en | de

Press release | 17.02.2022

MEPs call for cross-border support to defend civil society from attacks

Members of the European Parliament have voted by a large majority to support cross-border non-profit organisations in a report from Greens/EFA MEP Sergey Lagodinsky. The report calls for EU-wide measures to safeguard civil society organisations at the Member State and EU level, including better legal recognition for nonprofits, and supporting minimum standards as well as supporting freedom of association and speech, which is increasingly under threat in Europe.

Sergey Lagodinsky, Greens/EFA MEP and European Parliament Rapporteur on the report on a statute for European cross-border associations and non-profit organisations, comments:

"The EU is not just a marketplace, but a place of democracy and democracy needs a strong and vibrant European civil society. But NGOs and nonprofit organisations still lack safeguards for their work and a truly European cross border organisational form that would put them on par with companies or European parties.

"We urgently need to introduce a pan-European definition of what constitutes the public good, in order to facilitate and defend the work of civil society across European borders.

"We need to give EU citizens the opportunity to join forces and found European associations across national borders. We want to ensure minimum standards for non-profit foundations and associations to protect against against discrimination and undue pressure from public authorities or anti-democratic actors.

"If the Commission is serious about supporting democratic values and civil engagement in Europe, then it must come out with a proposal to support cross-border nonprofit organisations as we set out in this report."

More:

Non-profit organisations play a full part in the economic life and in the development of the internal

market, contribute to the achievement of the Union's objectives and are fundamental to representing the interests of citizens and civil society, as they support active participation in economic, democratic and social life. Despite this, they lack a legal form at Union level to put them on an equal footing with commercial undertakings. This report marks an important step towards better representation of civil society at EU level. While companies could incorporate themselves for decades, civil society still lacks an appropriate legal form. Introducing a European Association Statute and minimum standards for non-profits in the member states could be a game-changer, empowering civil society all over Europe. This dossier is also linked to the parliament’s work on Rule of Law, SLAPPs and the shrinking space of civil society. MEPs are also presenting a proposal for a Directive on common minimum standards for NPOs in the EU in view of creating a level playing field for organisations across the EU.

Recommended

Press release



Greens/EFA in Vilnius: Lithuanian Presidency must lead…

05.11.2026

Press release

Photo by Gauravdeep Singh Bansal on Unsplash



Greens/EFA welcome strong outward facing EU amid irres…

19.10.2026

Press release

KOBU Agency



[Enlargement: New incentives and rules for candidate co…]

06.10.2026

Press release

Esma Nur Büyükgüçlü



Serbia: Greens/EFA call for consequences after new spy…

03.09.2026

Responsible MEPs



Sergey Lagodinsky

Vice-President

Contact person



Alex Johnson

Press & Media Advisor EN (English language press)

Please share

- E-Mail