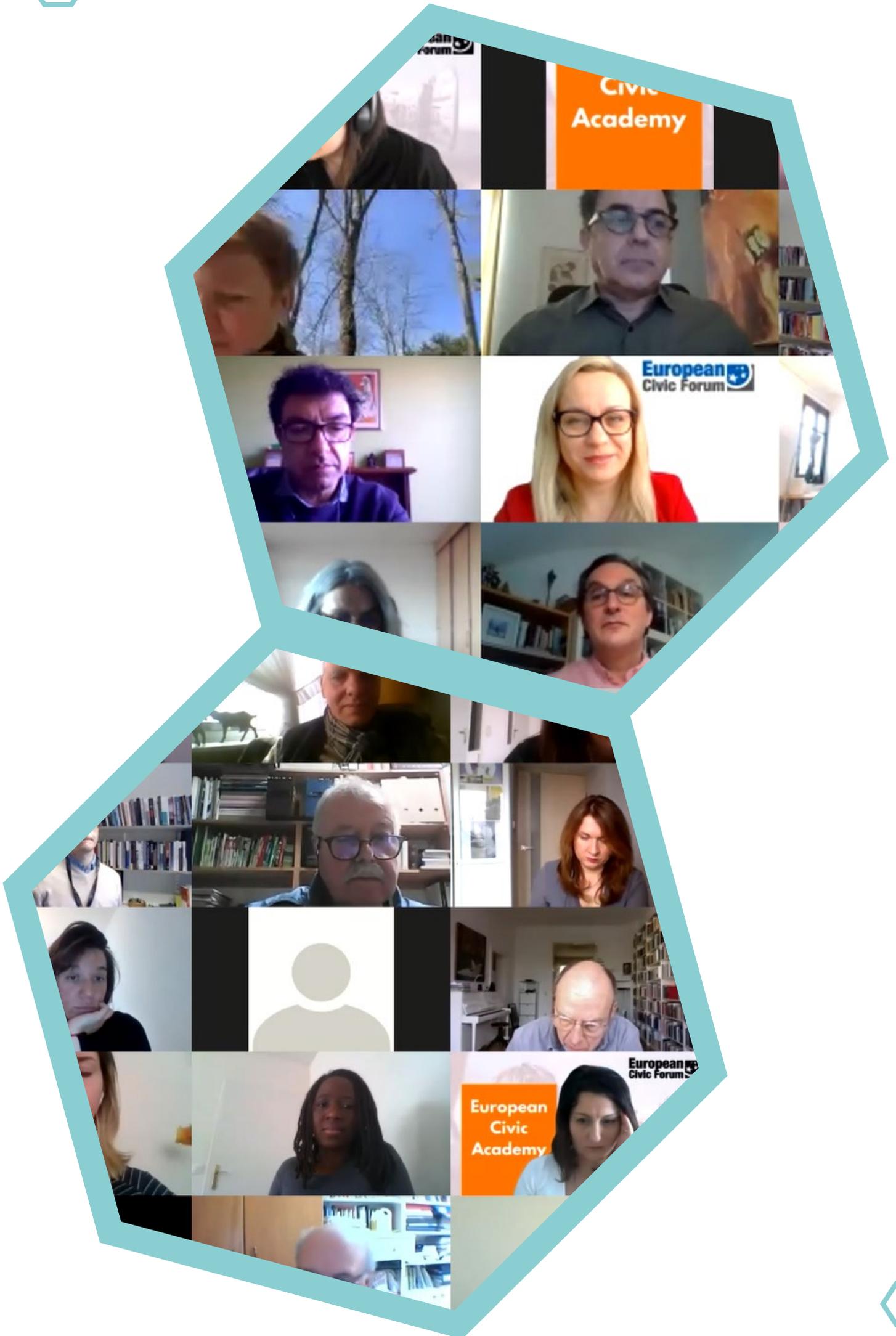


alliance building and ways to overcome fragmentation.

Eventually, the three sessions brought nearly 300 participants and nearly 5000 people were reached through our dissemination work around the ECA.

