

**Conference organised under the auspices of the Minister for European Affairs
Mikuláš Bek**

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS FOR BUILDING A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY IN EUROPE

Date: Monday Oct 17, 2022 (1 pm - 7 pm, incl. reception)
Tuesday Oct 18, 2022 (9 am - 4 pm)

Venue: [Hrzánský Palace](#), Prague, Czech Republic

Online participation through webex and zoom.

Organizing partners: **Glopolis** on behalf of the informal network of networks **NeoN Partnership Foundation**
in cooperation with **the Government Office of the Czech Republic - Department of the Secretariat of the Government Council for Non-State Non-Profit Organisations and Spiralis**

Context and objectives of the conference:

What role can civil society play in times when citizens feel helpless in the face of current crises and the threat of their cumulative effects?

The Russian war in Ukraine, the refugee and migrant waves into Europe, the rising energy and food prices, climate change and political proposals to address it, the Covid-19 pandemic, are just some of the headlines of recent years. Alongside them, we can observe in the public space a growing support for behaviour and actions that adversely affect the democratic environment and break down social cohesion.

Only **cooperation between the state and civil society, the private and academic sectors** can provide comprehensive and functional solutions to such challenges. **A vibrant civil society is an important pillar of democracy.** With its practical and community-based perspective and know-how, it contributes - together with the perspective and know-how from the private and academic spheres - to the higher quality and relevance of public policies. High quality and relevant public policies enhance good governance and strengthen trust in the state and thus democracy. Conversely, poor quality and irrelevant public policies lead to increased frustration in society, a decline in trust in public institutions, erosion of democracy, the rule of law and social cohesion, and strengthen the electoral base of populist and extremist parties.

The aim of the conference on the Strategic Partnerships for Building Democratic Society in Europe is to:

- to promote **dialogue and cooperation** between representatives of public administration, parliament, NGOs and other actors in the Czech Republic and the EU.
- To present, through concrete examples, the **principles of partnership and the benefits of cooperation between public administration and civil society** and NGOs in addressing crises and societal needs.
- link the need for **democracy building in Europe with support for a resilient civil society** and the creation of favourable conditions for its activities.
- contribute to a successful Czech Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

Who is the conference for:

- Representatives of the public administration of the Czech Republic.
- Members of the Parliament of the Czech Republic.
- Representatives of EU institutions
- Representatives of the European Commission, the European Economic and Social Committee and other EU institutions.
- Representatives of CSOs and their umbrella organisations and networks.
- Members of government working and advisory bodies.

PROGRAMME:

Monday 17 October: Promoting participation as a basis for effective partnership between the public administration and CSOs

Working language: Czech

12:30 - 13:00 Registration, welcome coffee

13:00 - 13:20 Welcome and opening:

- On behalf of the Office of the Government: **Klára Laurenčíková**, Human Rights Commissioner of the Government of the Czech Republic
- On behalf of the Czech Presidency: **Karel Blaha**, Deputy Minister for Legislation, Czech Republic
- On behalf of organisers: **Petr Lebeda**, director, Glopolis

13:20 - 14:20 Panel Discussion: The benefits of civil society participation in public policies - international and European principles and the relation to the quality of governance

- **Paul Braithwaite**, Open Government Partnership, Senior Regional Coordinator, Europe, OGP Support Unit
- **Lukáš Pachta**, European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion
- **Roxana Bedrule**, European Commission, Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy, European Community of Practice on Partnership 2021-2027
- **Zdislava Odstrčilová**, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Deputy Minister for the Family Policy and Social Services Section
- **Daniel Trnka**, Deputy Head Of Division, OECD Regulatory Policy Division
- **Filip Vagač**, Ministry of the Interior of the Slovak Republic, Government Commissioner for Civil Society Development

Moderator: **Silvie Pýchová**, Director, SKAV - Permanent Conference of Education Associations, Chair of the EU Committee of the Czech Government Council of NGOs

14:20 - 14:40 Coffee break

14:40 - 15:00 Presentation of research on cooperation between the Czech public administration and NGOs for the purposes of the Strategy for Cooperation between Public Administration and NGOs 2021-2030 and recommendations
Tereza Pospíšilová, Charles University, Faculty of Humanities

15:00 - 16:00 Panel 1: Experiences and benefits of participation from practice and from current topics of the Czech Presidency

