

EUROPE

Key trends in 2023

- 🔍 Focus on foreign interference fosters climate of suspicion against civil society.
- 🔍 Right to protest remains under threat, environmental defenders particularly targeted.
- 🔍 Repressions against those expressing solidarity with Palestine.
- 🔍 A climate of fear for excluded groups.
- 🔍 Legal intimidation and harassment continue.
- 🔍 Draining resources: Burdensome registration and reporting requirements.
- 🔍 Citizens' assemblies increasingly tested, but structured involvement of CSOs remains weak.
- 🔍 Positive developments: Civil society's action leads to substantial human rights and democratic victories

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Recommendations:

- 🔍 **A strong Vice President mandate for oversight:** Appoint a Commission Vice President responsible for civic space and dialogue with civil society to oversee the implementation of the strategy and ensure coherence between all EU actions.
- 🔍 **Enabling civil society's democratic mission and its capacities to act for the common good and fundamental rights:** Ensure European laws and policies enable civil society's democratic mission without negative side effects.
- 🔍 **Protecting civil society and human rights defenders against attacks:** Enhance efforts to protect civil society and human rights defenders from harassment and attacks, with an intersectional approach, by strengthening the rule of law cycle, and supporting the establishment of a European protection mechanism and/or national protection hubs.
- 🔍 **Fostering real dialogue and meaningful participation:** Recognise civil dialogue as essential for participatory democracy and ensure the structured participation of civil society in all EU policy-making processes by adopting a civil dialogue agreement.
- 🔍 **Building the resilience of the civic sector through truly empowering funding policies:** Implement funding policies that empower communities and respond to real needs, embedding human rights and participatory grant-making principles that get civil society out of the “starvation cycle”.