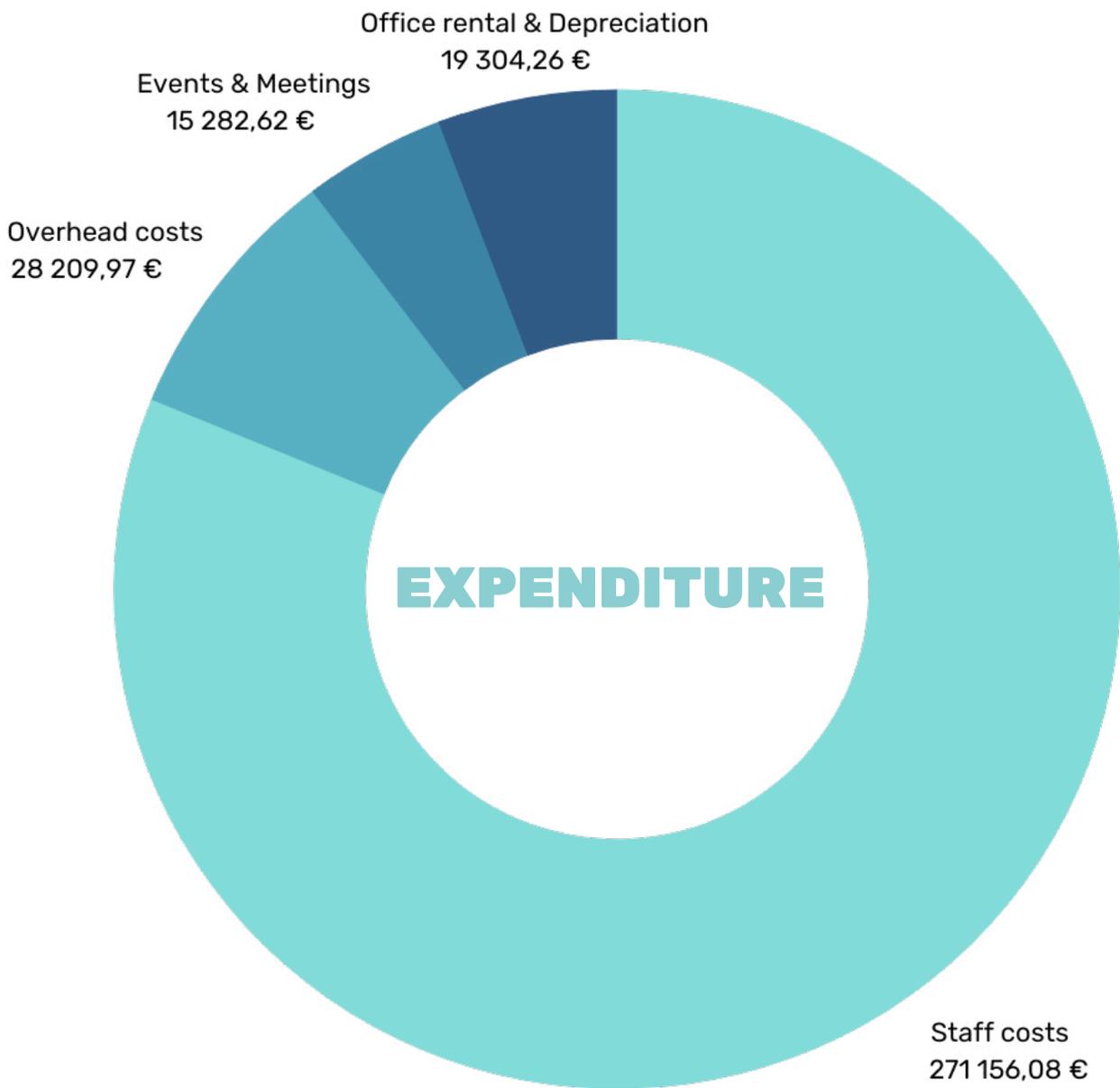


During this fourth edition of the **European Civic Academy**, organised in partnership with SOLIDAR, Collegium Polonicum Foundation and Civil Society Europe, the ECF brought together leading academics and civic actors to discuss obstacles and ways forward for civic organisations and social movements in the current context, characterised by growing distrust in democracy and divisions inside

