The future must be different from the past

Ten lessons learned out of the crisis

Lesson 1: Our security depends on the others’ security

We need universal health and social protection for everybody in our society and all over the world.

Lesson 2: We are all vulnerable and our destiny is interwoven

Solidarity, equality, rights and caring must be at the base of international relations and every days’ reality.

Lesson 3: The common good exists

Public institutions must serve, protect and implement the common good, not particular interests.

Lesson 4: Democracy is the crucial antivirus we all need

Citizens’ awareness, civic participation, trustworthy information, public research and education, transparent institutions ensure the public good.

Lesson 5: The global market system failed

We have to relocalize production, implement circular economy, and have a universal basic income for all.

Lesson 6: We are the earth’s custodians, not its owners

Nature is using our lockdown to recover our damages. We must return to the world with ecological justice.

Lesson 7: Essential workers are real heroes. Women are at the forefront

Their contribution has to be recognized in the social hierarchy; the invisible ones must fully access their rights.

Lesson 8: Time has to slow down

Lockdown forced us to give full place to social bonds, patience, compassion: we have to keep this in the long run.

Lesson 9: We need human, social, ecological security

We commit ourselves for a just recovery and a just transition in our country, in Europe and all over the world.

Lesson 10: The future must be different from the past

We need to learn from the Lessons and act together.
**SYSTEMIC**

- Declining trust in how democracy works and delivers

- Democratic space under pressure

  - Institutional populism: reaching out to individuals vs intermediary bodies.
  - Anti-rights narratives creating competition between vulnerable groups.

- Pandemic crisis

  - Human suffering
  - Fragile economies
  - Fragile democracies

**SPECIFIC**

- Democratic space under pressure
  - Targeting political actions
  - Restrictions to freedom of assembly
  - Overregulating the sector
  - Anti-terrorism and public security laws
  - Police violence
  - SLAPPs lawsuits

- Effects of the pandemic crisis
  - Basic rights come in collusion
  - CSOs face reduced financial resources
  - NGOs struggle to maintain their operating capacities and actions
  - Shift in activities & budgets to deliver basic social services
Strategic Priorities for 2021 – 2025: opportunities

**GENERAL**

- Human rights and common good are back
- Revival of Solidarity and Activism
- Fall of certain taboos
- Change is needed and possible

Great opportunity for civic organisations and actors to keep alive and visible these positive attitudes and interest for common good in our societies.

**OPERATIONAL**

- Opportunity for CSOs to showcase their social and societal role towards people and institutions
- Digitalisation: Facilitate networking, bridge the distance between EU and national/local levels
- Bridge different forms of organisation
- Embrace a systemic approach

Systemic challenges require systemic thinking for impactful civic action.
What is the role of the ECF?

**Political role**
Advocate for a society based on our shared values of equality, solidarity, democracy and inclusiveness.

**Platform for democratic civic organisations**
To meet, exchange knowledge and experience, support and learn from each other.

**Bridge institutional civil society with social movements**

**Connect different forms of organisation and activism**
National platforms of NGOs across different sectors: human rights advocacy, educational and cultural associations...

**Monitor and report on civic space and fundamental rights in Europe**
Build positive narratives and campaigns to counter shrinking spaces and rights

**Amplify the impact and visibility of local issues**
Support and amplify members’ initiatives and capacities.

**Be a tool for EU advocacy and institutional dialogue**
1. Protect and expand civic space

- Monitoring the state of civil society
- Alerting media and policy makers about threats to fundamental rights
- Providing spaces to build transnational solidarity

2. Build civic pride and resilience

- Connect and amplify initiatives that bear the potential to inspire community resilience
- Connect civic activism with academia
- Support CSOs in connecting constituencies through campaigning

3. Enable institutional and political dialogue

- Connect European-level policy-making with grassroots initiatives and concerns
- Give voice to members’ concerns and advocate for EU and national recognition and support
- Engage with international institutions to trigger policy cohesion
1. Further develop the Civic Space Watch (CSW)
   - Better coverage of all EU countries
   - Better reach out to vulnerable groups
   - More active cooperation with other organisations
   - Carry out more interviews with civic actors under pressure

2. Improve information sharing, interaction among ECF members and CSW community
   - Provide better visibility to local and national cases
   - Inspire civic actors to learn from experience of others
   - More engagement: knowledge to act and build coalitions

3. Promote a positive narrative about civil society and human rights through storytelling
   - Gather and tell civil society’s success stories
   - Increase civil society’s confidence: empowering effect of celebrating the work of grassroots actors

4. Carry out more impactful and more evidence-based advocacy toward stronger actions at the European level
   - More awareness on emerging trends
   - Annual report on the state of civic space
   - Trigger institutional actions
   - Strengthen relations with the European Parliament
**Work to Improve**

- Internal governance to better reflect the diversity inside the network
- Interaction between the members, through working groups, trainings and webinars
- Membership policy and network development: better coverage of all EU countries and actors
- Communication: community building, visibility of our actions, media relations
- Diversity of our sources of funding

**Measure Success**

- Responsiveness and commitment of members/contacts/partners to our activities
- Quantitative and qualitative indicators such as number, diversity and reputation/quality of speakers/contributors to our activities
- Social media statistics and traffic on websites