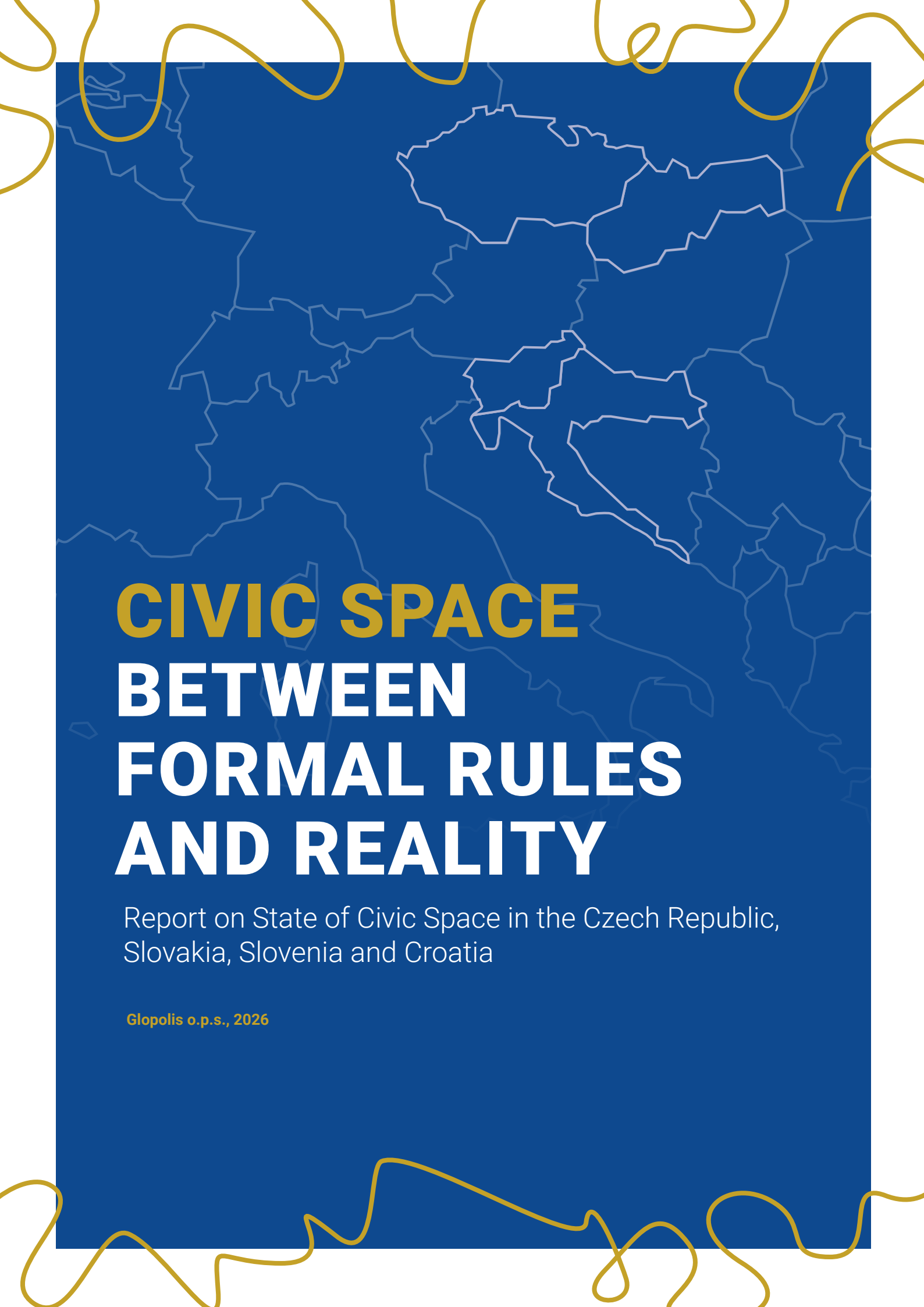




CIVIC SPACE **BETWEEN** **FORMAL RULES** **AND REALITY**

Report on State of Civic Space in the Czech Republic,
Slovakia, Slovenia and Croatia

Glopolis o.p.s., 2026

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PROSECO – Empowering Ecosystems of Civil Society Organisations – is a project implemented in four European countries: the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia and Croatia. Its aim is to strengthen the protection of civic space and the resilience of civil society organisations.



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WHAT THIS REPORT DELIVERS

This report was prepared within the project *Proseco – Empowering Ecosystems of Civil Society Organisations in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia and Croatia*. The project brings together civil society organisations and their networks from the four countries to jointly monitor developments affecting civic space, and to build national and transnational ecosystems of collaboration that protect civic space and increase the resilience of civil society and promotion of EU values and the rule of law.

The report provides an overview of the state of civic space in the participating countries and aims to support dialogue among civil society, policymakers and other stakeholders committed to safeguarding democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights. The data collection period was October 2024 – August 2025.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Civil society organisations involved in the project across Czechia, Slovakia, Slovenia and Croatia monitored the state of civic space and identified the conditions that enable – or weaken – civil society's role in democracy. Based on four national monitoring reports covering the period from October 2024 to August 2025, and complemented by major developments observed in early 2026, the analysis focuses on five interconnected areas: the regulatory environment, finance and funding, right to participation in decision-making, safe space and the capacity and resilience of organisations.

This report examines the environment that shapes and enables civic space. Civic space refers to the conditions that allow people and organisations to freely associate, express their views, participate in public life and cooperate with the state. Monitoring these conditions helps identify where democratic systems are weakening and where action is needed. As such, it is a **key determinant of how democracy works in practice**. When civic space functions well, it enables people to bring in expertise, highlight problems and contribute to solutions, forming an essential infrastructure of trust on which democratic societies depend.

The findings point to a clear regional pattern: civic space remains formally open, but in practice the **conditions for civil society are becoming weaker, more fragile, and, in some cases, openly hostile**. Direct bans are rarely the starting point. They are more often the final stage of a longer process in which civic space is gradually undermined by administrative burdens, funding instability, political pressure, and hostile public narratives shaped by political rhetoric and disinformation.

THREE MAIN TRENDS STAND OUT ACROSS THE REGION:

- **Weak participation in decision-making**
Consultation mechanisms usually exist, but they too rarely create the conditions for inclusive and well-informed policymaking, or ensure that the input received is genuinely reflected in final decisions.
- **Growing political and societal pressure**
Organisations working on human rights, democracy, environmental protection or inclusion increasingly face hostile rhetoric, smear campaigns, and reputational attacks.
- **Unstable and short-term funding**
Administrative burden, pressure to reduce public support, and limited access to long-term funding undermine organisational sustainability, planning, and independent advocacy.

These trends are closely interconnected and reinforce one another: weak participation limits civil society's influence on decision-making, making it easier for political pressure and public delegitimisation to take hold, while insecure funding further reduces organisations' ability to respond, communicate, and sustain public support.

