



Norwegian Ministry
of Foreign Affairs



Ministry of Foreign Affairs
of the Czech Republic



CIVIC SPACE COHORT

PARTICIPATION IN DECISION- MAKING PROCESSES

COUNTRY LEAD: NORWAY

SUPPORTED BY: ARMENIA, CANADA, THE CZECH REPUBLIC, ESTONIA, KOSOVO, MALTA, SLOVAKIA, SPAIN, SWEDEN, THE UNITED KINGDOM, AND THE UNITED STATES

The participation of civil society in policy and decision-making processes is an indicator of a vibrant and inclusive democracy and contributes to the quality and effectiveness of laws and policies. Participatory approaches to decision-making help to forge a positive dynamic relationship between people and their governments. Effective participation in national decision-making processes requires and builds upon access to information, freedom of expression and freedom to associate with others and to hold peaceful assemblies.

CSOs and national human rights institutions contribute to promoting good governance, transparency and accountability of public authorities in different ways, and are increasingly active in promoting democratic participation at national and local levels. Safe, non-discriminatory, inclusive and transparent rules, channels and processes for participation and access to information allow civil society actors to contribute meaningfully and effectively in law- and policymaking.

CSOs are concerned about their access to and participation in decision-making processes. Concerns refer to a lack of adequate information about participation and consultation processes, a lack of trust between civil society and public authorities, a lack of feedback on what happened with the input provided, and different obstacles, including discriminatory ones, to accessing and participating in decision-making processes. Fast-track and emergency legislative procedures during the pandemic exacerbated existing issues.

We have developed the following call to action:

1. The public, including civil society and national human rights institutions, where appropriate, should have access to draft legislations and be provided with a meaningful opportunity to provide input.

2. The public access to law making processes, where appropriate, should build on procedures that provide for sufficient timeframes, procedural clarity and sufficient information in order to make the public participation meaningful and efficient.
3. Also in situations of emergency, where appropriate, the public should be provided with an opportunity to provide input and states should provide for participatory review of the continued necessity and proportionality of emergency measures.