

# **Action Plan for the implementation of Articles 11(1) and 11(2) of the Treaty on European Union**

***Towards better EU civil dialogue and involvement of citizens for better policy-making  
building on the Riga Roadmap***

*Article 11(1) and 11(2) of the Treaty on EU*

- "1. The institutions shall, by appropriate means, give citizens and representative associations the opportunity to make known and publicly exchange their views in all areas of Union action.*
- 2. The institutions shall maintain an open, transparent and regular dialogue with representative associations and civil society."*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1. Purpose**

This action plan is intended as a follow-up to the relevant Roadmap adopted by the NGO Forum in Riga in 2015, outlining the concrete actions needed for the implementation of better civil dialogue<sup>1</sup> in the EU and the involvement of citizens and their associations. It reflects citizens' calls for better decisions, better policy making and better governance responding to citizens' needs.

The action plan sets out a vision of what the dialogue should seek to achieve and how it could be implemented in an effective, constructive and realistic manner with the widest range of supporters and stakeholders. It lays the groundwork for civil dialogue in which representative civil society organisations play a key role while, at the same time, the full potential of citizens, directly involved or not with CSOs, is harnessed. In this respect, "a distinction should be drawn between consultations of civil society organisations and of the general public. The difference between the two is not only a matter of methodology, but also of objective, since for the former group the aim is to ensure representativeness, while for the latter, it is about promoting inclusion and participation"<sup>2</sup>.

### **1.2. Current context**

Article 11 of the Treaty on European Union provides the legal basis for this. EU institutions, Member States and civil society<sup>3</sup> — including but not limited to individuals and representative associations — must work together to put Article 11 into practice. Civil society organisations (CSOs) play a crucial role in promoting active citizenship in Europe. Participatory democracy needs intermediary bodies if it is to involve the citizens and encourage them to express their views in all civic spaces. Civil dialogue has

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<sup>1</sup> The European Economic and Social Committee defines civil dialogue as a democratic and public opinion-forming process which can take various forms, depending on the players involved.

<sup>2</sup> EESC Opinion on *Evaluation of consultation of stakeholders by the European Commission*, [OJC 383. 17.11.2015. p. 58.](#)

<sup>3</sup> In accordance with the [Council of Europe Committee of Ministers' Recommendation 14 \(2007\)](#) civil society organisations are defined as "voluntary self-governing bodies or organisations established to pursue the essentially non-profit-making objectives of their founders or members. They do not include political parties."