WHAT CHANGED IN EARLY 2026:

Early 2026 developments confirm a broader trend of shrinking civic space across Europe, now increasingly manifesting in more direct and politically driven forms of pressure. What were previously gradual and structural weaknesses are becoming more explicit and deliberate, pushing civil society into a more defensive position – focused on protecting its space, responding to pressure, and sustaining its core functions rather than advancing its agenda.

This shift is visible across the region and has become particularly pronounced in Slovakia, where it combines legislative measures targeting civil society, intensified administrative pressure, and openly hostile political rhetoric. In Czechia, a sharp post-election shift has brought similar patterns, including attempts to stigmatise civil society and undermine its legitimacy.



The findings point to a clear pattern: these weaknesses are no longer merely long-term risks but are turning into direct and restrictive forms of pressure. Direct bans are rarely the starting point, they are more often the final stage of a process where civic space is gradually undermined by administrative burdens, funding instability, and hostile narratives shaped by political rhetoric and disinformation.

At the same time, civil society across the region continues to show resilience through networks, coalition-building, strategic communication, advocacy, and public mobilisation. **But resilience alone is not enough.** It cannot replace an enabling environment, stable support, or meaningful recognition of civil society as a legitimate democratic actor.

PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings highlight key needs from the perspective of civil society and align with the priorities set out in the European Commission's EU Strategy for Civil Society: meaningful participation, an open and safe supportive environment, and sustainable funding.

That requires:

- **Ensuring that participation has real impact**
Participation needs to be embedded in national policymaking in line with the ten guiding principles for dialogue with civil society set out in the EU Strategy for Civil Society, with consultations that are early, transparent, and inclusive, and with a clear assessment of whether civil society input is genuinely reflected in final decisions.
- **Addressing early warning signs of restrictions on civic space**
Greater attention to early warning signs such as stigmatising narratives, fast-track legislative procedures, the so-called legislative riders, the bypassing of consultation processes, and legal harassment, combined with stronger EU monitoring and enforcement, including the effective implementation of EU legislation addressing SLAPPs.
- **Recognising civic space as a core component of the rule of law and ensuring its funding**
Strengthening the link between civic space and rule of law conditionality, while ensuring adequate EU and national funding, reducing administrative burdens, and supporting long-term and core funding, including for cooperation, networks, and resilience.

***The state of civic space
reflects how democracy works in practice.***

1. SCOPE, METHODOLOGY AND ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

Civic space in observed countries remains formally open but faces a range of structural and emerging challenges. These include instability and short-termism in public funding, limited and uneven opportunities for participation in policymaking, and increasing pressure on organisations engaged in advocacy or watchdog activities. At the same time, civil society in these countries continues to play a vital role in delivering services, strengthening social cohesion, and contributing to democratic resilience.

By examining both regulatory frameworks and real-world conditions, this report aims to provide a grounded understanding of how civic space functions in practice. It identifies common patterns across countries, highlights key risks and enabling factors, and formulates recommendations to ensure that civic space is not only protected in principle, but effectively upheld in everyday governance.

UNDERSTANDING THE SCORING

The indicators in the table are assessed using a five-point scale:

1	The Highest Standard	There are no significant threats, barriers or gaps in the monitoring area as described. The score also includes positive changes made during the reporting period that significantly improved the situation or eliminated the weaknesses that preceded it.
2	Not Fully Satisfactory	There are minor threats or weaknesses that are named, can be easily addressed and solutions are being sought. The assessment includes expected positive changes that are already underway and are expected to be more or less smoothly adopted or implemented in the coming months.
3	Requires Attention	There are non-trivial gaps and the state and other stakeholders are having difficulty finding solutions. There is a risk of deterioration which is difficult to remedy.
4	Problematic State	Significant structural weaknesses are present and their deterioration risks undermining the fundamental pillars of the functioning of civic space and the wider democratic rule of law. Threatening proposals are in the process of being drafted or approved that have the potential to significantly degrade or undermine civic space and the environment for CSOs.
5	Seriously Flawed	There are significant structural weaknesses whose deterioration immediately threatens the basic principles of democracy and shrinks the civic space. Unless they are corrected immediately, there is a risk of long-term and difficult to remedy undermining.

Each area was assessed using 17 indicators. The framework draws on internationally recognised definitions – the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, the OECD and the UN – as well as applied tools such as the USAID CSO Sustainability Index and the CSO Meter.

Data collection combined analysis of legislation, policies, statistics, and existing studies with expert panels and consultations with civil society actors. Experts rated indicators on a scale of 1 to 5, supported by narrative evidence, followed by a moderated discussion with the option to revise scores. Lower values indicate more favourable conditions. They also identified key positive and negative trends. The rating serves as an indicative tool for cross-country comparison, not a statistical index. The combination of formal analysis and expert judgement allowed for the capture of dynamics and contextual specificities that quantitative data alone would not reveal.

INDICATOR FRAMEWORK

Area of monitoring

Indicator (shortened)



Regulatory environment

Whether individuals can freely establish, join and operate CSOs; whether registration procedures are simple and accessible; whether all CSOs are treated equally; and whether fundamental rights, including freedom of assembly and expression, are effectively guaranteed and protected.



Finance and funding

Whether CSOs can freely access and use financial and material resources from domestic and foreign sources; whether funding is treated equally regardless of origin; whether the state encourages private giving; whether public funding is accessible through transparent and objective procedures; and whether sufficient public resources are allocated, including with a degree of predictability.



Right to participation in decision-making

Whether authorities ensure meaningful participation of the public and CSOs in decision-making; whether participation is regular, open and effective across policy processes; whether CSOs can engage without discrimination and have access to relevant information; and whether institutional frameworks support cooperation, including strategies and transparent consultative bodies.



Safe Space

Whether mechanisms exist within civil society for early warning and coordinated responses to threats, including the ability to express solidarity and respond publicly to attacks.



Capacity and resilience of organisations

Whether CSOs have the capacity to engage in public debate and counter misinformation; whether they are embedded in networks and cross-sector partnerships that provide support and protection; whether they can mobilise public and media backing; and whether they have access to affordable or free legal aid in case of attacks.