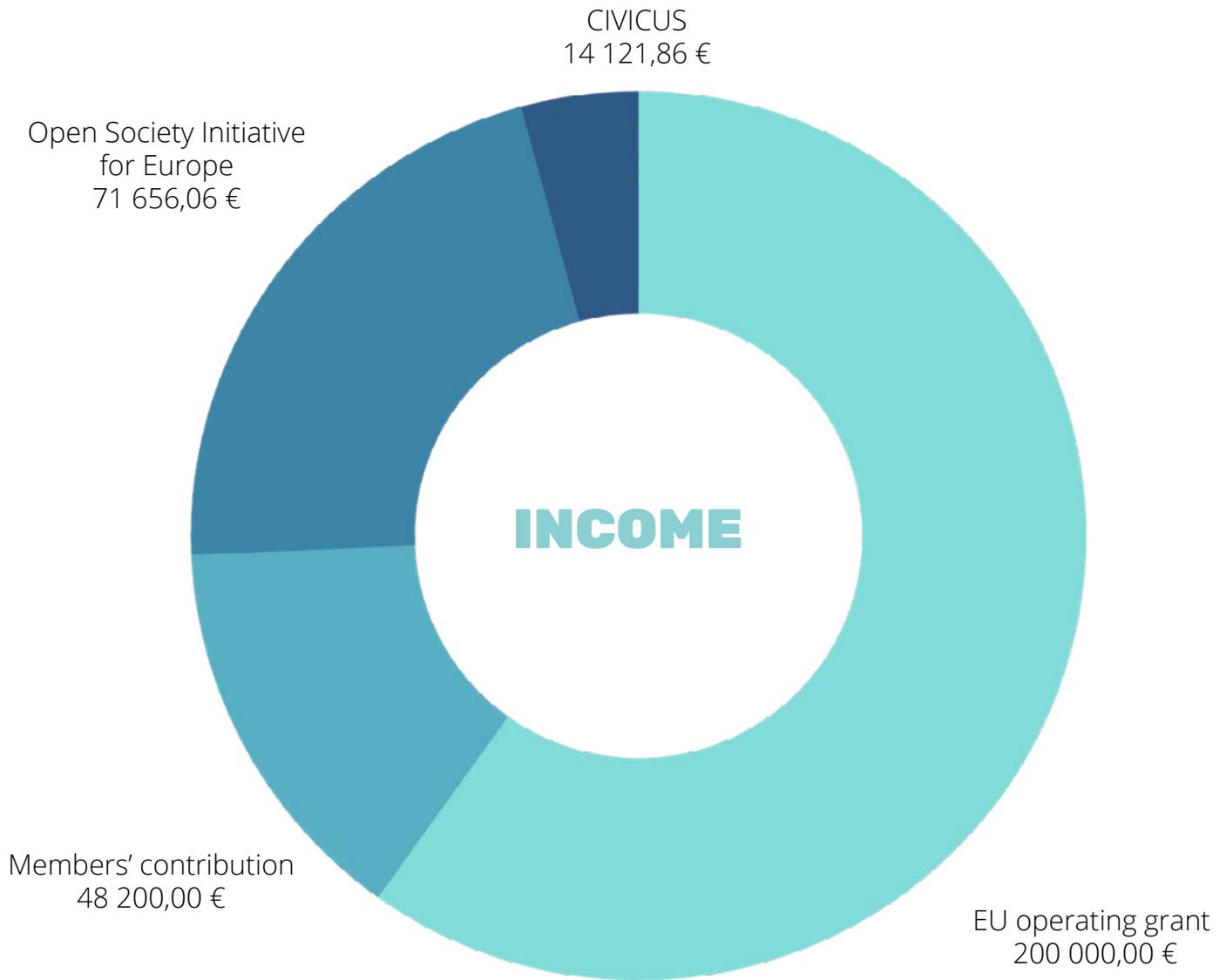




***FINANCIAL
REPORT***



Looking in details at the Staff costs,
Subcontracting amounted to **13 374.00 €**,
Seconded staff **37 503.81 €**,
Direct staff **220 278.27 €**.



In the details, the Members' contribution was split as follows:

- La Ligue de l'Enseignement **12 000.00 €**,
- Fédération de Paris de la Ligue **30 000.00 €**
- Membership fees **6 200.00 €**.

