

Press Release

Strengthening Civic Space for Child Protection

On **December 2, 2024**, KMOP hosted a significant event at **Serafeio, Athens**, bringing together a diverse audience and leading experts in civil society, child protection and education. During the event, **CivicChampions**, a project dedicated to strengthening civic space in Southern Europe by empowering civil society actors to report threats and violations of fundamental rights, was presented. As the shrinking civic space phenomenon continues to pose challenges across the EU, the project focuses on developing monitoring and early warning mechanisms, building capacity, and fostering public trust in civil society organisations.

Connecting Civic Space and Child Protection

A key element of the event was the **exhibition of civil society organisations**, highlighting their vital role in child protection. Participants had the opportunity to engage with organisations such as **the Network for Children's Rights, ELIX, Medical Intervention – Medin, the "IASIS AT CENTRO" Day Centre, METAdrasi, Multicoloured School, SolidarityNow, UNICEF, Terre des Hommes, Ως Αιδώς, and Four Elements**, learning about their initiatives and challenges.

The event was moderated by Dr. Antonis Klapsis, Vice President of KMOP, who provided critical insights into the broader context of civic space and its impact on child protection efforts. Dr. Yannis Pappas, Head of Programmes at KMOP, opened the discussion by emphasizing the role that civil society organisations have to play.

Expert Discussions and Key Findings

- Ms. Maria-Elli Dufexi-Kaplani, senior researcher at KMOP, presented key findings on children's online behaviors, highlighting digital risks and the urgent need for awareness and education to protect children in both physical and online spaces.
- Dr. Antonia Torrens, Director General of KMOP and President of COFACE, along with other experts, discussed strategies for empowering children and parents, reinforcing the connection between civic engagement and child protection.
- Experts in child protection and education explored the role of education in equipping children with the skills to protect themselves.

A Call to Strengthen Civic Space

The event highlighted the crucial role of civil society organisations in protecting children and promoting their rights, despite the increasing challenges they face. For more information about the CivicChampions project, click [here](#).

