



ANNUAL REPORT

2022



FOREWORD



2022 was nothing if not an eventful year. As we began to emerge from the Covid-19 pandemic, we were met immediately by another crisis: war came once again to our continent. At the time, we **condemned** the invasion of Ukraine and expressed our solidarity with the victims. We continue to do so as the war goes on, causing more death, destruction, suffering and risks. The difficult economic situation we are now facing, partly as a result of the crises mentioned above, partly a structural effect of decades of misguided policy, once again falls hardest on those most vulnerable. As we highlighted in **Civic Pride Month**, it is democratic civil society that comes to the aide of those in need when so often governments fail to deliver.

But despite the fact that civil society is so desperately needed, it is facing increasing pressure across Europe. Both intentional attacks on civic actors and unintentional actions that burden civil society are having a serious impact on European civic space.

It is for this reason that for European Civic Forum, the overriding theme of 2022 was the growing momentum for a **European Civil Society Strategy** to empower and protect civic actors and organisations and expand civil society's space in Europe. It was a process that started early in the year, with our advocacy and **campaigning**, followed by strong mobilisation within Civil Society Europe, with 350 associations backing our call in a letter to President Ursula von der Leyen.

It was fitting, therefore, that we closed the year with a large **gathering** of over 100 representatives of civil society, donors and institutions to co-create a strategic approach for an open civic space in Europe, with the participation of the European Commission Vice-President Vera Jourova.



Another key activity in 2022 was the **Civil Society Convention for the Conference on the Future of Europe**. The ECF was in the driving seat of this alliance, initiated and coordinated by Civil Society Europe, that gathered **82 European networks and platforms** with constituencies all across Europe.

We deplored the marginal role allocated to civil society and social partners in this Conference. **Citizens' associations** across Europe help aggregate and empower those voices to make them heard in the democratic and political

arenas. They cater to the **needs of diverse communities** across Europe on a daily basis, filling the gap left by the lack of social investment, and promoting access to rights, inclusion, participation and justice for all, and notably the most marginalised.

Democracy is strengthened when people organise

Just as representative democracy relies on political parties, we believe **collective organising** is crucial to participatory democracy to leverage people's voices and make them heard by the decision-makers. Democracy is strengthened when people organise in **associations, charities and trade unions**, to engage in community life, help others, protect their rights, monitor institutions, and hold them to account.

While democracy and the rule of law in Europe are backsliding amidst weakening standards for human rights – including socio-economic rights – and with increasing restrictions on civic space in many European member states, the EU's role is even more crucial in **rebuilding trust and confidence in the capacity of our democracy to offer a decent life and a sustainable future for all**.

Civil society organisations, as well as **social partners**, must be **key players and partners** in this endeavour. The **policy recommendations** we put forward at the end of this process reflect the Civil Society Convention's shared vision for a more democratic, socially and environmentally just European Union, as a precondition for an inclusive, sustainable and just future

for all.

Achieving this vision requires transformative change, a **shift** from a **growth- and profit-driven** system to one that prioritises the **common good** and **care for the living and the planet**.

**by ECF Co-Presidents
Jean-Marc Roirant & Raffaella Bolini**



ABOUT US



Who are we?

The European Civic Forum (ECF) is a transnational network that brings together nearly 100 associations and NGOs across 29 European countries: a great variety of civic organisations ranging from big federations of associations deeply rooted in local constituencies, national platforms of NGOs uniting hundreds of thousands of NGOs across different sectors, human rights advocacy and campaigning organisations, but also smaller groups working at community level or engaging with the public on local issues.



What do we stand for?

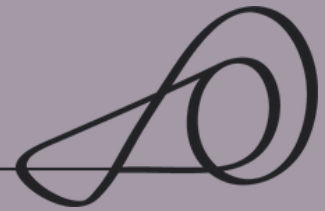
Since our foundation in 2005, we have been working to:

- Promote an enabling environment for civic actors to engage in the public sphere and community life around the values of Equality, Solidarity and Inclusiveness and Democracy.
- Support the structuring of European civil society through alliance building, sharing of experience and joint campaigning for effective access to rights for all.
- Foster institutional recognition of civil society organisations via the setting up of European Civil Dialogue and the adoption of a Statute for European Associations.