Total EXPENDITURE

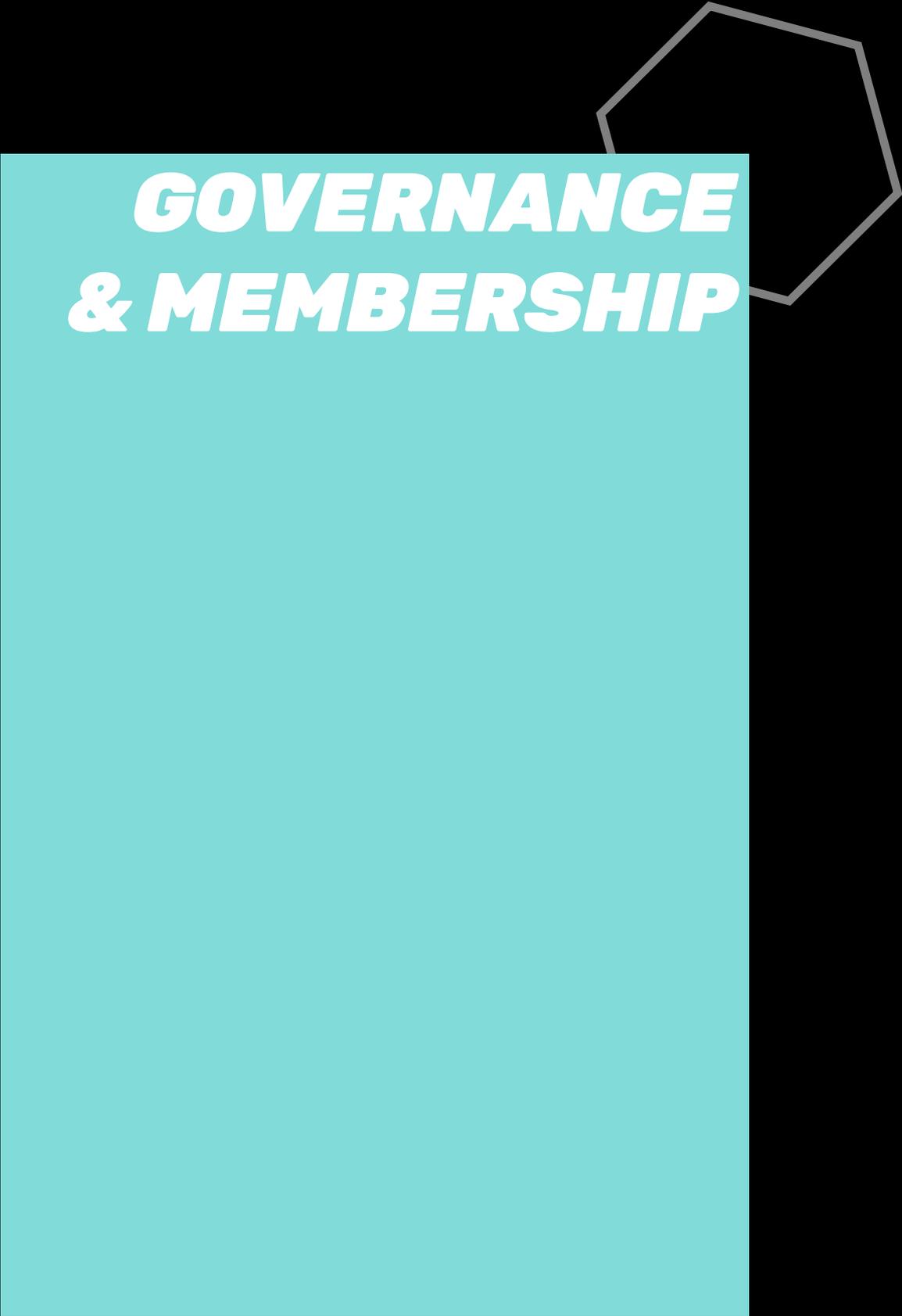
333 952.93 €

Total INCOME

333 977.92 €

**THE EUROPEAN CIVIC FORUM ENDED THE YEAR WITH A
POSITIVE ACCOUNTING RESULT OF**

25.00 €



***GOVERNANCE
& MEMBERSHIP***

The ECF is striving for equality not only at societal level, but also in its internal organisation. As from 2020, the ECF has two co-chairs. This ensures gender balance in ECF and a shared responsibility for internal decision-making between two elected co-chairs.

THE STEERING COMMITTEE

Our Steering Committee welcomed an 8th member in 2021, with Yonous Muhammadi, director of the Greek Forum of Refugees.



