

Consultation with CSOs on the Protection and Promotion of Civic Space in Finland

Civic Space Scan Finland

The OECD's Observatory of Civic Space is undertaking a **Civic Space Scan of Finland, at the request of the Government of Finland**. As part of the Scan, the Observatory is calling on national non-governmental actors (e.g. Civil Society Organisations, think-tanks, journalists, academics, citizens) to submit recommendations on the protection and promotion of civic space **by 1 September 2020**.

Civic space is defined as the set of political, institutional and legal conditions necessary for citizens and civil society to access information, speak, associate, organize and participate in public life.

Respondents are requested to answer the following:

- How can Finland strengthen its commitment to civic space?
- How can Finland strengthen the enabling environment for CSOs?
- How can Finland strengthen its commitment to civic participation in public governance?

Background

The OECD has been supporting countries around the world to strengthen their culture of open government by providing policy advice and recommendations on how to integrate the core principles of transparency, integrity, and accountability into public sector reform efforts. The OECD's work on civic space is a continuation of this effort, recognising that civic space is an enabler of open government reforms, collaboration with non-governmental actors, and effective citizen participation in public governance.

The OECD approach to civic space is informed by its long-standing focus and expertise on good governance and open government, as well as its constructive relationship with civil society actors. From a good governance perspective, the work aims to assess how existing legal, policy, and institutional frameworks as well as the public sector's capacities and management practices, shape and impact civic space. The open government focus addresses how these frameworks translate into participatory practices and accountability mechanisms – in other words, how civic space becomes a vehicle for effective non-governmental actor participation in policymaking, decision-making, and service design and delivery as part of enhancing democratic governance.

The scan will generate **evidence-based, concrete and actionable recommendations** for the Government of Finland on how to further protect and promote civic space. It will focus on the following key areas:

- The **civic freedoms and rights** that enable civic space (e.g. access to information; freedoms of expression, assembly, and association; right to privacy);
- **Media and digital rights and freedoms** (press freedom; open internet; data protection; duty to protect journalists, whistle-blowers and activists);
- The enabling **operational environment for CSOs** (e.g. laws and policies governing funding, registration, promoting CSOs);

- **Participation** in policymaking, decision-making and service design and delivery (e.g. quality of participation, mechanisms used, outcomes);
- Cross-cutting issues such as **discrimination, inclusion, access to justice, the impact of Covid-19, and civic education.**

This is your chance to tell us what you think! Please get in touch with your recommendations for the Government of Finland.

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Submissions will inform the OECD's interviews, as part of the Civic Space Scan, with governmental and non-governmental actors in September and October 2020. The final Civic Space Scan report will be submitted to the Finnish Ministry of Finance in late 2020.