



Assessing the civil society environment in the Eastern Partnership countries

The CSO Meter monitors the environment in which civil society organisations (CSOs) operate in the Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries. It provides essential data and analysis on the laws and practice affecting CSOs, which allows the civil society sector and the EU to identify priorities for legal reforms needed.

Period: 2017-2027

Countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine

Project lead: European Center for Not-for-Profit Law (NL)

CSO Meter partners: Transparency International Anticorruption Center in Armenia; Civil Society Institute in Georgia; Promo-LEX Association in Moldova; the Ukrainian Center for Independent Political Research (UCIPR) between 2017-2023 and ISAR Ednannia (2024-2027); and country researchers from Azerbaijan and Belarus.

11 CSO ENVIRONMENT AREAS MONITORED

Freedom of Association | Equal Treatment | Access to Funding | Freedom of Peaceful Assembly | Right to Participation in Decision Making | Freedom of Expression | Right to Privacy | State Duty to Protect | State Support | State-CSO Cooperation | Digital Rights

UNIQUE METHODOLOGY FOR A REGULAR AND CONSISTENT MONITORING OF THE CSO ENVIRONMENT

- The first monitoring tool **developed for the region** by CSOs from the countries, responding to the actual needs and priorities of organisations and activists.
- Based on **international standards** and best practices.
- Result of a highly **consultative** process, consulted in 3 rounds with more than 807 CSOs across the region.
- Featuring a **scoring system** specifically tailored for the region, allowing for thorough comparison across the countries and years per area in both law and practice.
- Addressing **new civil society environment trends and needs**, including how digital technologies affect civic space, the topic of digitally-mediated assemblies, digital fundraising, or climate activism.

CSO Meter monitoring provided evidence and analytical expertise to:

- EU enlargement package, county-level progress reporting and EU Roadmaps preparation.
- USAID CSO Sustainability Index, Universal Periodic Review, OGP Action Plan, UN Special Rapporteurs, Financial Action Task Force.

42 country reports
7 regional reports
191 early warning updates



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ACTIVE CIVIL SOCIETY COMMUNITY THAT IS COMMITTED TO AN OPEN CIVIC SPACE IN THE EAP REGION

- 25 national organisations in the CSO Meter Hub.
- 56 Advisory Board members providing oversight and assessing the findings of monitoring reports.
- Regular convenings to build capacity about emerging topics and share strategies.
- Increased cooperation between CSOs, EU institutions and international bodies on a conducive environment for civil society.

CSO METER MONITORING FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS SUPPORTING EFFORTS ADVOCATING FOR PROGRESSIVE LAW REFORMS, SUCH AS:

- more transparent procedures of state funding for CSOs in Armenia.
- civil society development strategy in Ukraine to strengthen the civic sector and promote partnership between CSOs and authorities.
- law clarifying the legal status of philanthropy and sponsorship, allowing philanthropy to become a significant source of funding for civil society in Moldova.
- progressive volunteering law, allowing organisations to harness the power of volunteer labour and providing protections for volunteers in Armenia.

... AND DEFENDING CIVIC SPACE FROM THE ADOPTION OF RESTRICTIVE LAWS:

- revoking the ban on peaceful assembly in relation to COVID-19 limitations in Moldova.
- advocating against the restrictive Foreign Agents Law and Assembly Law in Georgia.
- challenging an unfavourable draft law on lobbying, which would limit the right to participation in Ukraine.

The EU Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) in its 2021 report recommended that the CSO Meter “*could be adapted to keep track regularly and consistently of civic space challenges within the EU*” as an action to strengthen the application of the “*EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and the rule of law*”.

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Advancing democracy and human rights



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