

Resolution on the need to establish a European values instrument to support civil society organisations which promote fundamental values within the European Union at local and national level

2018/2619(RSP) - 19/04/2018 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 489 votes to 137 with 14 abstentions, a resolution tabled by the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs on the need to establish a European Values Instrument to support civil society organisations which promote fundamental values within the European Union at local and national level.

Civil society organisations (CSOs) are vital for upholding and promoting the values enshrined in Article 2 TEU, i.e. respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, and play a crucial role in promoting active citizenship in the EU. Accordingly, Members believed that the EU should provide targeted financial support to CSOs in promoting and protecting these values. They called for the EU to set up a dedicated funding instrument which could be called the European Values Instrument for the promotion and protection of the values enshrined in Article 2 TEU, within the EU budget under the next, post-2020 multiannual financial framework (MFF), with a funding level corresponding to at least that of the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights. The instrument's structural priority should be to create a healthy and sustainable CSO sector at national and local level.

Members recalled that while the EU provides direct funding to CSOs operating in third countries to foster these values, the funding possibilities for CSOs pursuing this goal within the EU are very limited, in particular as regards CSOs operating at local and national level. Many (CSOs) are faced with growing difficulties in securing the necessary funding to develop and perform their activities independently and effectively.

With regard to, Members considered that the new proposed instrument:

- should provide CSOs with operating grants (core funding as well as grants for projects and initiatives);
- should be managed by the Commission and that it should ensure fast and flexible grant-making procedures;
- have an application procedure that is user-friendly and easily accessible for local and national CSOs;
- should specifically target projects and initiatives promoting European values at local and national level, such as civic participation projects and advocacy and other watchdog activities, and that transnational projects and initiatives should play only a subsidiary role;
- should be complementary to already existing European and national instruments and activities promoting and protecting these values, and should therefore not come at the expense of other European or national funds and activities in this area;

The Commission should draw up an annual report on the performance of the instrument and publish a list of the organisations and activities that it has funded.

Lastly, Members underlined that financial accountability as laid down in the Financial Regulation must be ensured in the management of the new instrument.