- **Richard Nikischer**, Ministry of Regional Development, Head of the Rural Development Unit, Department of Regional and Housing Policy Strategies and Analyses
- **Markéta Pěchoučková**, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Czech Republic, Head of Social Innovation Projects
- **Martin Polášek**, Ministry of the Environment, Department of Environmental Policy and Sustainable Development
- **Anna Kárníková**, Director of the Friends of the Earth, Czech Republic
- **Marta Smolíková**, Director of Open Society
- **Tomáš Habart**, Director of the Variants Programme, People in Need

Moderator: **David Ondráčka**, Glopolis

16:00 - 16:20 Coffee break

16:20 - 17:20 Panel 2: Experiences and benefits of participation from practice and from current topics of the Czech Presidency

- **František Kučera**, Ministry of Justice, Conflict of Interest and Anti-Corruption Department, Czech Republic OGP Point of Contact
- **Hana Volná**, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Deputy Director of the Development Cooperation Department
- **Michal Barbořík**, Ministry of the Interior, Director of the Crime Prevention Department
- **Andrea Krchová**, Director of the Migration Consortium
- **Martina Břeňová**, Director, OSF Foundation Prague
- **Lukáš Kraus**, Reconstruction of the State

Moderator: **David Ondráčka**, Glopolis

17:20 - 17:40 Final summary and conclusions - how to further promote partnerships between the Czech public administration and CSOs

- **Roman Haken**, Centre for Community Organising, member of the EU Committee of the Government Council of NGOs

Moderators: **David Ondráčka**, Glopolis

17:40 - 19:00 Informal social reception:

Welcome: Klára Laurenčíková, Human Rights Commissioner, Czech Republic

Tuesday, October 18: Strategic support to cooperation for a democratic society in Europe

Working language: *English, translation into Czech*

8:30 - 9:00 Registration, morning coffee

9:00 - 9:20 Opening and welcome:

- On behalf of the Cabinet of the Minister for European Affairs: **Pavλίna Žáková**, Head of the Department of Advisors to Minister Mikuláš Bek
- On behalf of the the organisers: **Petr Lebeda**, Director, Glopolis

9:20 - 10:20 Political panel: Cooperation with civil society as a basis for building democratic space in Europe

- **Jitka Seitlová**, Vice-Chairwoman of the Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic
- **Olga Richterová**, Vice-Chairwoman of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic
- **Barbora Urbanová**, Vice-Chairwoman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic
- **Eva Decroix**, 1st Vice-Chairwoman of the Civic Democratic Party of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic

Reflection notes from the European perspective:

- **Séamus Boland**, President of the Civil Society Organisations' Group, European Economic and Social Committee

Moderator: David Ondráčka, Glopolis

10:20 - 10:40 Coffee break

10:40 - 12:00 EU Civil Society Strategy - on the way towards a thriving civic space

- **Vera Móra**, Director, Ökotars, Hungarian Environmental Partnership Foundation
- **Alexandrina Najmowicz**, Secretary General, European Civic Forum
- **Sergey Lagodinsky**, member of the EU Parliament, Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance
- **Ingrid Bellander Todino**, Head of Unit - Fundamental Rights Policy, European Commission, DG Justice and Consumers

Moderator: **Ionuț Sibian**, Director, CSDF - Civil Society Development Foundation, Romania, member of the European Economic and Social Committee

12:00 - 13:00 Lunch

13:00 - 14:20 Panel Discussion: experiences of strategic cooperation between the state and CSOs and their networks

- **Frank Heuberger**, BBE - National Network for Civil Society, Germany
- **Anna Grudzinska**, OFOP - National Federation of Polish NGOs, Poland

- **Liv Hernæs Kvanvig**, the Head of freedom of religion or belief section in the Norwegian Helsinki Committee
- **Roy Virah-Sawmy**, Programme manager, Civitates / NEF – Network of European Foundations
- **Alexandra McGehee**, Head of the Department of the Secretariat of the Government Council for NGOs, Office of the Government of the Czech Republic

Moderator: **Pavel Trantina**, Vice-Chairman of the EU Committee of the Government Council for NGOs, former member of the European Economic and Social Committee

14:20 - 14:40 Coffee break

14:40 - 15:30 Participatory discussion - EU Strategy to support civil society - how to bring it to life/what are the initiatives?

