



## MONITORING AND EVALUATING THE STATE OF THE RIGHTS TO EUROPEAN ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

### PROJECT SUMMARY

*December 2007*

The project consists in the set up, application and diffusion of a **toolbox** to monitor and evaluate the implementation of active citizenship rights, both at national and EU levels, with regard to citizens' organizations.

The source of these rights is the **European Charter of Active Citizenship**<sup>1</sup> (ECAC), which is at the moment the only document that tries to fill the EU "normative gap" on the rights of organized citizens to participate in policy making ("political" or "policy rights" to collective participation). Though it is not an official and binding document, it has an institutional relevance since it was set up in 2006 with the support of the European Commission and it directly refers to the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

The project will involve countries that were studied in the **Civicus' Civil Society Index (CSI)**<sup>2</sup> project (11 in total) - Cyprus, Czech Republic, Greece, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey - because there is already a wide base of homogeneous and comparable information about these rights, coming from their participation in the CSI.

Since 2004 the European Union has been developing a strategy aimed at improving the Active European Citizenship, intended also as participation of citizens and citizens' organisations in the European policy making. Moreover, because of the failure of the referenda on the Constitutional Treaty in France and The Netherlands, the enforcement of this strategy is of crucial importance. That was the framework in which the European Charter of Active Citizenship have been delivered, in order to define operational rights of organized citizens involved in European policy making.

These **rights** are the right to intervention, right to carry out prevention activities, right to consultation, right to evaluate, right to access, right to a qualified interlocution, right to respect of time and obligation to give feedback, right to trust and equal dignity, right to facilitation and support measures.

In order to support the practice and enforcement of these rights in an actual way, it is necessary to monitor the state of their implementation in the member states and at the European level,

---

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.activecitizenship.net/documenti/European\\_Charter\\_of\\_Active\\_Citizenship\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.activecitizenship.net/documenti/European_Charter_of_Active_Citizenship_FINAL.pdf) ;  
<http://www.fondaca.org/pagina%20documenti/documenti%20pdf%20per%20sito/documenti/EuropeanCharterofActiveCitizenship%20FINAL.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Important links for more information regarding Civicus and the country reports, which serve as base information  
[http://www.civicus.org/new/CSI\\_country\\_reports.asp](http://www.civicus.org/new/CSI_country_reports.asp); [http://www.civicus.org/new/CSI\\_background.asp](http://www.civicus.org/new/CSI_background.asp)

defining specific indicators and engaging both citizens' organizations and public institutions to this end.

The **general aim** of the project is to provide public institutions, citizens' organizations and their stakeholders with the opportunity to check and improve the implementation process of these rights, as constituent part of the European integration and the strengthening of European citizenship.

The **specific objectives** of the research are:

- The identification of the main features of active citizenship rights in their implementation phase;
- The creation and testing of a **toolbox** aimed at monitoring and assessing the progress of active citizenship rights at national and EU levels.

The **expected results** are:

- Setting up a **toolbox** that will be used to evaluate the state of the rights to European Active Citizenship regarding civil society organisations;
- Gathering of **comparable information** about indicators regarding the implementation of European Active Citizenship rights around 11 European countries, coming from
  - Previous researches regarding the public policies on civic activism in Europe, such as some of the projects carried out by Active Citizenship Network and in particular Citizens for the New Europe project, regarding the attitude and behaviours of public institutions interacting with citizens' organizations both in general and with reference to health, environment and consumer policies;
  - The Civicus Civil Society Index reports for the countries involved in the project, using the CSI indicators (focused on the wider concept of civil society organizations) in case they concern the context surrounding CSOs and then active citizenship organizations too and are focused on CSOs participation in policy making process and then concerning by definition Autonomous Citizens' Organizations;
  - Key persons, namely civic leaders and public institutions' representatives, to be interviewed;
  - Partner organizations' own information on the state of active citizenship rights.
- Analysis of the main **strengths** and **weaknesses** of the civil organisations actions and capacities to participate in the public policy making at national and European level;
- Defining **policy recommendations** for the enhancement of the rights to European Active Citizenship.