COMPARATIVE SCORECARD – STATE OF CIVIC SPACE IN 2025

Assessment Area	Czechia	Slovakia	Slovenia	Croatia
 Regulatory Environment	1.3 Freedom of association and assembly is stable, inconsistent administrative practice remains a challenge.	4.2 Critical deterioration due to restrictive laws and extreme administrative burden.	2.5 Standards are being met, though the sector still faces legislative remnants from the past.	2.5 The legal framework is sound but faces pressure due to high political polarisation.
 Finance and funding	1.7 Strong private giving balances the administrative complexity of state grant schemes.	3.9 Significant decline in public funding availability and targeted discrimination against human rights topics.	2.4 Funding volume is growing but directed toward services rather than advocacy activities.	2.7 Financial uncertainty and excessive sector dependence on short-term project funding.
 Right to participation in decision-making	3.6 Public engagement is often formalistic, mechanisms for truly meaningful influence are lacking.	4.5 Systemic exclusion of critical voices and disregard for CSO expertise in policymaking.	2.9 Opportunities for involvement exist, but the effectiveness and openness of consultations vary in practice.	3.3 Institutional closedness makes participation one of the weakest areas in the country.
 Safe space	2.9 Lack of protection against SLAPP suits, attacks on organisations working on sensitive topics are emerging.	4.1 Hostile environment fuelled by aggressive political rhetoric and disinformation campaigns.	2.2 Safe environment for free expression without systemic attacks on activists.	2.7 Increasing nationalist discourse and verbal attacks negatively impact the sense of safety.
 Capacity and resilience of organisations	2.6 Cooperation networks are functional, and organisations are capable, but face fatigue and disinformation.	3.0 Despite external pressure, internal solidarity and the ability to collectively defend the sector are growing.	2.5 The sector shows strong internal cohesion and the ability to coordinate responses to threats.	2.9 Organisations are resilient but exhausted by administrative and political pressure.

The comparative results highlight significant variation across countries, with Slovakia showing the most severe deterioration across multiple areas, while Czechia and Slovenia perform comparatively better, albeit with emerging vulnerabilities. Across all countries, participation consistently appears as the weakest dimension.

2. CIVIC SPACE AS A CORNERSTONE OF EUROPEAN DEMOCRACY

Open civic space creates the conditions for a diverse and resilient civil society. It supports a plurality of voices and perspectives, allowing civil society to reflect the complexity of society and respond to its needs. By bringing expertise and services in various fields and independent scrutiny, it strengthens democratic governance and improves public policies. At the same time, it ensures that different groups – including those often underrepresented – can be heard and represented in public life.

Across Europe, the conditions in which civil society operates are becoming more challenging. Organisations, especially those working on human rights, environmental protection, or democratic accountability face growing political pressure, unstable funding, and increasing regulatory demands. According to the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights¹, these pressures often follow a similar pattern. **They begin with increasingly hostile political rhetoric and smear campaigns that question the legitimacy of civil society actors.** This is often followed by efforts to restrict or destabilise access to funding, and further reinforced by new legislative requirements and administrative burdens that place additional strain on organisations.

In a number of countries, such narratives moved into the political mainstream, accompanied by concrete measures. For example, in Slovakia, draft legislation sought to label certain CSOs as “lobbyists” or “organisations with foreign support”, contributing to a climate of stigmatisation. In Croatia, political actors used the label “foreign-funded non-governmental organisations” pejoratively, reinforcing mistrust and discouraging private giving.

These developments have brought increasing attention at the EU level to the conditions in which civil society operates, and the risks associated with their deterioration. As the **European Union Strategy for Civil Society**² underlines:

“An open civic space, with a vibrant civil society is at the core of our democracies. Civil society plays an essential role in our societies contributing to policymaking, partnering with governments to implement public policies, delivering social and community support and services, raising awareness about important social issues, and representing diverse groups in vulnerable situations”.

The European Commission adopted the EU Strategy for Civil Society in late 2025, introducing the first comprehensive EU policy framework specifically addressing the role and operating environment of civil society organisations.

The Strategy is structured around three broader objectives:

- **strengthening participation in policymaking,**
- **ensuring an enabling environment,**
- **and improving access to sustainable funding.**

¹ <https://fra.europa.eu/en/news/2026/rising-pressure-civic-space-threatens-european-democracy>

² <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52025DC0790>

In doing so, it explicitly links the functioning of civic space to the Union's fundamental values framework, including Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union and the Charter of Fundamental Rights.

Although developed independently, the monitoring approach applied within the PROSECO project addresses the same dimensions highlighted in the Strategy. By examining five key areas the project provides empirically grounded insights into how enabling conditions for civil society are reflected in practice. The comparative evidence generated through national monitoring reports therefore contributes to a better understanding of how the principles outlined in the EU Strategy for Civil Society relate to developments observed at national level.

Within the project's assessment, participation was the lowest-rated dimension across all monitored areas, pointing to persistent gaps in how civil society is involved in policymaking across the region. In this context, the EU Strategy for Civil Society further specifies ten guiding principles for dialogue with civil society, translating its broader commitments into concrete standards for meaningful participation. **These principles define the key conditions for effective and inclusive participation:**

10 guiding principles for dialogue with civil society (according to EU Strategy for Civil Society, shortened)

1. **Partnership:** Civil society should be involved as an equal partner in shaping agendas, priorities, and outcomes.
2. **Comprehensiveness:** Participation should take place across all stages of policymaking.
3. **Predictability and regularity:** Dialogue should be structured, regular and allow sufficient time for input.
4. **Transparency:** Clear information on processes, timelines and criteria should be provided, along with access to relevant documents.
5. **Representation:** Participants should be selected based on independence, legitimacy, expertise, and adherence to EU values.
6. **Inclusivity:** Dialogue should include a diverse range of organisations, including underrepresented and marginalised groups.
7. **Accessibility:** Processes should remove barriers and enable full participation, both online and offline.
8. **Accountability:** Feedback should demonstrate how input contributed to policy outcomes.
9. **Resourcing:** Financial and logistical support should enable participation, especially for grassroots actors.
10. **Safety:** Participation should be safeguarded, including protection of data and confidentiality.

3. PATTERNS, PRESSURES AND, DIVERGING TRENDS

Within all analysed countries, civic space in 2025 remained formally open, but increasingly constrained in practice. Rather than direct legal restrictions, civil society organisations operated in an environment shaped by administrative burdens, unstable funding, political polarisation, and growing public contestation.

This chapter examines these dynamics across five key areas: the regulatory environment, finance and funding, right to participation in decision-making, safe space and the capacity and resilience of organisations. Among these areas, a consistent pattern emerges. Legal frameworks generally guarantee fundamental rights, but their implementation is uneven and increasingly influenced by political dynamics. Participation in decision-making stands out as the weakest dimension across all countries, while funding remains structurally unstable and largely short-term. At the same time, civil society is facing increasing exposure to hostile narratives, disinformation and reputational attacks, with limited institutional protection.

Taken together, **these findings point to a broader shift: civic space is less constrained by formal rules than by the conditions that shape how those rules function in practice.**



REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT

Sub-indicators evaluated: *freedom of association, equal treatment of civil society organisations by the state, freedom of peaceful assembly, and freedom of expression.*

The legal framework across the monitored region continues to formally guarantee fundamental freedoms relevant to civil society, including the rights to associate, assemble, and express views publicly. Establishing an organisation remains generally accessible, particularly for associations, although more formal legal structures like foundations face higher administrative hurdles.

The key challenge across the region is not the absence of formal rights, but the widening gap between legal theory and practical implementation. While Slovenia maintains relative procedural stability, the situation elsewhere is deteriorating rapidly. At the time of national report finalisation (autumn 2025), Czechia appeared to be a stable environment. However, following the October 2025 elections and the installation of a new right-wing populist government, Czech civil society has faced significant and systemic pressure since the beginning of 2026, fundamentally altering the previous conditions. In Slovakia and Croatia, organisations continue to face long-term political scrutiny, stigmatising rhetoric, and selective administrative attention, which actively discourages civic engagement.

