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# 1<sup>ST</sup> CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM REPORT



Support to Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in the Turkish Cypriot community through inter-alia tailor made assistance, trainings, capacity building and networking with Greek Cypriot and other European Union's CSO  
EuropeAid/135176/C/SER/CY



# CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM REPORT

**20th October 2015, Green Kitchen Restaurant, Nicosia**

The first Civil Society Forum hosted by the Civic Space was held on 20th October 2015, Tuesday in Nicosia between 16.00-20.00 hours.

The Forum, in which 70 participants from 50 CSOs attended, started with the opening speech of the EU Task Manager Charlotte Goyon, followed by a brief presentation of planned Project activities by the Team Leader of Civic Space, Juliette Remy-Sartin. Following a questions and comments session, the Civil Society Forum continued with an interactive workshop facilitated by Selen Lermioglu Yilmaz (Capacity Building Expert of Civic Space), and Ayca Haykir (Deputy Team Leader of PMU). Five working groups discussed 3 questions and came out with their needs and recommendations for the project implementation. These recommendations are summarized below.

Last, but not least, the Civic Space team proposed 3 logo choices designed for the Project, to the participants of the Forum to vote for. The logo that received most votes was selected by the team to be used as the Project Logo. The logos and the votes they received are presented in the Annex.

## WORKSHOP RECOMMENDATIONS

**Recommendations for Question 1: What are your capacity needs? (in terms of technical, institutional and managerial needs, counselling, networking, communication, etc.)**

### General Capacity Strengthening Topics

- Transparency and Accountability of CSOs emerged as an important topic of capacity strengthening;
- Networking and partnership building;
- Fundraising;
- Public outreach / Grassroots outreach;
- Collaboration with local "authorities";
- International level visibility & networking;
- Advocacy and Lobbying;
- Working with media / Media Relations;
- Increasing and working with volunteers;
- Human rights based awareness (e.g. gender equality, children rights);
- Training of people with disabilities;
- How to overcome infrastructural problems
- Project proposal writing;
- Sustainable budgeting;
- Collective joint advocacy.

### Peer-to-Peer Support & Solidarity and Sharing

- Sharing of resources for sustainability and peer-to-peer support (e.g. incubators, sharing of rooms, offices, participation in each others' trainings.)
- Provision of spaces for civil society related activities;
- Involving disadvantaged groups in mainstream civil society work;
- Experience and information sharing among CSOs;
- Translation support to be provided in bi-language activities.

**Recommendations for Question 2: What are your topic wise/thematic priorities? Which thematic topics you would like to see the Civic Space to prioritize? (e.g. environment, gender, health, youth, people with disabilities, arts, culture, fight against human trafficking, social justice, social inclusion;)**

1. **Health** (prioritised by 4 groups; first choice in 3 groups and second choice in 1 group) – *sub-topics proposed: research on environmental factors on public health; preventive health (rather than treatment);*
2. **Environment** (prioritised by 4 groups; second choice in one group; third choice in 2 groups; fourth choice in one group); *sub-topic proposed: raising environmental awareness;*
3. **Human rights** (children, women, LGBTI, people with disabilities, fight against human trafficking, etc.) (prioritised by 3 groups; first in 1 group; second in 1 group and third in 1 group)
4. **Gender** (prioritised by 3 groups; third choice by all 3 groups)

5. **Arts, Culture and Sports** (prioritised by 2 groups; first choice in 1 group; third choice in 1 group) – *sub-topic proposed: ensuring more intensive arts, culture and sports education at all school levels*
6. **Education** (prioritised by 2 groups; second choice in 1 group and fourth choice in 1 group) – *sub-topics proposed: education to raise general awareness of the public on these issues; education of people with disabilities; education of personnel and institutions that provides special education services;*

There were other thematic topics such as social justice, social inclusion, participation of CSOs in decision making, enabling environment prioritised by groups; however, the above list of 6 priorities were identified by more groups than these.

Last, but not least, many groups mentioned the importance of general awareness raising on all these social issues to be conducted jointly.

**Recommendations for Question 3: How do you see the Civil Society Forum functioning? What are your expectations from the Forum? - e.g. code of conduct for the Forum: working rules, principles, operational structures, representation in the Project Steering Committee, criteria for Steering Committee Representatives, how to elect these representatives (online or in-person)**

### Civil Society Forum Working Principles

- A Charter should be drafted and presented to all Members for comments and adherence;
- Forum should be permanent and sustainable, not limited by 2,5 years;
- General meetings with all CSOs every 3-months and thematic meetings in between Forum meetings (one group proposed that the Forum should meet every 2 months)
- Neutrality;
- Transparency;
- Should be a space with efficient and broad participation.

### Civil Society Forum Working / Meeting Forms and Methods

- Should be hosted by different CSOs each time (rotating location);
- Continuous information sharing via online interactive means;
- Monitoring and evaluation meetings should be held;
- Should allow us to quickly mobilize when and if urgent action is necessary;
- Should allow information and knowledge exchange (e.g. when a CSO is organizing an event, it could use the Forum to mobilize others;
- Meeting/Forum notes should be shared with all CSOs;
- Monitoring of the implementation of the decisions taken in previous forums should be reported and shared with all CSOs;
- Forum should have an online space to share information on mandates or statutes of CSOs which are part of it;
- Forum meetings should be conducted in the form of workshops.

