

Civil society

A healthy and stable democracy depends on the existence of an active civil society. Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway are contributing over €160 million to strengthen civil society. This makes the EEA and Norway Grants one of the prime funding schemes to the sector in Central and Southern Europe.

WHY FOCUS ON CIVIL SOCIETY?

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) play a vital role in promoting democratic values, human rights and fostering civic participation. They help to raise awareness about social and environmental issues, bring citizens' concerns to governments and tackle concerns in society, both as advocates and service providers.

However various obstacles hamper NGOs in their efforts. Many struggle to find adequate funding for their activities. The economic crisis has hit the sector hard. Spending cuts have also increased inequalities and social tensions, creating a fertile breeding ground for discrimination and extremism.

WHAT WILL WE ACHIEVE?

The aim of the NGO programmes is to achieve a stronger and more developed civil society - able to empower marginalised groups in society and contribute to democratic and sustainable development.

Programmes focus on three broad areas:

- > Democracy, good governance and active citizenship
- > Human rights and equality
- > Social inclusion and provision of welfare services for disadvantaged groups

SNAPSHOT OF SUPPORTED PROJECTS

In Poland, a coalition of NGOs are working together with one of the country's leading LGBT organisations to address the issues of hate crimes against minorities and provide legal aid and advocate for victims.

In Hungary, the Smile Foundation provides art and storytelling therapy for children suffering from chronic diseases like cancer. Treatment often involves long periods in hospital, putting huge strain on parents and children alike. Art therapy has proved very beneficial in helping children through the difficult emotions of a long-term illness.

In Slovakia, joblessness is particularly high amongst women and young people. A local NGO has set up education and training schemes to help women and young people venture into self-employment or start their own business.

www.eeagrants.org
www.norwaygrants.org



© Maciek Nabradalik / Sea Change

Promoting democratic values is one of the priorities of the NGO Programmes

The support helps to bridge a critical funding gap and strengthen the capacity of the sector, as well as provide much needed social services to poorer communities. Against a backdrop of rising human rights abuses and threats to freedom of speech, the aim is also to enable NGOs to promote tolerance and combat discrimination against minorities like Roma.

HOW WILL WE ACHIEVE IT?

NGO programmes have been set up in all beneficiary countries. NGOs can also apply for funding under many of the EEA and Norway Grants programmes in other areas e.g. gender equality and gender-based violence, environment and climate change, culture, health and children and youth at-risk.

Types of activities supported by the programmes include:

- > Capacity building and organisational support to NGOs
- > Provision of key welfare services to vulnerable groups
- > Support for network and coalition building
- > Strengthening advocacy, monitoring and watchdog activities
- > Awareness-raising on environmental issues

NO HATE

STANDING UP AGAINST HATE SPEECH

The EEA and Norway Grants are a strategic partner to the Council of Europe's 'No Hate Speech' campaign. Launched in 2013 and running until end of 2017, the campaign is based on human rights education, youth participation and media literacy.

The NGO programmes are making a strong contribution to the campaign, organising workshops for youth bloggers, compiling good practice databases and sharing campaign toolkits for schools.



HOW DOES IT WORK?

Projects are selected following open calls for proposals organised in each beneficiary country. Calls are published on the websites of the programme and on www.eeagrants.org.

Funding is available for non-governmental organisations registered in the beneficiary countries. Specific eligibility criteria and rules for applying can be found in the individual calls for proposals when published.

BILATERAL COOPERATION

Partnerships between NGOs in the beneficiary countries and bodies in the three donor countries are widely encouraged. Seed money is available to support networking and partner searches.

The Icelandic Human Rights Centre and the Norwegian Helsinki Committee facilitate contacts and cooperation between NGOs in the beneficiary countries and Iceland and Norway.

For more information:

www.ngonorway.org – www.humanrights.is

COUNTRY OVERVIEW: NGO PROGRAMMES

All programmes support projects covering the core areas of democracy, equality and human rights. Find more detailed information about programmes in each country, latest news and project stories here: www.eeagrants.org/What-we-do/Programme-areas/Civil-society/NGO-Programmes

Country	Programme Operator	Grant amount (€ million)
Bulgaria	Open Society Foundation http://bit.ly/1jAQTjD	11.8
Croatia	National Foundation for Civil Society Development http://bit.ly/K9lDjp	1.3
Cyprus	Price Waterhouse Coopers http://bit.ly/1q8tQbv	1.3
Czech Republic	Civil Society Development Foundation http://bit.ly/1ins5nO	11.4
Estonia	Open Estonia Foundation http://bit.ly/1qeBJGb	2.3
Greece	Bodossaki Foundation http://bit.ly/1oqtOAT	7.3
Hungary	Hungarian Environmental Partnership Foundation http://bit.ly/1uAUvHe	13.5
Latvia	Society Integration Foundation http://bit.ly/1hxs3NE	10.4
Lithuania	Human Rights Monitoring Institute http://bit.ly/1fUXVAR	5.5
Malta	Solidarity Overseas Service (SOS) Malta http://bit.ly/1fPE45Q	0.5
Poland	Stefan Batory Foundation http://bit.ly/1qeCFTv	37.0
Portugal	Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation http://bit.ly/1oqrry2	8.7
Romania	Civil Society Development Foundation http://bit.ly/1fPBX1l	36.3
Slovakia	Ekopolis Foundation (Active citizenship and inclusion) http://bit.ly/1o6ULvV Open Society Foundation (Democracy and human rights) http://bit.ly/1oqscXQ	3.7 3.7
Slovenia	Regional Environment Center (REC Slovenia) http://bit.ly/1o6VvkW	1.9
Spain	NGO Platform of Social Action http://bit.ly/1slrNrX	4.6
Total		161.2

ABOUT THE EEA AND NORWAY GRANTS

Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway provide funding to:



AREAS OF SUPPORT

- Environmental management
- Climate change
- Civil society
- Cultural heritage and diversity
- Human and social development
- Green industry innovation
- Justice and home affairs
- Research and scholarships
- Decent work and social dialogue

* EEA Grants €993.5 million (Norway 95.7%, Iceland 3.2%, Liechtenstein 1.1%) – Norway Grants €804.6 million, financed by Norway alone