Freedom of assembly is broadly respected, with protests and public gatherings occurring without systemic prohibition. However, administrative requirements and policing approaches have begun to create uneven conditions for politically sensitive issues. This trend is most notable in Croatia and occasionally in Slovenia, where certain policing practices have been perceived as intimidating or disproportionately restrictive.

A similar pattern of “soft erosion” applies to freedom of expression. While legal protections remain in place, civil society actors and journalists face growing indirect pressures. This includes the rise of SLAPPs (Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation), defamation cases, and aggressive political rhetoric, particularly in Croatia and Slovakia. Conversely, Slovenia has taken positive steps by strengthening whistleblower protections and introducing anti-SLAPP measures in early 2026, though their practical effectiveness remains to be seen.

Conclusion:

While regulatory frameworks remain formally enabling, the operating environment is increasingly fractured by political dynamics and administrative pressure. Slovakia remains the most critical outlier, where hostility toward the sector has become systemic. This was clearly demonstrated by the 2024-2025 legislative attempt to impose “foreign support” labels on CSOs—a move that, despite being struck down by the Constitutional Court in late 2025, has left a lasting “chilling effect” on the sector’s sense of security.

Czechia has emerged as a new focal point of concern in early 2026. Although the data from the national report predicted stability, the post-election developments under the new government demonstrate how quickly a previously secure space can shrink under the weight of restrictive initiatives and political pressure. In Croatia, the environment is shaped by a “latent crisis” and a strategic vacuum caused by the absence of a National Strategy, while Slovenia remains the only actor with relative stability. Consequently, the region is now a spectrum ranging from procedural stability in Slovenia, through rapid and sudden erosion in Czechia and Croatia, to active state-led hostility in Slovakia, where the law is increasingly weaponised as a tool of political discipline rather than a shield for civic rights.



FINANCE AND FUNDING

Sub-indicators evaluated: *access to domestic and foreign funding, tax treatment, private donations, public funding, and multiannual support*

Civil society organisations can formally access funding from both domestic and foreign sources without major legal restrictions. The key challenge lies not in access itself, but in the stability, predictability, and structure of funding.

While Slovenia continues to benefit from a relatively stable funding model, other countries in the region are experiencing profound disruptions. At the time of the national report finalisation, Czechia showed a similarly stable and diversified funding structure. However, this situation has changed rapidly since the beginning of 2026. Following the installation of the new right-wing populist government, the state has initiated significant budget cuts. A primary example is the targeted withdrawal of funding for environmental and human rights CSOs: according to Civic Space Watch (2026)³, the new state budget introduced drastic cuts to grant programmes across several ministries, with approximately one-third of funding removed from environmental education and protection programmes, while the government simultaneously moved to stop funding environmental justice organisations it accused of “blocking development and investment”. This has forced many organisations to rely on rapidly diminishing private reserves.

3 <https://civicspacewatch.eu/alert/czech-republic-civic-space-under-pressure-from-funding-cuts-and-policy-shifts-by-the-new-right-wing-government/>

In Slovakia, the funding environment has become overtly hostile. The government has systematically dismantled subsidy schemes at the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Culture. This instability is exacerbated by ongoing legislative threats to the 2% tax assignment system – a vital source of funding for Slovak CSOs – including attempts to redirect a share of individual tax assignments away from civil society organisations, as documented by ECNL.⁴ In Croatia, organisations remain heavily dependent on EU funding, while domestic funding mechanisms are often short-term, inconsistent, or perceived as politically influenced.

Short-term, project-based funding remains the dominant model across the region. This undermines organisational sustainability and contributes to high staff turnover. The problem is particularly acute in contexts where delays in public calls and the unpredictability of state grant cycles - further exacerbated by recent budget revisions across the region - have left many CSOs in a financial vacuum for several months. Evidence from the civil society sector suggests that administrative and reporting requirements have reached a tipping point, with smaller organisations increasingly forced to allocate more resources to compliance than to their core missions.⁵

Conclusion:

The funding environment for civil society has shifted from being “administratively demanding” to being “existentially threatening” for many actors. Slovakia and now Czechia (since early 2026) represent the most alarming cases, where the state actively uses the “power of the pocketbook” to silence critical voices and marginalise specific agendas like environmental protection and human rights. In Croatia, the crisis remains one of neglect and over-reliance on EU funds, while Slovenia maintains the only relatively enabling environment. The region is witnessing a clear trend: the withdrawal of state funding is not a neutral fiscal measure but a targeted political strategy to undermine the independence of the CSO sector.



RIGHT TO PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING

Sub-indicators: *the right to participate, openness and quality of participation, and institutional frameworks for cooperation*

For participation to be considered meaningful, it must move beyond mere information-sharing towards genuine partnership and co-creation. This requires timely access to information, inclusivity, and a transparent process for addressing feedback. However, data from the 2025 national reports and subsequent developments in early 2026 show participation as the lowest-rated area across all monitored dimensions. **It remains the most fragile aspect of civic space in the region, shifting from a state of procedural weakness to active marginalisation.**

The 2025 national reports established that while formal mechanisms (such as advisory bodies) exist in all monitored countries, their impact on policy outcomes remains structurally limited. In Czechia and Croatia, participation was supported by established frameworks but often remained a purely procedural matter. Engagement in Czechia depended heavily on the discretion of individual ministries, as guidelines remained non-binding. Similarly, in Croatia, the political relevance of the *Savjet za razvoj civilnoga društva* declined, with consultations frequently perceived as a formality to ensure compliance with EU rules. Slovenia maintained a relatively developed framework but struggled with short consultation windows, while Slovak reports warned of a shrinking space and a decline in the regularity of engagement in key legislative processes.

4 <https://ecn1.org/news/slovakia-civil-society-under-threat>

5 <https://visegradinsight.eu/strengthening-csos-for-democratic-resilience-in-central-europe/>

Since the beginning of 2026, the civic space for meaningful consultation has significantly contracted. This decline is driven by an aggressive political narrative that labels independent experts from CSOs as ideologically biased or driven by “hidden agendas”. This labelling serves as a pretext to bypass standard legislative procedures, reducing participation to an “obstructive formality” that lacks genuine expert dialogue. The Fico government has implemented significant leadership changes at the Office of the Government Plenipotentiary for the Development of Civil Society. The newly appointed official lacks prior experience in working with the third sector, leading civil society organizations to express deep dissatisfaction with the measures taken. These actions undermine the principles of the Open Government Partnership⁶ (OGP). Furthermore, the BTI 2026⁷ report describes how the Minister of the Environment carried out the most extensive purges within the Fico administration, replacing 50 experts with unqualified nominees from the ruling parties.