### Representation (in the Steering Committee) and Election

- Experience and expertise should be sought as well as long-term vision;
- Representatives should be selected from among "social initiators";
- Gender and regional equality should be maintained;
- Thematic diversity should be sought;
- Substitute members should also be identified;
- Representatives should be able to commit time;

- Awareness on civil society, and impartiality should be sought;
- Should not be limited to 2 people but more representatives securing thematic representation;
- If the number of representatives should be limited by two, then additional thematic advisers should also be identified;
- Good level of English language should be sought;
- Each CSO that would like to propose a candidate for the Steering Committee should first identify their candidate among themselves, and then these candidates should be proposed for election;
- Election should be made online and transparent;
- If possible, the representatives to be elected should be financially supported.

## ANNEX I – AGENDA OF THE FORUM

### Gündem / Agenda

**16:00 - 16:30**

Karşılama, kahve ve kayıt / Welcome, coffee and registration

**16:30 - 16:45**

Açılış konuşması, Charlotte Goyon, AB Sektör Yöneticisi

Introduction by Charlotte Goyon, EC Task Manager

**16:45 - 17:00**

Projenin kısa sunumu, Takım Lideri, Juliette Remy Sartin

Brief presentation of the Project by Team leader, Juliette Remy Sartin

**17:00 -18:30**

Öncelikli alanlarda atölye/istişare: ihtiyaçlar, politikalar, iletişim, ağ kurma ve operasyon yapısı

Workshop/consultations in the form of a chat cafe on priority areas: needs, policy, networking and organizational structure

**18:30 -19:00**

Organizasyon, Yapı ve Bileşenler

Composition and organizational structure

**19:00 - 20:00**

Resepsiyon / Reception

## ANNEX II – LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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# ANNEX III – PRESENTATION OF CIVIC SPACE





## Capacity Strengthening

- Help Desk
- Needs Assessment
- Peer to Peer Learning
- Civil Society Forum
- Trainings
- Thematic Seminars
- Financial Sustainability: Fundraising, Corporate Social Responsibility
- Active Citizenship Mechanism
- Improved M&E systems

## Enabling Environment

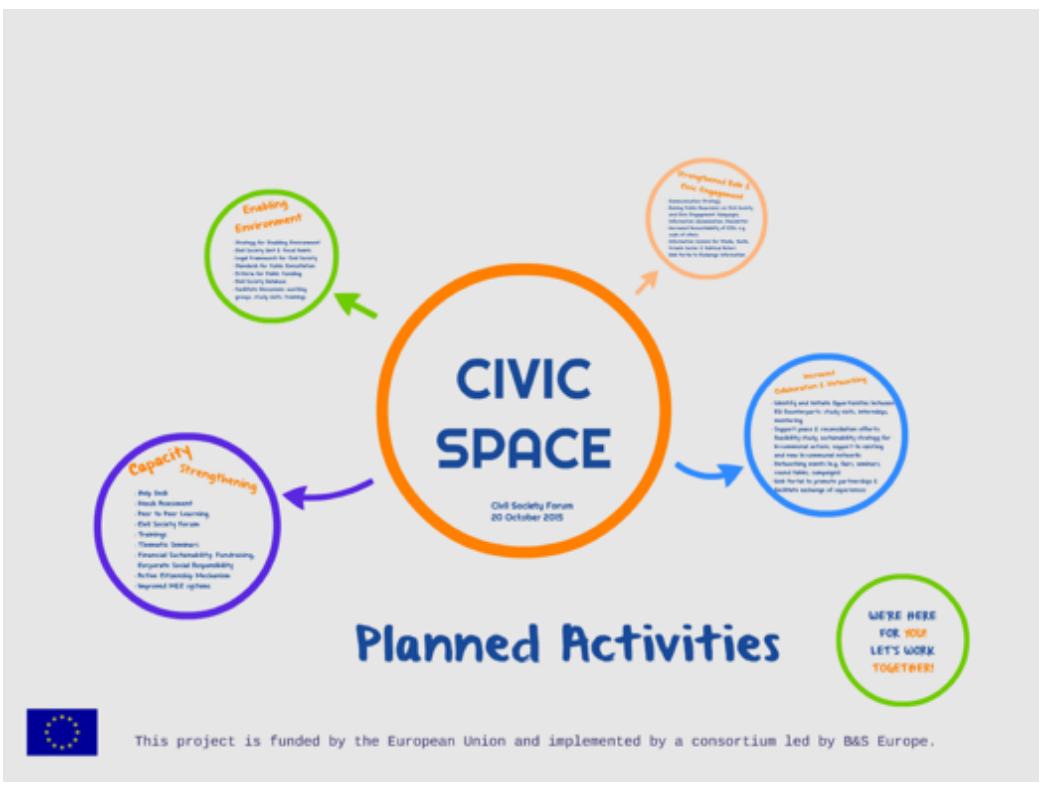
- Strategy for Enabling Environment
- Civil Society Unit & Focal Points
- Legal Framework for Civil Society
- Standards for Public Consultation
- Criteria for Public Funding
- Civil Society Database
- Facilitate Discussions: working groups, study visits, trainings

## Strengthened Role & Civic Engagement

- Communication Strategy
- Raising Public Awareness on Civil Society and Civic Engagement: Campaigns, Information dissemination, Newsletter
- Increased Accountability of CSOs: e.g. code of ethics
- Information Sessions for Media, Youth, Private Sector & Political Actors
- Web Portal to Exchange Information

## Increased Collaboration & Networking

- Identify and Initiate Opportunities between EU Counterparts: study visits, internships, mentoring
- Support peace & reconciliation efforts: feasibility study, sustainability strategy for bi-communal actions, support to existing and new bi-communal networks
- Networking events (e.g. fairs, seminars, round tables, campaigns)
- Web Portal to promote partnerships & facilitate exchange of experiences



## ANNEX IV – Logos Proposed and Votes They Received

**Logo 1** (34 votes)



**Logo 2** (2 votes)



**Logo 3** (26 votes)





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