How do we take action?

- We connect civil society actors transnationally and cross-sectorally through conferences, forums and alliances.
- We participate in civil dialogue structures within the European institutions and civil society.
- We advocate and campaign for the defence of civic space and the recognition of civil society organisations in the policy-making process.

2022 HIGHLIGHTS



January

ECF publishes its response to the European Commission Rule of Law consultation, including 14 country reports.

March

The European Parliament calls for a European Civil Society Strategy, following our advocacy.

June

350 CSOs sign Civil Society Europe and ECF's letter to Ursula von der Leyen, calling for a European Civil Society Strategy.

17 March

Launch of Activizanship #6 and Civic Pride Awards ceremony, attended by Vera Jourova, Pietro Bartolo and Birgit Van Hout.



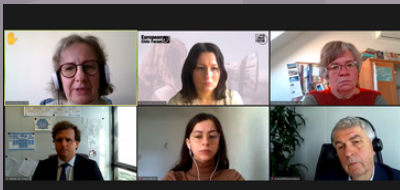
May

ECF publishes a report, **Towards Vibrant European Civic and Democratic Space**, making the case for a European Civil Society Strategy.



28 September

ECF holds a discussion on the Civil Society Strategy with cabinet of European Commission Vice President Dubravka Šuica.



10-11 November

European Civic Academy 2022 takes place in Florence, as part of the 2022Firenze programme of events.



29-30 June

ECF holds its General Assembly alongside the High Level Conference: Civil Society and the Future of Europe in Paris.



20 October

ECF holds its eighth capacity-building session with members on the Civil Society Strategy.

5-6 December

ECF and CSE host a European Convening of over 100 representatives of CSOs, donors & institutions to co-create a strategic approach for an open civic space.



2022 IN NUMBERS



17

Meetings with
policy-makers, including

3

with European
Commissioners



4

Reports



4

New members of
the secretariat



630

Attendees at
ECF events



4

Events



8

Capacity-building
sessions for members



168

Website articles



160k

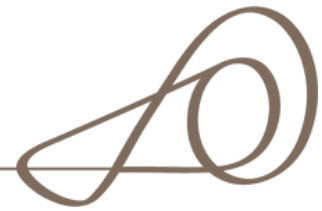
Social media
impressions for
#CivicPride



37000

Visitors on
ECF websites

OUR ACTIVITIES



Civic Space Watch: monitoring, researching, reporting.

In 2022, we continued our work on Civic Space Watch, gathering resources through social media monitoring, desk research, alerts and regular contacts with activists on the ground. The 2022 Civic Space Watch Report captured trends and transformations affecting civil society and associative life in Europe, and warned that attempts at shrinking civic space were reaching the EU level. The report nurtured the ECF and its members' and partners' advocacy, as well as contributing to the annual European Commission's Rule of law report.



European Civic Forum response to the 2022 European Commission stakeholder consultation on rule of law in the EU

January 2022

We also closely followed and contributed to the European Commission's work on the Fundamental Rights Report as well as the European Democracy Action Plan, by providing evidence, policy proposals and recommendations.

Thanks to the reinforcement of our staff team under the current grant, 2023 will see us expand our work areas to include a broader range of policy areas, including Digitalisation and Artificial Intelligence. Another key aim is to strengthen the capacity of national platforms and coalitions of NGOs, which unite hundreds of thousands of organisations, to ensure their participation in shaping EU policies affecting the sector.

Advocacy, campaigning and civic participation

Based on evidence collected through Civic Space Watch and exchanges with members and partners on the ground, we continued to bring our case to EU and national institutions, in close cooperation with Civil Society Europe and other EU level organisations.

