

# Call for Expression of Interest

## Civil Society Platform

### 1. What is the Civil Society Platform?

The Civil Society Platform was announced as a key deliverable of the **EU Strategy for Civil Society**<sup>1</sup>. As part of the Strategy's objective to strengthen effective and meaningful engagement between the Commission and civil society, the Platform will reinforce dialogue on values enshrined in Article 2 of the Treaty on the European Union (TEU), particularly on fundamental rights, democracy, equality and the rule of law. Over time, the Platform may be extended to cover other policy areas. The Platform will provide a **regular and structured framework** for engagement between the Commission and civil society organisations.

The Platform is intended for **independent, non-profit civil society organisations** with proven experience in **promoting and protecting democracy, the rule of law, equality, fundamental rights and civic space**<sup>2</sup>. By bringing together **organisations that operate across multiple EU Member States and/or enlargement countries**, who have a demonstrated track record of contributing to these objectives at national, European or international level, the Platform will address challenges faced by CSOs while strengthening their role in EU policymaking.

Set up in accordance with the **10 Guiding Principles for Dialogue with civil society**<sup>3</sup> the Platform is a permanent structure, with agendas co-created by civil society organisations and the Commission.

Members will contribute as a partner in shaping the Platform's priorities, review progress and assess challenges related to civic space and EU values as well as identifying opportunities for support and protection. The Platform will enable exchanges of knowledge, good practices, and updates and on the progress of implementation of the Strategy for Civil Society, to ensure that dialogue leads to meaningful impact.

The Platform will consist of up to 30 members, selected for a mandate of three years. Mandates can be renewed through participation to future call of expression.

The eligibility criteria and selection process are outlined below.

You may also consult the [Platform's Terms of Reference](#) for more information.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM%3A2025%3A790%3AFIN&qid=1762962291274>

<sup>2</sup> Registration in the Transparency Register is required in order for organisations to be selected.

<sup>3</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM%3A2025%3A790%3AFIN&qid=1762962291274>

## 2. Eligibility criteria

Organisations applying to become a Member of the Civil Society Platform must meet all the following criteria:

- a. They shall be independent non-governmental organisations which have a non-profit or charitable purpose.
- b. They shall be legally established in an EU Member State, or a European Economic Area (EEA) country, or an EU candidate country or potential candidate and be registered in the EU Transparency Register<sup>4</sup>.
- c. They shall have proven and relevant expertise and experience of at least 3 years, at national, European or international level, in areas relevant to civic space and EU values, in particular democracy, the rule of law, equality and fundamental rights.
- d. They shall be, preferably, organisations with membership, offices or operations in either:
  - i. at least 7 Member States, or
  - ii. at least 3 candidate countries and potential candidates, or
  - iii. a combination of Member States and candidate countries and potential candidates reaching a comparable scale (e.g. 5 Member States and 2 candidate countries and potential candidates).

Organisations who may not fulfil this specific criterion (but fulfil all others) will still be considered to become a Member of the Platform based on their relevant experience and expertise in the area of civic space, spanning across several countries.

- e. They shall be organisations that must operate independently, have elected internal governance structures and accountability towards their members, including procedures for the selection, renewal and exclusion of member organisations, when applicable.
- f. They shall be organisations that must respect and uphold the values enshrined in Art. 2 of the Treaty on European Union and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, other applicable EU<sup>5</sup> (and international law, including international human rights law and standards. They shall commit to respect these values and rights within the activities of the Platform.

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<sup>4</sup> [https://transparency-register.europa.eu/search-register-or-update\\_en](https://transparency-register.europa.eu/search-register-or-update_en)

<sup>5</sup> This includes Regulation (EU) 2016/679, General Data Protection Regulation ('GDPR').

- g. They shall be organisations that must have internal processes for preventing, mitigating, detecting, reporting on and remedying reputational risks or breaches linked to the non-respect of EU values by themselves or their member organisations.
- h. They shall be organisations that must be transparent in their operations and funding through defined internal processes and/or by-laws.

The Commission will select Members from among the applicants to ensure the Platform reflects a diverse and balanced range of expertise. To achieve this, Members will be selected to cover the following priority areas:

- a. Fundamental rights, including children's and victims' rights;
- b. Democracy including transparency and democratic participation;
- c. The rule of law;
- d. Civic space, including protection of human rights defenders;
- e. Media, journalism, and press freedom;
- f. Equality and non-discrimination;
- g. Digital rights and freedoms.

### **3. Application Process**

Interested organisations are invited to submit their application to the Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers of the European Commission (hereafter 'DG JUST'), in accordance with the process and requirements outlined below and in the eligibility criteria.

Applications must be completed in English.

