

A stylized sun graphic on the left side of the page. It consists of a solid yellow circle at the bottom left, with several short, thick yellow dashes of varying lengths and orientations radiating from its top-right edge, suggesting rays of light. The background is a solid orange color, and a large white semi-circle is positioned on the right side, partially overlapping the orange background.

**AN OPEN, TRANSPARENT AND
STRUCTURED EU CIVIL DIALOGUE:
A STUDY ON CHALLENGES AND
OPPORTUNITIES**



CONTEXT & BACKGROUND

Civil dialogue as an essential component of **participatory democracy** reaffirmed in the EU Treaties and of **civil society enabling environment**

Concerns that current practices of EU civil dialogue do not guarantee the **adequate level of openness, transparency and structure**

ECF&CSE report illustrating main **gaps & opportunities** with **recommendations** to improve EU civil dialogue building on civil society experiences and views



CIVIL SOCIETY
EXPERIENCES:
KEY FINDINGS

Channels of dialogue more frequently used are either public consultations or specialised expert groups

Positive practices exist but are not mainstreamed

Regularity of transversal dialogue is particularly low

Impact of both sectoral and transversal dialogue is generally rated mild to low

Lack of structure, regularity, transparency and inclusiveness are seen as negatively affecting current practices of EU civil dialogue



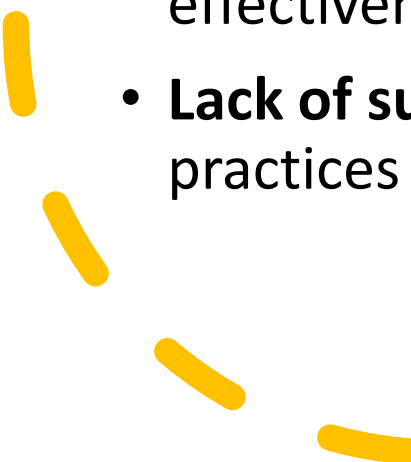
CIVIL DIALOGUE AT EU LEVEL

- **Absence of proper framework** leads to **fragmentation**
- Dialogue mainly occurs through **top-down processes** with rather **low publicity, transparency and responsiveness**
- Outside top-down processes, dialogue is generally **informal in nature**
- **Lack of coordination and support structures** lead to **inconsistent** civil dialogue practices among and within institutions
- No real culture of civil dialogue, with approach characterised by important degree of **instrumentalization**
- **No sufficient investments** to promote civil society participation and active engagement





EU CIVIL DIALOGUE AT NATIONAL LEVEL

- **Lack of common standards** to fill **general gaps** in national civil dialogue practices – also exacerbated by COVID-19 and in some cases by a broader hostile attitude towards civil society
 - Civil dialogue often seen as a mere **box-ticking exercise** and focus is more on national issues
 - **Poor intra-governmental coordination** as an obstacle to transparency and effectiveness
 - **Lack of support on the part of the EU** to facilitate and monitor civil dialogue practices on EU issues, including in terms of support structures
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WHAT IS AN
OPEN,
TRANSPARENT
AND
STRUCTURED
EU CIVIL
DIALOGUE?

• **Conceptualising civil dialogue** in light of EU fundamental rights & values

Enabling environment for an open and free civic space

Openness and transparency of all stages of decision-making processes

Responsiveness and accountability within and outside dialogue mechanisms

Inclusiveness and equal participation of all diverse groups within society

Sustainable and structural nature

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HOW DO WE GET
THERE?
FIVE KEY POINTS

Fostering an enabling environment for civil society as a means to promote mutual engagement

An **inter-institutional agreement** establishing an overarching policy framework on EU civil dialogue

Reinforcing the infrastructure for EU civil dialogue

Improving existing processes for civil dialogue and participation

Proactively encourage and support civil society participation and active engagement