

International Conference

HUMAN RIGHTS – THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS

Concept

The respect for human rights and the defence of democracy are European core values that are presently being threatened with the rise of extremisms and far-right movements. Can Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) play a more active role to fight this trend? What are the most significant challenges they face within the European framework? What opportunities are being missed in addressing the needs of European citizens?

Objectives

The International Conference “Human Rights: The Role of Civil Society Organisations” is an initiative of the Active Citizens Fund in Portugal in partnership with Fund Operators from Poland and Bulgaria. Drawing on different experiences in these three countries, the conference aims to raise awareness on the critical role that CSOs can play in reinforcing the promotion of human rights and tolerance, in fighting discrimination on the grounds of racial or ethnic origin and in supporting political action in favour of human rights.

As promotion of Human Rights is one of the main areas of support of the Active Citizens Fund, the Conference is also an occasion for NGOs to share experiences and good practices in order to prepare and submit to the Fund more innovative and effective projects in this area.

Participants

Speakers include representatives from the Fundamental Rights Agency, the Active Citizens Fund Operators and NGOs in Poland, Bulgaria and Portugal. The Conference will address primarily Civil Society Organisations but it is open to academia and the general public. All Active Citizens Fund Operators shall be invited to participate. A specific individual promotion will target CSOs. 100-150 participants are expected to attend.

Location

Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon (Portugal)

Date

26th March 2020



Programme

Morning – Auditorium 3

09h15 – Registration

09h45 – Welcome address – Guilherme d’ Oliveira Martins, Trustee of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation

10h00 – The role of the Civil Society Organisations in defending Human Rights – Maria Lúcia Amaral, Ombudsperson

10h20 – Human Rights Challenges – How should Civil Society Organizations address them? Waltraud Heller, Fundamental Rights Agency

10h40 – The support of the Active Citizens Fund to Human Rights initiatives - Luís Madureira Pires, Director of the Active Citizens Fund Portugal

10h55 – Coffee break

11h15 – Poland ACF representative – Good examples of successful projects and lessons learnt from previous experience

- Aleksandra Kaczorek, Association Akceptacja, project “Acceptance for LGB persons at home and at school”
- Magdalena Kawa, Association For the Earth, project “Women’s Voices”
- Filip Pierowski, Psychology of Health Center, project “I am HIV-positive”

12h00 – Bulgaria ACF representative – Good examples of successful projects and lessons learnt from previous experience

- Dilyana Angelova, Bulgarian Helsinki Committee, project “Assessment of the Reform in Places of Detention in Bulgaria – law and practice”
- Valentina Hristakeva, Global Initiative in Psychiatry, project “From Rights to Justice”

12h30 – Debate

13h00– Lunch

Afternoon – Foyer

14h30 – Intro by Waltraud Heller, facilitator for the World Café

14h45 – World Café

WHAT: What are the main concerns and problems Civil Society should address regarding Human Rights? What are the challenges we are facing or anticipating?

HOW: How should we address them? What actions are more effective to address them? How to strengthen our action? (resources; capacities; tools)

WITH WHOM: what kind of cooperation/partnerships/coalitions are necessary to ensure real impact? Who are our priority partners – CSOs, academia, companies, government, municipalities?

16h – Conclusions

16h30 – An NGO Platform for Human Rights – a Portuguese ambition

17h – Closure