EU COUNTRY ROADMAPS FOR ENGAGEMENT WITH CIVIL SOCIETY

Strengthening Europe's engagement with Civil Society Organisations to deepen democracy and promote more inclusive and effective societies

EU COUNTRY ROADMAPS

BACKGROUND

An empowered civil society is a crucial component of any democratic system and is an asset in itself. It represents and fosters pluralism and can contribute to more effective policies, equitable and sustainable development and inclusive growth. It is an important player in fostering peace and in conflict resolution. By articulating citizens' concerns, civil society organisations (CSOs) are active in the public arena, engaging in initiatives to further participatory democracy. They embody a growing demand for transparent and accountable governance.

With the EU Communication 'Roots of Democracy and sustainable development: Europe's engagement with civil society in external relations,' the European Commission defined three main priorities for EU – Civil Society engagement:

■ Enhancing efforts to promote a conducive environment for CSO's

■ Promotion of a meaningful and structured participation of CSO's in the domestic policies of partner countries, in the EU programming cycle and in international processes

■ Increasing local CSO's capacity to perform their roles as independent development actors more effectively

It is within this framework that the European Union launched the EU Country Roadmaps for engagement with CSO's – a new way of working for EU Delegations and Member States, allowing for more structured and strategic cooperation with civil society in each of the countries the EU partners with.

These Roadmaps are an important tool in strengthening strategic cooperation and structured dialogue of the EU and its Member States with CSO's in partner countries.

WHAT IS THE EU?

The European Union is a unique economic and political partnership between 28 European countries that has delivered half a century of peace, stability and prosperity. It helped raising living standards, launched a single European currency and is progressively building a single Europe-wide market in which people, goods, services and capital move freely among Member States. The EU was created in the aftermath of the Second World War and its first steps taken were to foster economic cooperation and peace. Since then, the EU has evolved into an organisation spanning all areas, from development aid to environmental policy.

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OBJECTIVES

Given the fact that the EU together with its Member States are among the most important donors to civil society, one of the objectives of the Roadmaps is to improve the impact, predictability and visibility of EU actions. They identify long-term objectives of EU cooperation with civil society organisations and encompass dialogue as well as operational support, taking into account the views and challenges of CSO's.

Country Roadmaps are meant to trigger coordination and sharing of good practices with the EU Member States and other international actors. They are based on a sound understanding of the wider context CSO's operate in.

In a nutshell, the Country Roadmaps for engagement with civil society include

- An analysis of the current situation
- An assessment of the EU - CSO engagement so far
- A list of priorities for EU engagement with civil society
- A set of actions, ranging from research, to policy dialogue and operational support
- A dashboard, with outcome and process indicators to monitor progress.

Roadmaps are elaborated for countries in Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa, Asia, the Pacific and the European Neighbourhood.

THE PROCESS

The elaboration of Roadmaps started in 2014. At country level the Roadmaps should activate and ensure structured dialogue and strategic cooperation, increasing consistency and impact of EU actions. For the implementation of the Roadmaps, continuous consultation and dialogue with civil society is essential.

The EU and its Member States will also ensure that the Roadmap process becomes naturally embedded in EU programming and policies and that it is linked to other relevant processes at country level.

WHERE TO GET MORE INFORMATION

- For more information on Roadmaps,go to www.capacity4dev.eu and search for:
  Public group civil society> Roadmaps

  Join this group (free) to receive updates and news alerts about Roadmaps.

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For more information, contact:
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