At the heart of our advocacy and campaigning strategy are the communities we serve and the civic actors we unite. We strived to amplify, Europeanise and build on their mobilisations and actions. We used our visibility, reputation and dialogue channels with policy-makers in Brussels to voice their concerns and demands.

As a result of our actions, the European Commission work programme for 2023 included measures to develop civic space in Europe. This followed on from our work on the need for a European Civil Society Strategy. In May, we

published a report, **Towards Vibrant European Civic and Democratic Space**, making the case for a strategy. Then, in June, together with Civil Society Europe, we coordinated a letter to European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen calling for a strategy, which was supported by nearly 350 CSOs.

Through the Civil Society Convention for the Conference on the Future of Europe, initiated and coordinated by Civil Society Europe, and co-chaired by ECF and JEF Europe, we brought civil society demands into the CoFoE plenary and working group debates, as well as in the final report of the Conference on the Future of Europe. This included a demand for enhanced structural support for civil society, and for including proper civil and social dialogue mechanisms at every step of the EU decision-making process.



The successful experience with the CSO Convention on the CoFoE has set the basis for strengthening horizontal cooperation within European civil society across various sectors. It will certainly also contribute to increasing the legitimacy and recognition of civil society as an important player in EU policy-making, with self-organised and -created representation structures that allow it to speak with one voice and help to shape policies.

We also met EU policy-makers 17 times last year, whether to report on our monitoring activities, or to make the case for new legal instruments aimed at enhancing and promoting civic participation and civil dialogue.

Thanks to ECF research, policy and advocacy work, we have planted many seeds for the next phase of action. We especially used the spaces and tools obtained at the European level, such as the rule of law report, and the European Commission Vice-President in charge of relations with civil society - the mandate of VP Jourova - to create leverage for change at the national level.

Building community, capacities and resilience

At ECF, a major part of our mission is building community amongst our members and partners. In 2022, this took many forms. At the start of the year, we involved our members in the CSO Convention process and successfully contributed to a set of nearly 100 recommendations, which were formally adopted and supported by 80 European networks and platforms of CSOs.

We also hugely value our members' expertise when it comes to reporting. In fact, we see them as being crucial to our work at the European level, sharing their experience on the ground, including good practices but also worrying trends that affect the CSO sector. As such, we worked with 12 ECF member organisations to write our response to the 2022 European Commission consultation on the Rule of Law.

ECF IN THE MEDIA



In 2022, ECF continued to speak up for Civil Society Organisations with a range of media organisations and in a number of formats

EURACTIV

We managed to come together, to be stronger. As civil society, we had to fight for every millimetre of our participation and representation at the Conference on the Future of Europe (CoFoE)," says Alexandrina Najmowicz, Co-Chair of the Civil Society Convention on the Future of Europe...

- EURACTIV, 30 May 2022



EURACTIV

Alexandrina Najmowicz, secretary general of the European Civic Forum, said that "the biggest threat to democracy is people losing trust", adding that "disinformation is an effect of a loss of trust."

"Certain populations are more prone to disinformation. If we look at research and opinion polls, it is those who are left behind, on the fringes of society," she added, pointing to the need for policymakers to focus on ensuring that communities are not left behind.

- EURACTIV, 19 Oct 2022

Another aspect of this work is capacity building. At ECF, we regularly organise pan-European capacity-building events and exchanges among civil society actors, to strengthen their knowledge, skills and expertise in various issues linked with EU policymaking and, more broadly, the socio-political environment. Through events like these, online, offline and hybrid, we brought together over 630 CSOs, activists, decision-makers and scholars. These activities help to build and sustain trust among civic actors - a prerequisite for strong alliances and participation in European advocacy.

In 2022, we hosted several significant events. In November, we organised the fifth European Civic Academy in Florence, bringing together leading civic actors from different countries, sectors and areas of activism with academics, to discuss overarching systemic issues and how we achieve change as civil society. In cooperation with Scuola Normale Superiore, one of Europe's most renowned schools on European affairs, we brought together 90 activists and academics (both students, rectors and professors) to exchange views on social movements and civil society's outcomes as drivers for positive changes in public policies. This edition also paved the way for intensified cooperation with other famous schools welcoming students from all over Europe.