JEAN-MARC ROIRANT
CO-PRESIDENT



RAFFAELLA BOLINI
CO-PRESIDENT



KAROLINA DRESZER
VICE-PRESIDENT



JAN ROBERT SUESSER
VICE-PRESIDENT



FILIP PAZDERSKI
VICE-PRESIDENT



OONAGH AITKEN
VICE-PRESIDENT



ROGER CASALE
VICE-PRESIDENT



YONOUS MUHAMMADI
VICE-PRESIDENT

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

BELGIUM

New Europeans

BULGARIA

European Institute Foundation

CROATIA

GONG

CZECH REPUBLIC

SPIRALIS

DENMARK

Nyt Europa

FRANCE

Fédération de Paris - Ligue de l'Enseignement
Ligue des droits de l'Homme

GERMANY

Bundesnetzwerk Bürgerschaftliches Engagement
Democracy International
We Are Europe

GREECE

Greek Forum of Refugees

HUNGARY

Ökotárs - Hungarian Environmental Partnership Foundation

ITALY

ARCI
CIME - Movimento Europeo
CIPSI

LATVIA

Latvijas Pilsoniskā Alianse

NETHERLANDS

Netwerk Democratie

NORTH MACEDONIA

Community Development Institute Macedonia

POLAND

Instytut Spraw Publicznych
Ogólnopolska Federacja Organizacji Po-
zarządowych (OFOP)

PORTUGAL

Academia Cidadã

ROMANIA

Fundatia pentru Dezvoltarea Societatii Civile (FDSC)

SERBIA

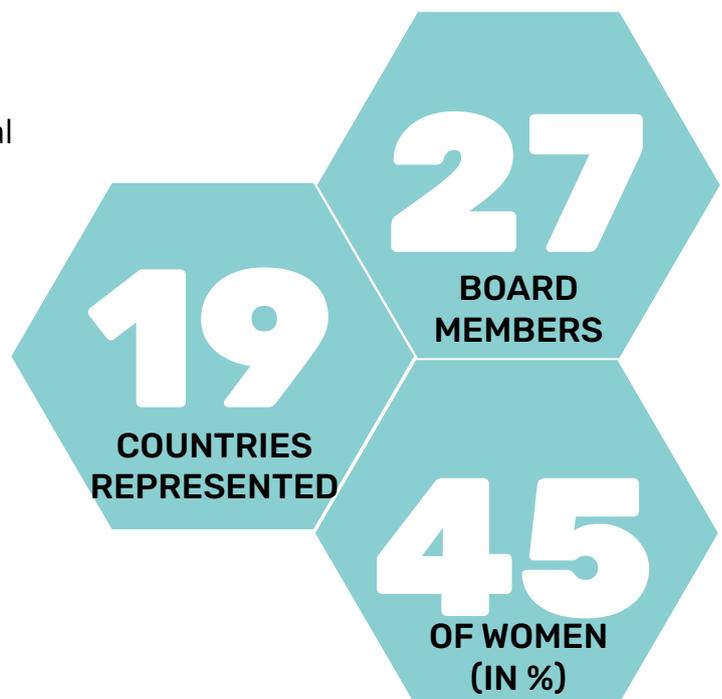
Inicijativa za Razvoj i Saradnju (IDC)

SPAIN

Fundacion CIVES
OMNIUM Cultural

UNITED KINGDOM

Volunteering Matters



ECF STAFF IN 2021

Counting on a small but proactive staff, ECF set important milestones in 2021 in its work. For instance, we attended 27 events in total, either organised by ECF or to which our staff was invited.

Facing the growing recognition of ECF and numerous solicitations, our team also grew in 2021, with two full-time internships dedicated to supporting the advocacy activities and monitoring civic space.



**ALEXANDRINA
NAJMOWICZ**
SECRETARY GENERAL



**VLADIMIR
SESTOVIC**
COMMUNICATION & MEMBERSHIP
COORDINATOR



**GIADA
NEGRI**
RESEARCH & ADVOCACY
COORDINATOR



**ALICE
HUBBARD**
COMMUNICATION OFFICER



**CAMILLA
LOMBARDI**
CIVIC SPACE OFFICER



**CHAYMA
KHAZZANI**
POLICY OFFICER

ECF NETWORK IN 2021

We were thrilled to welcome 5 new organisations in 2021. All new members expressed their satisfaction to bring a European dimension into their daily activities and share knowledge with colleagues in a transnational network.

With a new member organisation coming from Montenegro, the European Civic Forum network is now present in 29 countries.