Conclusion

Already in 2025, participation was the weakest-rated dimension across all monitored areas, despite being widely seen as untapped potential. By 2026, it has shifted from a structurally weak area to a direct target of marginalisation, reflecting a calculated political strategy to weaken independent oversight. In Slovakia and Czechia, the state utilises “power over the process” - through expedited procedures and personnel purges - to eliminate expert opposition.⁸ This regional trend is alarming: the restriction of participation is not merely an administrative inefficiency but a move to erode democratic accountability. Without binding standards participation ceases to be a democratic tool and becomes hollow formality used only when politically convenient.



SAFE SPACE

Sub-indicators: *early warning and solidarity mechanism, protection against threats, harassment, and violence*

Rather than direct repression, civil society organisations in the region face increasingly sophisticated indirect pressures. These include systematic verbal challenges, disinformation campaigns, and instances of targeted online harassment. **The core issue remains the construction of political narratives suggesting that international funding for CSOs may be linked to agendas that conflict with national interests.** According to the 2025 national reports, the situation in Czechia and Slovenia was initially assessed as relatively stable, supported by intra-sectoral solidarity and informal early warning mechanisms. However, even then, state responses to online harassment and Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPPs) were identified as areas requiring improvement. While Slovenia introduced whistleblower protection legislation, practical access to legal help remained uneven. In Czechia, the transposition of the anti-SLAPPs directive remained pending for much of 2025, leaving organisations potentially vulnerable to legal challenges. In early 2026, some progress was observed, as the government approved a draft law transposing the EU anti-SLAPPs directive, which is heading towards parliament. While this represents an important step towards strengthening protection, its practical impact remains uncertain. At the time of this report’s writing, effective safeguards are still limited, as organisations continue to face legal, financial and reputational burdens without access to rapid dismissal procedures.

⁶ <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/slovak-republic-action-plan-review-2024-2026/>

⁷ <https://bti-project.org/en/reports/country-report/SVK>

⁸ <https://www.greenpeace.org/czech/tiskova-zprava/23440/skrty-a-cistky-motoristu-na-mzp-nici-ochranu-prirody-a-prodrazil-domacnos-tem-energie/>

In contrast, Croatia and Slovakia already reported a more difficult environment in 2025, marked by stigmatisation and a link between political rhetoric and the use of administrative procedures involving state institutions. These pressures have further intensified in 2026. In Slovakia, administrative measures, including in-depth financial audits and ministerial inspections, have been increasingly applied to various organisations, often accompanied by political rhetoric referring to “national interests” and an increase in aggressive online campaigns. In Croatia, the persistence of these challenges suggests that anti-SLAPPs protections are not yet fully functional, leading to significant resource exhaustion for civic actors involved in protracted legal disputes.

The perceived effectiveness of protection mechanisms across the region remains low in 2026, as legal tools are often difficult to access for many organisations, and informal solidarity networks cannot fully substitute for institutionalised state protection of democratic actors.⁹

Conclusion

The safe space for civil society in the region showed mixed conditions in 2025, with Czechia and Slovenia still benefiting from relatively stable environments supported by intra-sectoral solidarity and informal early warning mechanisms, while Croatia and Slovakia already faced more pronounced pressures, including stigmatisation and politically driven scrutiny. At the same time, gaps in protection, particularly in addressing online harassment and SLAPPs, were evident across all countries.

In 2026, this environment has become increasingly constrained, with indirect intensified pressures, including hostile political narratives, disinformation campaigns and administrative targeting of organisations across the region. As a result, many CSOs have shifted towards maintaining operational continuity, requiring greater investment in legal defence and crisis communication. Without stronger institutional safeguards, there is a risk that this more restrictive environment will persist as a regional norm.



CAPACITY AND RESILIENCE OF ORGANISATIONS

Sub-indicators: *capacity to engage in public debate, partnerships, public and media mobilisation, and access to legal aid*

The long-term resilience of civil society in the region remains fragile. Although organisations demonstrate a strong ability to adapt under pressure, their sustainability is threatened by political attacks, disinformation and structural constraints. The capacity to engage in public debate and advocate effectively is uneven, with larger organisations benefiting from professional communication and media access, while smaller or volunteer-based actors face limitations in visibility and their ability to counter smear campaigns. **Organisations working on polarising issues, such as human rights or migration, face additional barriers, including public distrust and disparaging narratives that weaken their mobilisation efforts.**

National reports from 2025 showed a similar pattern in Czechia and Slovenia, where relatively strong internal capacities coexisted with significant structural limitations. In Czechia, organisations benefited from functional networks and solid advocacy skills, but critically lacked stable long-term support, including access

⁹ <https://www.amnesty.eu/news/submission-to-the-consultation-on-the-eu-civil-society-strategy-2026-2030/>



to affordable specialised legal aid and resources for strategic communication. Slovenia exhibited strong sectoral solidarity, which nevertheless faced low media visibility and difficulties in reaching the broader public beyond the capital. In contrast, structural pressures were significantly more pronounced in Croatia and Slovakia in 2025, with the Croatian sector suffering from financial precarity and regional disparities leading to high staff turnover in smaller organisations. In Slovakia, the deteriorating political and legislative climate was already restricting long-term planning and the willingness of public institutions to cooperate, forcing organisations into reactive strategies instead of conceptual development.

The year 2026 has brought a fundamental test of this resilience, revealing that while informal partnerships allow for survival, they are no substitute for institutional stability. In Slovakia, resilience in 2026 has transformed into a struggle against a “starvation strategy”, where CSOs are systematically cut off from data and expert consultations, leading to the collapse of partnerships with the state administration that still showed remnants of functionality in 2025.¹⁰ In Czechia, a new phenomenon in 2026 is the decline in public mobilisation caused by intense polarisation and government rhetoric, making corporate donors and the public hesitant to openly align with not only human rights issues.¹¹ Although networks and partnerships continue to play a central role in sustaining the sector, in 2026 they are underfunded and often rely on informal relationships rather than stable frameworks. Access to legal aid remains fragmented, increasing the vulnerability of organisations at a time when they face a rise in abusive litigation.

Conclusion:

The resilience of civil society in 2026 is not the product of a healthy democratic environment, but a manifestation of crisis management and “self-defence” by the organisations themselves. This resilience by necessity, however, has its limits. In a situation where the state in Czechia and Slovakia actively dismantles expert partnerships and ignores abusive litigation, informal solidarity networks are no longer sufficient. Without systemic access to legal protection and the stabilisation of funding for expert capacities, there is a grave risk that the sector in the region will lose its ability to function as an independent watchdog. The beginning of the year 2026 demonstrates that the long-term sustainability of civic space cannot rest solely on volunteerism and the internal conviction of actors while they are systematically exposed to political pressure, financial liquidation, and disinformation campaigns.

