

CIVIC CHAMPIONS

days

The partners organised a series of events, one in each country and served as an opportunity to explore and discuss the challenges faced by EU CSOs and address the problem of shrinking civic space, disinformation, and online threats – **the Civic Champions Days.**



BULGARIA



GREECE



CYPRUS



ITALY



CIVIC CHAMPIONS CONSORTIUM MEETING @ PALERMO



The Civic Champions consortium successfully held its Mid-Term Transnational Project Meeting (TPM) in Palermo, Italy, on the 22nd and 23rd of May 2025. The two-day event brought together partners from across Europe to reflect on the project's progress and set the stage for the next phase of implementation, aimed at protecting civic space and supporting civil society actors across the EU.

The meeting focused on reviewing the overall advancement of the project, which seeks to empower civil society organisations (CSOs) and activists defending human rights and democratic values. A key topic of discussion was the development of a regional monitoring tool designed to collect data on physical, verbal, and cyberattacks targeting CSOs and NGOs. This tool will be deployed in the coming months in Italy, Greece, Bulgaria, and Cyprus, serving as both a reporting mechanism and an instrument for raising public awareness.

INTERNATIONAL CONSULTATION MEETING IN VIENNA ADVANCES EFFORTS TO SAFEGUARD CIVIC SPACE IN THE EU

On 26 September 2025, the Civic Champions Project convened its International Consultation Meeting on Safeguarding Civic Space in the EU at Impact Hub Vienna. The event brought together representatives from European institutions, civil society organisations, local authorities, and digital innovation experts to address pressing challenges facing civic space across the region. The meeting opened with remarks from Mariyan K. Sabev, Director of Communications & Senior Security Analyst at the Center for the Study of Democracy, and Rania El Ampasy, Civic Engagement and Governance Unit Coordinator at KMOP and the presentation of the Early Warning Mechanism (EWM).

In the session Civic Space at a Crossroads – Threats and Resilience in Focus, leading experts including Waltraud Heller (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights), Shams Asadi (Head of Human Rights Office, City of Vienna), Hedvig Morvai (ERSTE Stiftung), and Cristina Marcuzzo (DG Research & Innovation, European Commission) shared perspectives on current challenges and strategies to safeguard civic space. The keynote address, Smarter Safeguards – How Digital Tools Can Protect Democratic Space, was delivered by Arno Scharl, Managing Partner at webLyzard technology, highlighting how innovative technologies can support civil society organisations (CSOs) in navigating emerging threats.



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Comparative Report on the State of Civil Society in Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece and Italy



CIVIC CHAMPIONS REPORT

A new Comparative Report sheds light on the state of civic space in Southern Europe, focusing on Bulgaria, Greece, Cyprus, and Italy. The study, led by CESIE, provides a comprehensive analysis of the political, legal, and societal challenges facing Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in the region.

The report is available in English, Greek, Bulgarian and Italian.



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CIVIC CHAMPIONS BROCHURE

In the brochure are presented the trends and challenges to Civil Society Organisations and Human Rights defenders in Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece and Italy



Understanding Civic Space in Southern Europe

Trends and Challenges to Civil Society Organisations
and Human Rights Defenders in Bulgaria, Cyprus,
Greece and Italy

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Coming up

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

A series of 4 full-day national conferences (one in each country in focus) will serve to raise awareness on the actual state of civic space in the countries in focus as well as the importance of evidence-based monitoring and warning services on risks and challenges.

SERIES OF BRIEFINGS

As an advocacy effort, partners will engage a range of national and municipal institutions in policy briefings regarding the results of WP2, the need for endorsing the EWM as a tool that would provide the necessary situational awareness that would inform new policies that empower civic space.

DOCUMENTARY VIDEO

Partners will produce a 30 minute documentary in a story-telling format tackling popular negative narratives about CSOs and disproving them through interviews with experts and successful stories from the countries in focus.

TRAINING GUIDE FOR CSO PROFESSIONALS

The partners will develop a training programme for CSO professionals and activists aiming at: building the capacity of professionals on policy advocacy, civil society participation and enabling public-civil dialogue, fostering stronger connections between professionals and encourage solidarity among civil society actors and promoting analytical approach to emerging risks and challenges of civic space in order to advocate for policy/legislation and provide evidence-based solutions, ultimately promoting the pilot of the EWM under WP3.



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