An application will be deemed admissible only if it is sent to [just-civic-space@ec.europa.eu](mailto:just-civic-space@ec.europa.eu) by the deadline and includes the documents referred to below. All documents submitted by applicants should be duly filled in, legible, signed and numbered sequentially. The total length of application, with all documents combined into a single PDF file, shall not exceed 6 pages.

#### Application and supporting documents

Each application shall include the following documents submitted into a single PDF file:

1. a one page (maximum) cover letter explaining the applying organisation's motivation for answering this call and stating what contribution the organisation could make to the Platform;
2. a classification form duly filled in specifying the priority area(s) for which the application is made (Annex I) (see character limitation in Annex I);

3. a selection criteria form duly filled in documenting how the applying organisation fulfils the selection criteria listed in this call, including a contact point for the applying organisation (functional mailbox) (Annex II) (maximum 2 pages).

Additional supporting documents (e.g. publications to verify expertise on thematic areas) may be requested at a later stage.

### Deadline for application

The duly completed and signed applications must be submitted by **3 August 2026** at midnight at the latest.

## **5. Selection procedure**

Members of the Platform will be selected by the Commission. The selection procedure shall consist of an assessment of the applications performed by the Commission against the selection criteria listed in this call, followed by the establishment of a list of the most suitable applicants, and concluded by the appointment of the members of the Platform.

Relevant Commission services and representatives from the Steering Group of the Platform, consisting of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA), and Civil Society Europe will be informally consulted on the overall composition of the Platform's membership (but not on an individual membership application) to support the selection procedure conducted by the Commission.

The composition of the Platform will aim to ensure the diversity and broad representation in thematic and geographical scope covered by the selected organisations and balance in the size of selected Members as well as the representation of underrepresented and vulnerable groups and organisations.

The EU Strategy for Civil Society recognises that EU Member States, candidate countries and potential candidates are part of a shared, interconnected and continuous civic space. Accordingly, the Platform shall include Members covering candidate and potential candidate countries, with two seats explicitly reserved for organisations active in these contexts.

The selection process will be conducted in line with the Commission's principles of transparency, equal treatment, and proportionality.

The list of Members will be made public online.

If you have any other questions, do not hesitate to contact us directly via [just-civic-space@ec.europa.eu](mailto:just-civic-space@ec.europa.eu).

ANNEXES:

- Annex I: Classification form
- Annex II: Selection criteria form

## **Annex I - Classification form**

To be filled in by all applicants

Name of organisation:

Transparency Register identification number:

The applicant shall demonstrate expertise in the following areas of interest: (please select a **maximum of two** areas):

- Fundamental rights, including children's and victims' rights;
- Democracy including transparency and democratic participation;
- The rule of law;
- Civic space, including protection of human rights defenders;
- Media, journalism, and press freedom;
- Equality and non-discrimination;
- Digital rights and freedoms.

Please explain below and provide examples of the work you do in the selected area(s) (e.g. by providing links to relevant reports, studies, training etc.) You should demonstrate at least 3 years of expertise in the chosen area(s). (maximum: 3000 characters).

## Annex II: Selection criteria form

Applicants are requested to provide information and where necessary, relevant links and attachments, to demonstrate how they fulfil the below selection criteria listed in this call.

<p>Please provide proof that your organisation is legally established in an EU Member State or EU candidate or potential candidate.</p>	
<p>Please provide a complete list of all your organisation's members, offices or places of operation (if applicable). This list shall ideally demonstrate that your organisation fulfils one of the following scenarios: Having membership, offices or operations in either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- at least 7 Member States, or</li><li>- at least 3 candidate countries and potential candidates, or</li><li>- a combination of Member States and, candidate countries and potential candidates, reaching a comparable scale (e.g. 5 Member States and 2 candidate countries and potential candidates).</li></ul> <p>Alternatively, please detail the geographical scope of your activities and operation.</p>	
<p>Please provide information to demonstrate that your organisation operates independently, has elected internal governance structures and accountability towards your members, including procedures for the selection, renewal and exclusion of member organisations, when applicable.</p>	
<p>Please provide information to explain how your organisation respects and upholds the values enshrined in Art. 2 of the Treaty on European Union and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, other applicable EU<sup>5</sup> (and international law,</p>	

<p>including international human rights law and standards).</p> <p>Please confirm that your organisations commit to respect these values and rights within the activities of the Platform.</p>	
<p>Please provide information, and links where relevant, to your organisation’s internal processes for preventing, mitigating, detecting, reporting on and remedying reputational risks or breaches linked to the non-respect of EU values by you or your member organisations, where applicable.</p>	
<p>Please provide information to explain how your organisation ensures transparency in operations and funding through defined internal processes and/or by-laws.</p>	

Name of the organisation: .....

Please provide a contact point (functional mailbox).....

Date: .....