¹⁰ <https://ecnl.org/news/shrinking-freedoms-steady-erosion-civic-space-and-freedom-assembly-slovakia>

¹¹ <https://civic-forum.eu/members-corner/glopolis-czech-republic-the-new-government-wants-to-change-the-conditions-funding-of-the-cso-more-than-140-organisations-unite-to-defend-civil-society>

4. TRENDS AND PATTERNS: HOW CHANGE DRIVES COOPERATION

While the previous section provided a comparative overview of key indicators across countries, a closer look at national contexts reveals the dynamics behind these trends. **Developments observed since the finalisation of the national reports further highlight how quickly conditions can shift and why some of the initial findings have evolved.**

Country specific features of civic space



CZECHIA

The parliamentary elections of October 2025 marked a significant turning point for civil society in Czechia. Andrej Babiš and his ANO party won the elections and formed a coalition government with the far-right SPD and the right-wing populist Motoristé sobě, replacing the centre-right liberal government of Petr Fiala during the monitoring period covered by the project. This change of government was not merely a shift in political orientation – it directly altered the conditions under which civil society organisations operate, and several of the most concerning developments documented here occurred precisely as a result of, or in direct response to, the new political constellation.

The new government's approach to civil society became clear from the very beginning of its mandate. It has not only maintained its pre-election rhetoric but has continued to publicly label civil society organisations as “political NGOs”. Babiš's government programme¹² explicitly commits to introducing an obligation for organisations engaged in political activity and receiving foreign funding to disclose this fact transparently.

In March 2026, a leaked draft bill – co-authored by Babiš's adviser and several coalition partners¹³ – revealed the concrete shape this commitment could take. Modelled on Russian foreign agent legislation, the draft would have compelled CSOs with any foreign ties – including EU funding – to register in a state database, disclose staff lists and financial flows, and face fines of up to CZK 15 million for non-compliance. Civil society organisations responded swiftly and in a coordinated manner, publicly challenging the draft's constitutional and legal foundations, and it was ultimately taken off the table. This does not, however, mean the government has abandoned its intentions. As of the time this report was prepared, no new formal proposal had been officially submitted - but the political commitment behind it remains intact.

The necessity of such legislation is, in any case, questionable. **Czech civil society already operates under clear transparency frameworks**, as demonstrated by the new law on the regulation of lobbying¹⁴ adopted by the previous Fiala government and in effect since July 2025, which requires organisations that regularly communicate with politicians and public officials on legislative matters to register and comply with reporting obligations.

A striking example of financial intimidation occurred in April 2026, when government plenipotentiary for climate politics and Green Deal Filip Turek threatened to withdraw a Ministry of Environment grant from Hnutí DUHA¹⁵ in retaliation for a planned protest. Deputy Prime Minister Petr Macinka escalated the rhetoric by labelling the

¹² <https://vlada.gov.cz/cz/vlada/programove-prohlaseni/programove-prohlaseni-vlady-224629/>

¹³ <https://www.seznamzpravy.cz/clanek/domaci-kauzu-po-vzoru-ruska-babisova-poradkyne-sepsala-s-rajchlem-zakon-proti-neziskovkam-301146>

¹⁴ <https://glopolis.org/publikace/nove-povinnosti-pro-lobbisty-prakticke-tipy-pro-nevladky-i-obcanske-iniciativy/>

¹⁵ <https://www.seznamzpravy.cz/clanek/domaci-kauzu-turek-kvuli-demonstraci-chtel-ekologum-skrtnout-dotaci-dostanou-ji-303276>

group a “terrorist organisation”, a move legal experts deemed potentially actionable.¹⁶ Although the grant was ultimately awarded through standard expert evaluation, the incident revealed a clear willingness by coalition politicians to use financial sanctions as political pressure, while also highlighting the current resilience of administrative processes against such interference.



SLOVAKIA

Slovakia experienced the most severe systemic pressure among all observed countries. Since Robert Fico’s return to power in 2023, **the environment for civil society organisations has deteriorated dramatically**. His government and coalition partners have systematically deployed administrative and legislative tools to constrain independent civil society¹⁷, while Fico and senior coalition figures have normalised openly hostile rhetoric targeting CSOs¹⁸, journalists, and government critics. Recent legislative changes - most notably Act No. 109/2025 Coll., which imposed sweeping new obligations on civil society organisations – have placed a substantial administrative burden on organisations and significantly affected their ability to operate effectively. The law required CSOs exceeding a defined income threshold to compile and publicly disclose detailed records of individual donors and their contribution amounts, subjected CSOs receiving public funds to freedom-of-information obligations previously reserved for public bodies, and expanded reporting requirements more broadly. These measures collectively created a chilling effect on donor willingness to support civil society. Notably, in December 2025, Slovakia’s Constitutional Court found Act No. 109/2025 Coll. unconstitutional in its entirety¹⁹, ruling that the donor disclosure requirements disproportionately violated the right to privacy, that the freedom-of-information provisions imposed an unreasonable burden on organisations of a private nature, and that the stated goals – transparency and combating crime – could be achieved through less restrictive means that already existed in Slovak law. At the same time, public rhetoric targeting organisations receiving international funding, including EU support, has contributed to growing reputational pressure.

These developments reflect a pattern seen in other countries experiencing democratic backsliding: formal constitutional and legal frameworks remain nominally intact, but the Fico government has demonstrated a clear willingness to use legislative, administrative, and rhetorical tools to systematically erode the space in which independent civil society can operate. Despite these pressures, civil society in Slovakia has demonstrated notable resilience. Organisations report stronger cooperation within the sector, and large-scale public mobilisation, including nationwide protests involving tens of thousands of participants, indicates a continued capacity for collective action and civic engagement.



SLOVENIA

Slovenia was situated in a context of formal openness combined with increasing political and societal polarisation. While the Golob government expressed a declarative commitment to cooperation with civil society, the PROSECO Slovenia national report documents that this engagement frequently remained procedural rather than substantive. Public consultation requirements were breached in over 70% of cases, CSO recommendations seldom influenced final legislative decisions, and key public-interest fields – including democracy promotion, anti-corruption advocacy and rule-of-law protection – remained underfunded. Civil society organisations working on migration, human rights and LGBTIQ+ issues were subject to sustained delegitimising narratives from the right-wing opposition and affiliated media, while effective legal remedies for reputational harm or hate-motivated attacks remained largely inaccessible.

16 <https://zelenykruh.cz/vyhrozovani-ztratou-grantu-a-nalepkovani-terorismem-do-demokracie-nepatri/>

17 <https://www.seznamzpravy.cz/clanek/zahranicni-slovenska-vlada-naridila-plosne-kontroly-nevladnich-organizaci-299210>

18 <https://www.seznamzpravy.cz/clanek/zahranicni-stredni-evropa-ficovo-tazeni-proti-nevladkam-zname-to-z-normalizace-zni-z-post-bellum-247527>

19 https://www.ustavnysud.sk/en/actual-information/actuality/-/asset_publisher/B99toBHZi1uA/content/z%C3%A1kon-ktor%C3%BD-novelizuje-pr%C3%A1vnu-%C3%BApravu-mimov%C3%A1dných-organiz%C3%A1ci%C3%AD-je-v-rozpore-s-%C3%BAstavou

During his campaign, Janša pledged to restore “Slovenian values” and to cut off state funding to CSOs deemed to be acting as political parties.²⁰ The election resulted in a narrow victory for incumbent Prime Minister Golob, whose Freedom Movement secured 28.63% of the vote and 29 seats, ahead of Janša’s SDS with 27.95% and 28 seats.²¹ However, neither bloc secured a parliamentary majority, leaving coalition negotiations unresolved at the time of writing. What a Janša-led government would mean for civil society is not hypothetical – the 2020–2022 mandate provides²² a concrete reference point, during which freedom of assembly was repeatedly restricted in ways the Constitutional Court later ruled unconstitutional, and CSOs faced intensified political attacks. The relevant laws enabling these measures remain unchanged.