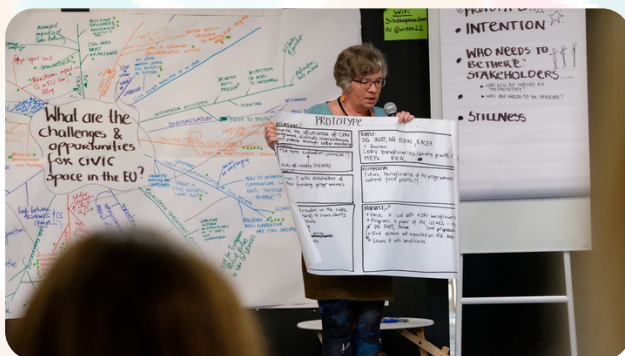


And in December, building on our advocacy for a European Civil Society Strategy, ECF and CSE gathered more than 100 representatives of CSOs, donors and EU decision-makers in Brussels to co-create a strategic approach for protecting and expanding Europe's civic space ahead of the 2024 European elections.

This gathering was not just about identifying issues and priorities, it was about building networks, trust, motivation, and momentum in the process. The meeting was professionally facilitated to be fully participatory and horizontal in order for all perspectives, ideas, and challenges to be openly engaged with and explored, in a trusted space. We discussed how to increase resilience, sustainability and impact; how institutions can support civic actors when they are criminalised or attacked; how co-creation and co-programming can improve the accessibility and impact of EU funding; how to ensure diversity and inclusion in civil society's leadership, and much more!

European Commission Vice-President for Values and Transparency Věra Jourová joined the convening in an active listening mode to hear the ideas that emerged from the discussion as a contribution to the preparations of the upcoming Defence of Democracy package.