The **final Toolbox** will be made of:

- A **checklist** including all the information that for each right is supposed to be gathered. The checklist will be directly used to gather information from existing researches (Civil Society Index and previous European-based researches on public policy towards citizens' organizations participating in policy making). An introductory part of the checklist will report information on the cultural and political context in which the active citizenship rights are implemented;

- A **matrix** for the assessment of the implementation of active citizenship rights. It will be set up in relation with the checklist and tested in a scoring exercise involving the project partners.

The actors that will be involved in the project are:

- FONDACA;
- Active Citizenship Network (ACN);
- 11 National Partner Organizations
  1. Bulgaria: Index Foundation
  2. Cyprus: The Management Centre of the Mediterranean
  3. Czech Republic: Consumers Defence Association of the Czech Republic - SOS
  4. Germany: Maecenata Institut
  5. Greece: Association Evropaiki Ekfrasi
  6. Italy: Cittadinanzattiva
  7. Poland: Women's Rights Center
  8. Romania: The National Association for Consumers' Protection
  9. Slovenia: Legal Information Center for NGOs
  10. Turkey: The Human Resources Development Foundation - IKGV
- Civicus: World Alliance For Citizen Participation;
- Labsus, Laboratorio per la sussidiarietà;
- Poleis, Centro Studi e ricerche di politica comparata;
- Daniela Piana, Dep. of Political Science and Sociology, Faculty of Political Science - University "Cesare Alfieri", Florence;
- Dep. of Demography, Faculty of Statistics – University La Sapienza, Rome;

The following activities has been carried out:

1) Setting up a **checklist** of indicators concerning the recognition and practice of the rights to European Active Citizenship with regard to citizens' organizations operating both at European, national and local levels.

2) Organising a **seminar with scholars** aimed at validate and evaluate the checklist. Participants will come from the Faculty of Political Science of Florence University, that of Statistics of La Sapienza University (Rome), that of Economics of Trento, Poleis, a Bocconi University's research centre, Civicus and Labsus. With the same aim, pre and post-seminar consultations will be carried out by e-mail involving selected scholars or researchers operating in this field.

3) Developing 2 **questionnaires** addressed to citizens organisations and public institutions aimed at collecting information about the actual implementation of European Active Citizenship rights.

4) **Gathering of data** regarding the indicators identified in the 10 European countries involved in the project: they will come both from the CSI reports and **interviews with 10 citizens' organizations and 3 public administrations' officials** in each country.

5) **Systematisation of the information** gathered in national checklists.

6) **Gathering of data at European level**, coming from interviews with 10 citizens' organizations operating at European level and 3 representatives of the EU institutions and the existing empirical researches on the practice of rights to active citizenship at community level.

7) **Partners' meeting**, aimed at sharing the gathered information and evaluating national situations. Through discussion and consensus among participants, every indicator will be scored according to pre-defined criteria contained in the **matrix**. A synthetic final score on the state of European Active Citizenship in each country and in Europe will be reached. **(20<sup>th</sup> May 2008)**  
The following activities will be carried out

8) **Systematisation of the information gathered at European level** in an European checklist.

9) Drafting of an **intermediate report** summarizing the content of the Matrix, the gathered information and the result of the evaluation exercise for each country.

10) Second **Partners' meeting**, that will be held on **24<sup>th</sup> June in Ancona** (Italy), during which all the project's partners will be convened to:

- check the information regarding the European Union and to apply the Scoring Matrix to the EU situation;
- evaluate the implementation of the project and to agree on some follow up guidelines.

11) **Final Conference in Ancona**, where representatives of public institutions, European Union, citizens' organizations, experts and scholars and other stakeholders will be convened in order to present and discuss two main topics:

- the **results** of the gathering of information and of the scoring exercise regarding the implementation of rights to active citizenship and the set up of recommendations and proposals for a better implementation of them;
- the **Checklist** and the **Scoring Matrix** as monitoring tools of the implementation of these rights in the European Union and the definition of suggestions for a wider use of them.

12) Delivering of a **final report**, including remarks and proposals coming from the workshop, as well as of a **final version of the tool**.

13) **Diffusion** of the results of the project, involving public institutions, active citizenship organizations and the scientific community, using on-line and off-line tools.

14) **Follow up**: translation of the Matrix; meetings at national level involving people interviewed and other stakeholders; presentations of the results of the project during the Civicus World Assembly (Glasgow, June 2008).