

KMOP brings together experts and civil society to protect children and civic space



On December 2, 2024, KMOP organised a dynamic event at Serafeio in Athens, focusing on how civil society can better protect children and respond to today's growing challenges. The event brought together more than 100 participants, including experts in education, child protection, and civic engagement.

A key part of the event was the **exhibition of civil society organisations** working directly with children and families. Participants had the chance to connect with 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 Αιδῶ, and Four Elements. These organisations shared their work, experiences, and the obstacles they face in the field.

The discussion was moderated by **Dr. Antonis Klapsis**, Vice President of KMOP. **Dr. Yannis Pappas**, KMOP's Head of Programmes, opened the event by highlighting the vital contribution of civil society in defending children's rights—especially during times when civic space is shrinking.

Several speakers shared valuable insights.

- **Maria-Elli Dufexi-Kaplani**, Senior Researcher at KMOP, presented findings on children's online behaviour, showing the urgent need for more digital safety education.
- **Dr. Antonia Torrens**, Director General of KMOP and President of COFACE, spoke about empowering children and parents and building trust between society and institutions.
- Experts from child protection and education sectors also discussed how schools can teach children to recognise danger and protect themselves, both online and offline.

During the event, **KMOP also presented the CivicChampions project**, which aims to strengthen civic space in Southern Europe. As more civil society organisations face restrictions in their work, the project helps them monitor and report threats and violations of fundamental rights. It also supports the development of early warning mechanisms, builds capacity, and promotes public trust in civic action.

At a time when civic space is under pressure across the EU, the event highlighted one clear message: protecting children and their rights depends on protecting civil society too.

Find out more about the CivicChampions project and how it supports civil society
<https://www.kmop.gr/projects-vf/news-civicchampions/>

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