ALFA CENTAR NIKSIC, MONTENEGRO

LIBERA ONLUS, ITALY

MINISTARSTVO PROSTORA, SERBIA

RECLAIM EUROPE, BELGIUM

THE WHEEL, IRELAND



FULL MEMBERS

A Buon Diritto; Italy
Academia Cidadã - Citizenship Academy; Portugal
AEGEE Europe; Belgium
ALFA Centar Niksic; Montenegro
Animafac; France
ARCI; Italy
Batorego Fundacja - Stefan Batory Foundation; Poland
Bundesnetzwerk Bürgerschaftliches Engagement; Germany
CAP MAGELLAN; Portugal
CIPSI; Italy
Civic Alliance; Latvia
CNVOS; Slovenia
Community Development institute – CDI; North Macedonia
Democracy international e.V.; Germany
Europa Haz; Hungary
European Institute Foundation; Bulgaria
Fédération de Paris de la Ligue de l'Enseignement; France
Fédération Française des Maisons de l'Europe; France
Fundacion CIVES; Spain
Fundacja Strajk Kobiet; Poland
Fundacja na rzecz Collegium Polonicum; Poland
Fundatia pentru Dezvoltarea Societatii Civile - FDSC; Romania
GONG; Croatia
Greek Forum of Refugees; Greece
Initiative for Development and cooperation – IDC; Serbia
Instytut Spraw Publicznych; Poland
Interessenvertretung Gemeinnütziger Organisationen; Austria
Kodanikuhariduse keskus; Estonia
La ligue de l'enseignement; France
Le Mouvement Associatif; France
LIBERA Onlus; Italy
Ligue des droits de l'Homme; France
Maison de l'Europe – Paris; France
Ministarstvo Prostora; Serbia
Movimento Europeo Italia – CIME; Italy
National NGO Coalition; Lithuania
NetwerkDemocratie; Netherlands
New Europeans; Belgium
NOVACT; Spain
NYT Europa; Denmark
Ogólnopolska Federacja Organizacji Pozarządowych, OFOP; Poland
Okötars Alapítvány; Hungary
OMNIUM Cultural; Spain
SPIRALIS; Czech Republic
The ECI Campaign; Belgium
The Wheel; Ireland
Volunteering Matters; United Kingdom
Volonteuropé; Belgium
We Are Europe e.V.; Germany

AFFILIATE MEMBERS

Action pour le développement intégré et la formation - ADIF; France
 ANACEJ; France
 Anne Frank Stichting Maison d'Anne Frank; The Netherlands
 ANO pro Evropu; Czech Republic
 Asociace NNO V Ceske Republice; Czech Republic
 Asociace Občanských Poraden Association of Citizens Advice Centres; Slovakia
 Asociația Pro Democratia; Romania
 Association Européenne de l'Education - AEDE; France
 Association for Civil Society development; Hungary
 Athens network of collaborating experts; Greece
 Association for Democratic Initiatives - ADI; North Macedonia
 Associação À Praça; Portugal
 Association Européenne des Enseignants - AEDE; Belgium
 ATD Quart monde France; France
 Centrum Edukacji Obywatelskiej; Poland
 Centrum pre Evropsku politiku - CEP; Czech Republic
 Citizens Union Paremvassi; Greece
 Civisme et Démocratie - CIDEM; France
 CMJCF; France
 Documenta; Spain
 European social forum; Cyprus
 EFPOLIT; Slovakia
 Fondation pour la solidarité; Belgium
 GSI Italia; Italy
 Initiative for Social Change - InSoc; North Macedonia
 Jeunes Européens - France; France
 Jeunesse au plein air; France
 Johannes Mihkelson Centre; Estonia
 Kesalukioseura ky (Summer high school association); Finland
 La liga de la educacion; Spain
 La ligue luxembourgeoise de l'enseignement; Luxembourg
 Legal information centre for NGOs - PIC; Slovenia
 Legambiente; Italy
 Les Francas; France
 Movimient Laic i Progressista - MLP; Spain
 Mouvement Culture et liberté; France
 Mouvement Rural de Jeunesse Chrétienne; France
 National Council of Voluntary Organisations - NCVO; United Kingdom
 Občan a demokracia Citizen and democracy association; Slovakia
 Polish Rural Youth Union; Poland
 Roma Democratic Development association SONCE; North Macedonia
 Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations; Scotland
 TERAMaison de l'Europe de la Charente; France
 The Women's Centre; United Kingdom
 Udruga SMART; Croatia
 Youth Work; Ireland



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This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