European Convening 5-6 December

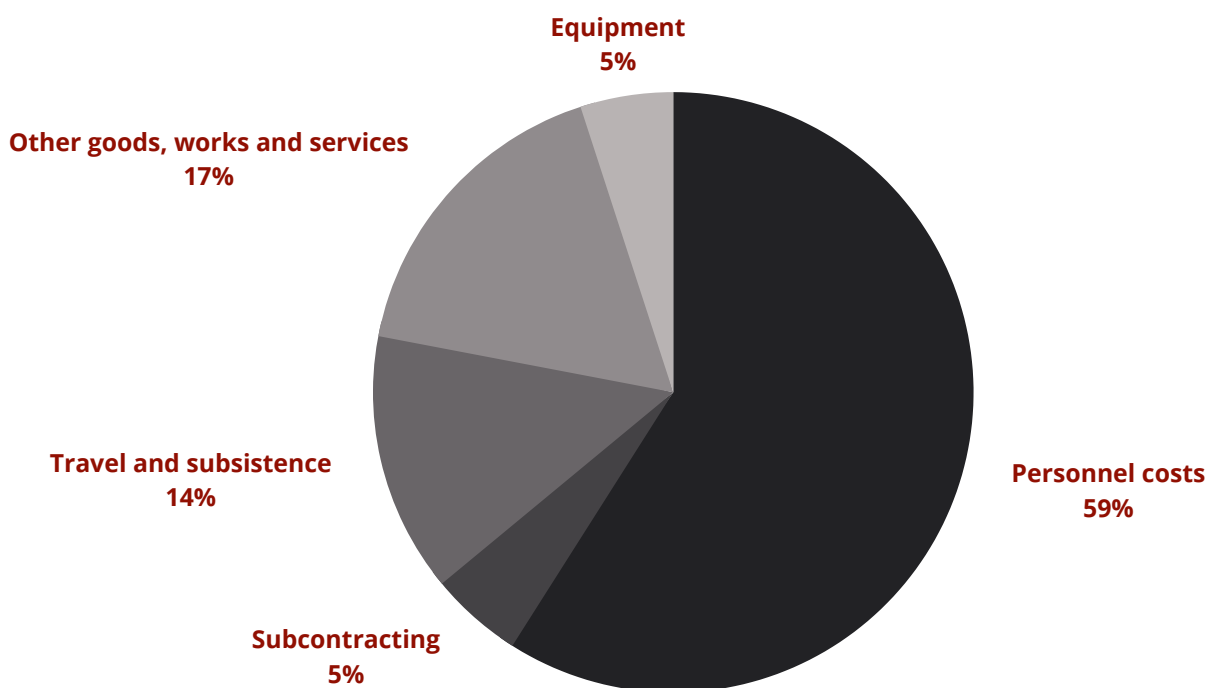


Read the recommendations and more at
civic-forum.eu/convening

FINANCIAL REPORT

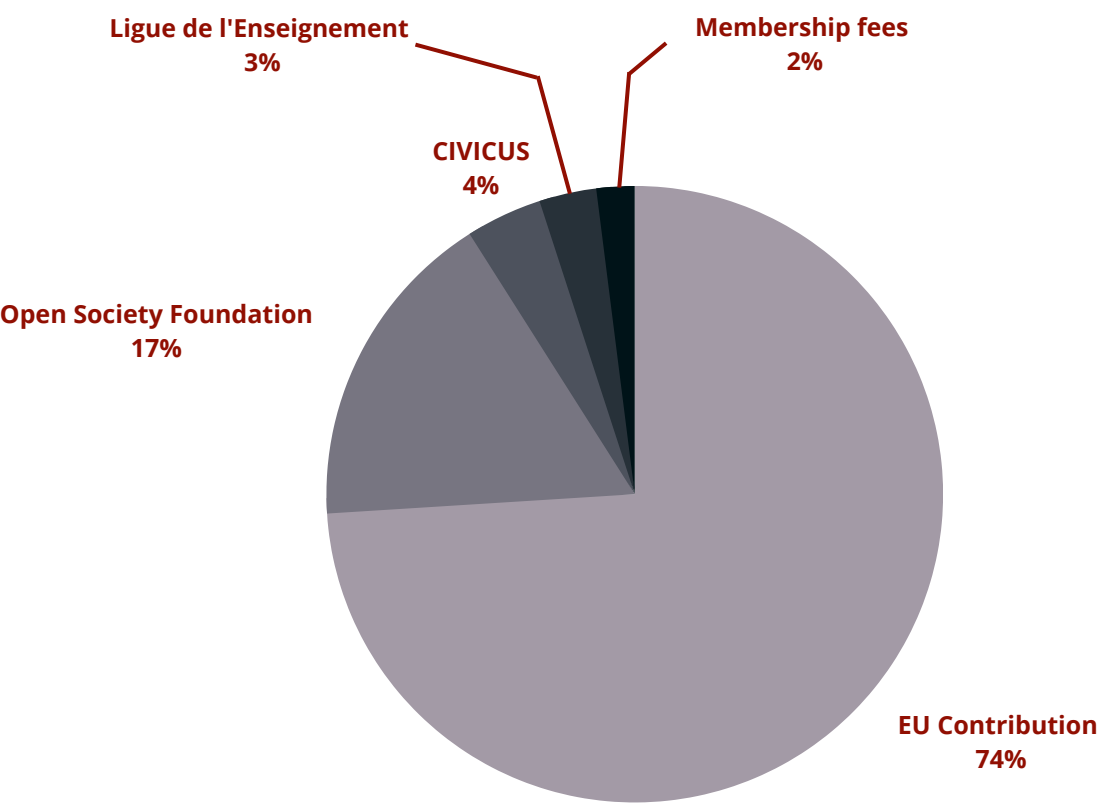


Expenditure



Personnel costs	€251,391.31
Purchase costs	
Travel and subsistence (events and meetings)	€60,673.25
Travel	€25,631.91
Accommodation	€24,423.41
Subsistence	€10,617.93
Equipment (office rental)	€19,643.15
Other goods, works and services (Running costs, office supplies, catering, conference facilitation, book keeping, audit, publishing, interpretation, venue rental, banking fees, insurance...)	€94,254.73
TOTAL	€425,962.44