Slovenia’s civic space is formally open but structurally fragile – and that the combination of political polarisation, structural underfunding and weak institutional protections creates conditions in which civic space can deteriorate rapidly if political dynamics shift. Safeguarding it will require proactive strengthening of institutional, financial, and participatory frameworks, including consistent enforcement of legislation, stable public funding, meaningful consultation mechanisms, and comprehensive protection against hate speech, harassment, and abusive litigation.



CROATIA

Following the 2024 parliamentary elections, Croatia has undergone a significant rightward shift under the coalition of the HDZ and the far-right Homeland Movement (*Domovinski pokret*). This development has been accompanied by a nationalist turn in public discourse, the militarisation of society—including the reinstatement of mandatory military service—and controversial interventions into institutional independence, symbolised by the appointment of Ivan Turudić as Attorney General.²³ Political polarisation, exacerbated by mass nationalist events in 2025, has exerted intense pressure on both the cultural and civic spheres.

Human rights and watchdog organisations, such as GONG and the Centre for Peace Studies (CMS), face systematic discredit campaigns and are frequently labelled as “foreign agents”.²⁴ While these attacks do not lead to direct legal sanctions, they trigger self-censorship and significant reputational risks. Particularly concerning is the situation in education, where local authorities block civic education programs under the guise of “political sensitivity”, creating a form of soft censorship dependent on local political will rather than legal guarantees.

The Croatian case illustrates how a formally stable legal framework can coexist with the gradual displacement of plurality. The absence of a national strategy for civil society development since 2016, combined with politically motivated funding and hostile rhetoric, produces what the PROSECO Croatia national report describes as “latent shrinking of civic space”. **Erosion here occurs not through formal legal bans, but through systemic neglect, administrative inertia, and the targeted delegitimisation of independent actors.**

20 <https://www.bssnews.net/international/369313>

21 <https://europeanwesternbalkans.com/2026/03/24/slovenias-liberal-party-edges-past-right-wing-in-tightly-contested-election/>

22 <https://freedomhouse.org/country/slovenia/freedom-world/2022>

23 https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/upholding-rule-law/rule-law/annual-rule-law-cycle/2024-rule-law-report_en

24 <https://monitor.civicus.org/country/croatia/>

5. WHAT WORKS IN PRACTICE: GOOD PRACTICES AND ENABLING FACTORS

Despite growing pressure, civil society continues to adapt. What makes these responses effective – and where their limits lie – is the focus of this chapter.

The analysis draws on a structured mapping of civic space resilience practices across Czechia, Slovakia, Slovenia and Croatia, developed as a standalone report within the project. In each country, a set of relevant practices was identified and assessed, with selected cases further developed into detailed case studies. These were analysed using a common framework, allowing for cross-country comparison of their scope, impact, sustainability and potential for transfer.

Rather than presenting isolated examples, the chapter focuses on patterns that emerge across contexts: what works, under what conditions, and with what impact. It addresses three key questions: which practices effectively strengthen civil society resilience and civic space; which institutional arrangements and cooperation models prove most effective; and which approaches can be transferred or scaled. The findings are therefore organised around recurring types of practice and the enabling factors that shape their effectiveness, offering a grounded understanding of how resilience is built in practice.

CORE PRACTICE TYPES STRENGTHENING CIVIC SPACE RESILIENCE

Across the analysed cases, several recurring types of practices emerge as key responses to pressures on civic space. **A central role is played by strategic communication, through which civil society actors counter delegitimising narratives and disinformation while actively shaping public understanding and reinforcing their legitimacy.** This is closely linked to legal and advocacy-based approaches, including strategic litigation, policy advocacy and the use of participatory tools to challenge restrictive measures and influence decision-making.

These efforts are reinforced by coalition-building and networked action, which enable organisations to share resources, coordinate advocacy and respond collectively to emerging threats. Public mobilisation and civic engagement further strengthen these strategies, as campaigns, protests, and participatory initiatives help generate public pressure and sustain democratic participation. Finally, these approaches are supported by adaptive organisational practices, such as diversifying funding sources, developing digital tools and strengthening internal processes, allowing organisations to operate under conditions of uncertainty.

KEY ENABLING DRIVERS OF RESILIENCE: NETWORKS, FUNDING AND LEADERSHIP

Beyond individual practices, the effectiveness of resilience strategies depends on several enabling conditions. Strong networks and trust-based relationships are critical, as they allow for rapid, coordinated responses and sustained mutual support. Closely linked is access to flexible and diversified funding, which enables organisations to move beyond short-term responses and invest in long-term strategies, while financial precarity remains a major constraint.

Strategic leadership and coordination capacity further strengthen resilience, particularly where actors are able to connect organisations, align strategies, and maintain continuity over time. At the same time, access



to communication channels and public visibility is essential for shaping public discourse and countering disinformation. Finally, cross-sectoral cooperation – including collaboration with media, academia, and private actors – expands both the reach and legitimacy of civil society actions.

TRANSFERABLE LESSONS AND LIMITS OF RESILIENCE

The analysis points to several transferable lessons. Resilience is most effective when it is collective rather than individual, with cooperation and shared resources consistently leading to greater impact and sustainability. Long-term investment in strategic communication is equally crucial, as reactive responses alone are insufficient without sustained efforts to build public support. Similarly, legal and institutional strategies are most effective when combined with public engagement, rather than pursued in isolation.

At the same time, important limitations remain. Many resilience practices are resource-intensive and dependent on short-term funding, raising concerns about their sustainability. Reliance on the extraordinary commitment of individuals and organisations can also lead to burnout and weaken long-term capacity. Most importantly, resilience cannot compensate for structural deficiencies: the ability of civil society to withstand pressure ultimately depends on broader political, institutional, and financial conditions.

RESILIENCE ALONE IS NOT ENOUGH

Civic space across the region demonstrates a strong capacity for resilience, grounded in cooperation, strategic adaptation, and engagement with both institutional and public spheres, as reflected both in this analysis and in the dedicated mapping of good practices developed within the project. However, this **resilience remains largely reactive, responding to constraints rather than replacing the need for an enabling environment**. Sustaining and scaling these practices therefore requires not only capable and connected organisations, but also stable funding, supportive institutional frameworks, and a political climate that recognises civil society as a legitimate and essential democratic actor.