- What are the **key parameters and areas** to be addressed by the strategy and how it can support civil society and CSOs at Member State level
- How to ensure a **participatory process** of strategy development at EU and national level

Moderators:

- **Pavel Trantina**, Vice-Chairman of the EU Committee of the Government Council for NGOs
- **Roman Haken**, Centre for Community Organising, member of the EU Committee of the Czech Government Council for NGOs

15:30 - 16:00 Conclusions from the discussions - Pavel Trantina and Roman Haken

Closing notes:

- **Vera Mora**, Director, Ökotars - Hungarian Environmental Partnership Foundation
- **Petr Lebeda**, Director, Glopolis

The conference will produce a **summary report** in Czech and English describing examples of cooperation and participation between CSOs and public administration and recording the main ideas and conclusions from the discussions and expert groups of the conference, including possible recommendations. The material will be public and shared with partners at different levels in the Czech Republic and the EU.

Conference partners and organizing team:

Glopolis/NeoN: Jana Miléřová, jmilerova@glopolis.org

Glopolis, o.p.s. is a Czech analytical and networking centre with 18 years of experience in research, education, monitoring and negotiation of public policies and coordination in the non-profit sector in the Czech Republic and the EU. Its mission is to connect people and organisations from the non-profit, public and private sectors to better collaborate for sustainable democracy and to create an enabling environment for such collaboration.

Glopolis initiated the creation of the informal network of networks NeoN. NeoN consists of 15 sectoral networks representing more than 400 CSOs and 3 major organisations. They focus on education, anti-corruption, migration, gender equality, environment, etc. Together, they work for democracy, accountable governance, resilient civil society and sustainable development based on human rights. Glopolis provides the background, coordination and

development of NeoN. It monitors relevant legislative and executive processes, prepares analyses, organises exchanges of views, develops joint opinions and supports negotiations with the state administration.

Partnership Foundation: Jitka Silárszká, jitka.silarszka@nadacepartnerstvi.cz

The Partnership Foundation is a Czech environmental foundation operating since 1992. It supports local communities and provides grants for tree planting, landscape care and public space. It offers professional and educational services related to environmental protection and sustainable management of agricultural land, adaptation measures in cities, development of cycling tourism and implementation of software for processing grant and subsidy applications. Every year it announces the Tree of the Year survey and the Bike to Work challenge, and awards active personalities for their contribution to the environment with the Josef Vavroušek Award. The Partnership Foundation is a member of the international consortium of foundations Environmental Partnership Association.

Between 2020 and 2023, as part of the project Reclaim Our Civil Space! - from local to European, supported by an EEA grant, it is implementing a programme to support the training of NGO representatives and the creation of an EU Strategy for Civil Society.

The Government Council for Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organisations: Alexandra McGehee mcgehee.alexandra@vlada.cz

The Government Council for Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organisations was established in 1992 as the Council for Foundations, in 1998 it was transformed into the Government Council for Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organisations. It is a permanent consultative, initiative and coordination body of the Government of the Czech Republic in the area of non-governmental non-profit organisations (NGOs). It collates, discusses and, submits to the government materials relating to NGOs and the creation of a suitable environment for their existence and activities. It also initiates and coordinates cooperation between ministries and monitors the integration of the CR into the EU with respect to NGOs. The Government Council for NGOs coordinates and defines the concept of medium-term measurement of the non-profit sector and formulates the objectives of cooperation between public administration and NGOs up to 2030.

Spiralis: Jolana Turnerová turnerovaj@spiralis.cz, Miriam Vránová vranovam@spiralis.cz

Spiralis, z.s. is an educational and consulting non-profit organisation. Since 1999 it has been cultivating civil society, professionalising charitable organisations, advocating for favourable conditions for their activities and supporting the development of active citizens. It creates opportunities for networking and cooperation between people across society with the aim of building a free and democratic Czech Republic. It helps more than 100 non-profit organisations and more than 600 individuals annually. Spiralis provides coordination support to the Platform for NGOs development, which is also an associated organisation of NeoN network.

The conference is organised thanks to the financial support provided by Civitates - A philanthropic initiative for democracy and solidarity in Europe, and the "Reclaim our Civil Space!" project, which benefits from a 1,8 million € grant from Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway through the EEA and Norway Grants Fund for Regional Cooperation.

The content of the conference is the sole responsibility of the organisers, and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the funders.