Income



EU contribution (CERV + EESC Study)	€317,000.00
Open Society Foundation	€72,640.95
Civicus research partnership	€16,216.69
La ligue de l'enseignement	€12,000.00
Membership fees (called)	€8,100.00
Other income (gain on exchange rate)	€105.98
TOTAL	€426,063.62

Total EXPENDITURE

€425,962.44

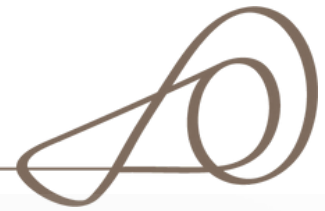
Total INCOME

€426,063.62

**The European Civic Forum ended the
year with a positive accounting record of**

€101.18

GOVERNANCE



Steering Committee

At ECF, we strive for equality both in society and in our own organisation. Since 2020, we have had two co-presidents, ensuring a gender balance at the top of the ECF.



Jean-Marc Roirant
Co-president



Raffaella Bolini
Co-president



Karolina Dreszer
Vice President



Jan Robert Suesser
Vice President



Filip Pazderski
Vice President



Oonagh Aitken
Treasurer



Roger Casale
Vice President



Yonous Muhammadi
Vice President

Board of Directors

Belgium

Oonagh Aitken, Volonteuropa
Roger Casale, New Europeans

Croatia

Drazen Hoffmann, GONG

Czech Republic

Jolana Turnerova, SPIRALIS

Denmark

Julie Rosenkilde, Nyt Europa

France

Jan Robert Suesser, Ligue des Droits de
L'Homme
Aur lie Gaudin, La ligue de l'enseignement

Germany

Mirko Schwaerzel, Bundesnetzwerk
B rgerschaftliches Engagement
Daniela Vancic, Democracy International
Maarten De Groot, The ECI Campaign
Jens Baganz, We Are Europe

Greece

Yonous Mohammadi, Greek Forum of
Refugees

Hungary

Veronika Mora, Okotars

Italy

Franco Uda, ARCI
Giuseppe Labita, CIPSI
Pier Virgilio Dastoli, European Movement
Italy

Latvia

Kristine Zonberga, Civic Alliance Latvia

Lithuania

Gaja Savele, National NGO Coalition

Netherlands

Tessel Renzenbrick, Network Democratie

North Macedonia

Sreten Koceski, Community Development
Institute

Poland

Filip Pazderski, Institute of Public Affairs
Karolina Dreszer, National Federation of Polish
NGOs

Portugal

Joao Labrincha, Academia Cidada

Romania

Stefania Andersen, Civil Society Development
Foundation

Serbia

Miodrag Nedeljkovic, Initiative for Development and
Cooperation

Spain

Rosario Sanchez, Fundacion Cives
Elena Jimenez, Omnium Cultural

27
Members

18
Countries

48%
Women

Secretariat

In 2022, our team underwent a reorganisation and expansion, to include an Administrative and Financial Officer and a Communications and Campaigns Officer.