6. CRITICAL CALL TO SUPPORT, PROTECT, AND EMPOWER THE CIVIC SPACE

The findings from the national reports from the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia and Croatia indicate certain patterns across the five monitored areas - the regulatory environment, access to funding, participation in public decision-making, safe space, and the capacity and resilience of organisations:

- Civic space is increasingly undermined by cumulative pressures rather than explicit bans. This trend is manifested in **unstable funding conditions** characterised by burdensome administrative complexity and a lack of long-term operational support, creating constant instability.
- The systemic **absence of robust protective frameworks** leaves civil society vulnerable to legal harassment (such as SLAPPs) and political stigmatisation, alongside its legitimacy being openly challenged in public discourse.
- Engagement has shifted toward **formalistic processes**. Although consultation mechanisms exist, participation often lacks real political recognition as part of quality decision-making, effective feedback and transparent timelines. Participation functions more as a procedural necessity rather than a genuine tool for co-creation.

RECOMMENDATIONS BASED ON NATIONAL FINDINGS IN LIGHT OF THE FRAMEWORK OF THE EU STRATEGY FOR CIVIL SOCIETY

The findings of this monitoring report suggest that the strength of civic space is fundamentally a reflection of the strength of democracy itself. Protecting civic space is not only a matter of maintaining or gradually improving it. In the context of the four countries, it requires recognising the role of civil society – and citizens more broadly – as legitimate and essential actors in policymaking and as a core component of a functioning democracy. This, in turn, requires real commitment and active support from political leaders, public authorities and institutions. At the same time, this remains one of the key weaknesses in the current political reality of these countries.

The EU Strategy for Civil Society defines key priorities at the EU level and provides a guiding framework for dialogue at the national level. **In this report, we therefore build on its core pillars** – participation, enabling environment and protection, and sustainable funding – **to formulate recommendations for both European institutions and national governments in Czechia, Slovakia, Slovenia and Croatia.**

Monitoring the state of civic space at both national and European levels must focus on real conditions – not only on formal obligations (*de jure*), but also on how rules are applied in practice (*de facto*) and how they are experienced by civil society actors.

Key recommendations

PARTICIPATION

Integrating the ten principles of participation as a core element of democratic processes at the national level: European institutions could support and encourage national governments in Czechia, Slovakia, Slovenia and Croatia to implement participatory processes in line with the ten principles of participation set out in the EU Strategy for Civil Society. These principles are universal and applicable across all levels of policymaking and implementation. While formal processes are important, it is equally essential to assess the real impact of consultations together with civil society and other stakeholders.

ENABLING ENVIRONMENT AND PROTECTION

Addressing early warning signs of restrictive measures targeting civil society: Stigmatisation and the labelling of civic actors by public officials or in public discourse as “foreign agents” or “political NGOs” are becoming increasingly common in Czechia, Slovakia, Croatia and Slovenia, yet must not be normalised within democratic debate. Such narratives often create the conditions for the introduction of measures specifically targeting civil society.

These measures are frequently advanced through fast-track legislative procedures, so-called legislative riders, and by bypassing regulatory impact assessments, interdepartmental consultation processes, stakeholder engagement and public debate. EU institutions are expected to systematically monitor these warning signs, assess their compatibility with EU law and values, and use available political and legal instruments to address harmful developments at an early stage.

At the same time, all four countries face challenges in transposing the anti-SLAPP Directive, underscoring the need for closer EU monitoring of its effective implementation.

FUNDING

Civic space as a component of the rule of law and EU funding: The rule of law will shape how the EU manages its resources under the next Multiannual Financial Framework. Civic space is an integral part of the rule of law, and its deterioration is necessary to be reflected in the conditionality of EU funds.

The key call is to ensure adequate sources within the Multiannual Financial Framework for the development of civil society, the protection of fundamental rights and the strengthening of democratic participation – both through programmes such as AgoraEU and within national funding frameworks.

It is necessary to reduce accompanied by a significant reduction in administrative burdens for civil society applicants and by increased support for long-term, core funding. Investment in coalition-building, cross-sectoral cooperation and societal resilience is recognised as a strategic priority.

COUNTRY SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS



Czechia needs to restore the role of civil society organisations as independent and critical partners, rather than portraying them as obstacles to development or political rivals. This includes abandoning stigmatising rhetoric, avoiding the division of the sector, and instead identifying practical ways to strengthen partnerships and implement the measures set out in the Strategy for Cooperation between Public Administration and NGOs for the period 2021–2030



Slovakia needs to restore an enabling environment for civil society by reversing disproportionate administrative burdens, ensuring transparent and non-discriminatory access to public funding, and guaranteeing meaningful public participation through the consistent application of consultation procedures and limits on the use of expedited legislative processes.



Slovenia needs to establish and enforce a clear and effective system for overseeing public participation by ensuring consistent implementation of consultation rules, introducing engagement methodologies and feedback obligations, and revising the legislative framework to include enforceable consequences (e.g. preventing draft bills from advancing) when participation standards are not met.

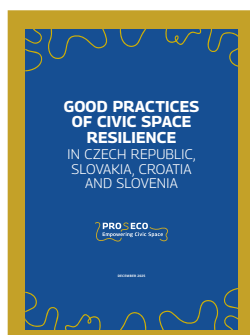


Croatia needs to adopt the long-delayed Strategy for Civil Society as a policy framework to provide predictable policy guidance to the development of civil society as a whole.

NATIONAL REPORTS OF ALL COUNTRIES



REPORT ON GOOD PRACTICE





Glopolis – A Czech organisation that has long supported a cohesive and collaborative society. It works to improve conditions for civil society, connects civil society organisations into networks, and develops their knowledge and skills for effective cooperation with public authorities, businesses, and other stakeholders at both national and European levels. Since 2004, it has been providing organisations with expert support, coordination, and capacity-building.



The Network for the Protection of Democracy – An independent initiative that connects leading experts with civil society across the country and across the political spectrum in Czechia. Experts assess the state of democracy and identify potential threats. Participating non-governmental organisations, companies, informal groups and individuals work together to protect the principles of a democratic rule-of-law state and are ready to take coordinated action when needed.



Malý Berlín – Slovak civic organisation based in Trnava that connects culture, history and public engagement. It focuses on researching and presenting the city's 20th-century history, while creating space for dialogue, education and community activities. Through exhibitions, events and public programmes, it brings together experts, artists and the wider public, fostering critical thinking and active participation in public life



Peace Institute / Mirovni Institut – Slovenian civil society organisation and research institute focusing on social sciences and public policy. Its work addresses areas such as human rights, democracy, equality, media and migration. The organisation combines research, advocacy and public engagement to promote inclusive and democratic societies, while contributing expert knowledge to policymaking and public debate at national and European levels.



CROSOL – Croatian civil society platform that brings together organisations working on international development cooperation, humanitarian aid and global education. It advocates for sustainable development, global solidarity and the protection of human rights. By connecting its members and engaging with public institutions, it strengthens the role of civil society in shaping development policies and promotes active participation in global and European debates.

