



EESC Various Interests Group calls for innovation in civil society

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The EESC study on the future evolution of civil society organisations (CSOs) identifies the main challenges, develops scenarios of change and includes practical recommendations.

CSOs are changing and should look for innovative ways to step up civil dialogue if they want to continue to provide added value to the decision-making process. In the study on [The future evolution of civil society in the European Union by 2030](#), presented at a major event in Brussels on 15 February 2018, the EESC Various Interests Group analyses the changing role of CSOs and showcases possible developments by 2030.

The document presents the current state of play and analyses the main issues faced by CSOs at national and European level, the trends and drivers of change, and the future prospects for relations with national and European policy makers. It then develops five likely scenarios of change and includes several practical recommendations and conclusions.

CSOs are currently facing a number of challenges such as the **economic crisis** and the effects of reduced availability of public funding, **digitalisation**, **demographic changes** leading to an ageing population and migration, **populism** and **shrinking civic space**. In order to ensure that they can adapt to change, continue to play their advocacy role and participate fully and proactively in the decision-making process, a number of measures will have to be explored and put in place in the future.

CSOs should devise innovative working methods and focus, in particular, on developing new services (for example media literacy, media fact-checking and civic education), diversifying funding sources and adapting managerial strategies. "We now have the right tools and should use them to support CSOs so that they can navigate successfully through the societal trends identified, working with them to establish a better European process of governance and helping them enhance participatory democracy up to 2030 and, hopefully, beyond", said **Luca Jahier**, President of the Various Interests Group, in the foreword to the study.

The publication was promoted by the [Various Interests Group](#) in cooperation with the [Liaison Group](#) and was commissioned from [CNVOS](#) (Centre for information service, cooperation and development of NGOs, Slovenia) and [ENNA](#) (European Network of National Civil Society Associations), in the framework of the annual study programme for 2017.

The launch event was moderated by **Daniela Vincenti**, Editor in chief at EURACTIV and led to a lively exchange of views among experts, representatives of European CSOs and EU institutions, and EESC members. It was opened by **Luca Jahier**, President of the EESC Various Interests Group, and **Gerry Salole**, member of the EESC Liaison Group and Chief Executive of the European Foundation Centre.

Speakers included **Ramón Luis Valcárcel Siso**, Vice-President of the European Parliament in charge of relations with the EESC and the European Committee of the Regions, **Paweł Świeboda**, Deputy Head of the European Commission's European Political Strategy Centre, **Goran Forbici**, Director of the Centre for information service, cooperation and development of NGOs (Slovenia) and **Sabine Selchow**, ARC-Laureate Programme in International History, University of Sydney and Conflict and Civil Society Research Unit, London School of Economics (LSE).

Jacek Krawczyk (President of the Employers Group), **Gabriele Bischoff** (President of the Workers Group) and **Arno Metzler** (incoming President of the Various Interests Group) also contributed to the debate.