Alexandrina Najmowicz
Secretary General



Vladimir Sestovic
Communications and
Network Coordinator



Giada Negri
Research and
Advocacy Coordinator



Meron Mengesha Mamo
Administrative and
Financial Officer



Benjamin Goodwin
Communications and
Campaigns Officer



Aarti Narsee
Policy and
Advocacy Consultant



Camilla Lombardi
Civic Space Assistant



Irene Bellomo
Civic Space Assistant

MEMBERS



Full members

A Buon Diritto, ITALY
Academia Cidadã, PORTUGAL
Animafac, France
ARCI associazione di promozione sociale, ITALY
Association des États Généraux des Étudiants de l'Europe - AEGEE-Europe, BELGIUM
Bundesnetzwerk Bürgerschaftliches Engagement (B.B.E), GERMANY
Cap Magellan, PORTUGAL
CIDEM - Civisme & Démocratie, France
Civic Alliance Latvia, LATVIA
CNVOS, SLOVENIA
Coordination of popular initiatives of international solidarity - CIPSI, ITALY
Democracy International, GERMANY
European House, HUNGARY
European Movement Italy – CIME, ITALY
Fédération de Paris de la Ligue de l'Enseignement, France
Fédération Française des Maisons de l'Europe, France
Fundacion Cives, SPAIN
Fundacja na rzecz Collegium Polonicum, POLAND
Fundatia pentru Dezvoltarea Societatii Civile, ROMANIA
GONG, CROATIA
Greek Forum of Refugees, GREECE
Institute of Public Affairs - IPA, POLAND
Jeunes européens - France, France
La ligue de l'enseignement, France
Le Mouvement Associatif, France
Les Francas, France
LIBERA, ITALY
Liga española de la educacion y la cultura popular, SPAIN
Ligue des droits de l'Homme, France
Maison de l'Europe de Paris, France
Nacionalinė NVO koalicija, LITHUANIA
National Federation of Polish Organisations – OFOP, POLAND
Netwerk Democratie, NETHERLANDS
New Europeans AISBL, BELGIUM
NOVACT, SPAIN
Nyt Europa, DENMARK
Okótárs Alapítvány (Foundation), HUNGARY
Omnium Cultural, SPAIN
Polish Women's Strike, POLAND
RECLAIM Europe, BELGIUM
SPIRALIS, CZECH REPUBLIC
The ECI campaign, GERMANY
The Wheel, IRELAND
Volonteuropa, BELGIUM
We Are Europe, GERMANY

Affiliate members

A Praça, PORTUGAL
Anne Frank Stichting, NETHERLANDS
ANO pro Evropu, CZECH REPUBLIC
Asociace NNO V Ceske Republice, CZECH REPUBLIC
Asociace Obcanskych Poraden (Association of Citizens Advice Centres), CZECH REPUBLIC
Asociatia Pro Democratia - APD, ROMANIA
Association Action pour le Développement Intégré et la Formation, FRANCE
Association d'étudiants francophones - EFPOLIT , SLOVAKIA
Association Européenne des Enseignants FRANCE - AEDE-FRANCE, FRANCE
Association for civil society development – SMART, CROATIA
Athens network of collaborating experts – ANCE, GREECE
Centrum pre Europsku Politiku – CEP, SLOVAKIA
Citizens Union Paremvassi, GREECE
Civica, FRANCE
Confédération des maisons des jeunes et de la culture – CMJC, FRANCE
Conseil des Mariannes de la République - CMR, FRANCE
Culture et Liberté, FRANCE
Documenta, SPAIN
European Institute Foundation, BULGARIA
European social forum of Cyprus, CYPRUS
GSI Italia, ITALY
Jaan Tonisson Institute - Civic education centre, ESTONIA
Jeunesse au plein air, FRANCE
Johannes Mihkelson Center, ESTONIA
Kesalukioseura ky, FINLAND
Kretakör Foundation, HUNGARY
Legambiente, ITALY
Ligue Luxembourgeoise de l'Enseignement, LUXEMBOURG
L'Interloque, FRANCE
Mouvement ATD Quart Monde, FRANCE
Mouvement Rural de la Jeunesse Chrétienne - MRJC, FRANCE
Moviment laic i progressista, SPAIN
NISC, LITHUANIA
Obcan a demokracia (Citizen and democracy association), SLOVAKIA
Pour la Solidarité ASBL, BELGIUM
Pravno-informacijski center nevladnih organizacij – PIC, SLOVENIA
Rural Youth Union, POLAND
Terra Maison de l'Europe de la Charente, FRANCE
Youth Work Ireland, IRELAND



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