

Civil Society Fund in the Baltics: Towards Partnerships Building between Baltic, Icelandic, and Norwegian CSOs

November 19-20, 2026, Vilnius

INVITATION

Representatives of civil society organisations (CSOs) from Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Norway, and Iceland are invited to apply for a cross-regional experience exchange and partnerships event hosted in Vilnius (Lithuania) by the Civil Society Fund (CSF) operators in the Baltics together with the CSF Contact Points in Norway and Iceland. The event will bring together up to 80 senior CSOs' representatives from the Baltics, Norway, and Iceland to exchange best practices, expand their strategies and methods, and build partnerships for joint projects under the Civil Society Fund (EEA & Norway Grants). The event offers opportunities not only for cooperation between Baltic and Nordic CSOs but also to strengthen partnerships within the Baltic region.

In today's shifting geopolitical and socio-economic landscape, **resilient civil society is essential to sustaining democratic societies and responding effectively to emerging challenges and achieving long-term transformative impact.** Building resilience within civil society requires opportunities for cross-border learning and partnership-building, enabling organisations to strengthen their capacities, adapt their strategies and methods, and develop their responses to shared challenges.

The participants will have an opportunity to deep-dive into the exchange of best practices through interactive thematic workshops: **preparation for Day X and other emergencies, shrinking civic space, integrating a just green transition into civil society work while promoting social justice, successful advocacy through public mobilisation, human rights, and LGBTQI+ safety.** The workshops will be designed not only to facilitate the sharing of lessons learned but also to promote cooperation between participating CSOs. **Participants will work together to identify shared challenges, explore transferable solutions, and develop initial ideas for joint initiatives.** Participants will have a chance to further develop and strengthen these ideas through dedicated networking and matchmaking, allowing organisations to find suitable partners and discuss how they could develop into collaborative project proposals.

This opportunity is targeted at senior leaders within CSOs who have the expertise to share best practices and/or are eager to learn and apply them, and the capacity to commit their organisations to project partnerships.

Please note that the working language of the event is English, and no interpretation will be provided.

Travel, accommodation, and catering costs during the event will be covered by the organisers.

[Apply here by September 28 →](#)

Applicants will be informed about the results of the selection, together with practical information, in October 2026.

If you have any questions, please contact info@vbplatforma.org.

DRAFT PROGRAMME

November 19, 2026, Vilnius

Day 1 - Exchange of Best Practices

Time	Activity	
9:00 - 9:30	Welcome Coffee & Registration	
9:30 - 11:00	PLENARY: Welcoming & Inspiration	
11:00 - 13:00	PARALLEL Session I: Preparation for Day X and Other Emergencies	The recent rise of multiple crises, including the COVID-19 pandemic, hybrid attacks and geopolitical shifts, has highlighted the necessity of active civil society involvement in strengthening resilience in crisis response. Since Russia's full-scale aggression against Ukraine, Baltic CSOs have been actively preparing for Day X and other potential emergencies. The session will provide a platform for exchanging experiences on preparedness and training, strengthening coordination among CSOs, enhancing cooperation with national and local authorities, integrating CSOs into state-led crisis response, and raising public awareness by engaging wider society and local communities.
	PARALLEL Session II: Shrinking Civic Space	Across Europe, CSOs are operating in an increasingly complex environment shaped by geopolitical instability, democratic backsliding, disinformation, political polarisation and growing pressure on public resources, alongside reduced opportunities for meaningful participation, shrinking funding for advocacy and watchdog work, administrative burdens, online harassment and declining public trust. The session will provide a space for organisations from the Baltic States, Iceland and Norway to exchange experiences, identify shared challenges, and discuss practical strategies for protecting civic space, strengthening organisational resilience, safeguarding independent advocacy and building effective cross-border partnerships.
	PARALLEL Session III: Pushing Back the Push-Back: LGBTQI+ Perspectives on Anti-Rights Mobilisation, Violence, and Civil Society Resilience	Across Europe, LGBTQI+ communities and organisations face online harassment, hate speech, disinformation and hostile narratives as part of a broader pushback against human rights, civic space and democratic values. These challenges increasingly cross borders, while hostility in digital spaces can directly affect the safety and public participation of LGBTQI+ people in the physical world, as illustrated by the terrorist attack in Oslo on 25 June 2022. The session will enable Baltic and Nordic CSOs to exchange practical approaches to supporting target communities, responding to harassment and hate, challenging harmful narratives, engaging public institutions, and strengthening community and organisational resilience.
13:00 - 14:00	Lunch	
14:00 - 16:00	PARALLEL Session I: Successful Advocacy through Public Mobilisation	Baltic CSOs have traditionally relied more on advocacy aimed directly at policymakers, while advocacy through public mobilisation has been used more restrainedly. Recent mass mobilisation initiatives in Lithuania and Latvia defending democracy, human rights and the rule of law demonstrate strategies and tactics that can be translated into transferable practices for broader advocacy contexts. The session will explore how effective public mobilisation, complemented by advocacy targeting policymakers, can strengthen CSOs' long-term impact on policy debates and decisions, drawing also on Norwegian and Icelandic traditions of public mobilisation.
	PARALLEL Session II: Just Green Transition and Social Justice	The green transition is one of Europe's key priorities and depends not only on policymakers but also on the knowledge, choices and engagement of society as a whole. CSOs can play an important role in this process, both those directly working on environmental issues and organisations interested in integrating green transition issues into their broader work with communities, by raising awareness, mobilising people to advocate for their interests and developing practical local solutions.

		The session will explore the green transition from different perspectives, identify key challenges, and help interested CSOs better understand and define their own role in contributing to a greener future.
	PARALLEL Session III: Human Rights	The session will explore practical approaches to protecting human rights, combating discrimination and bias-motivated violence, and strengthening the inclusion, participation, and access to support of groups at risk of exclusion.
17:00 - 21:00	Evening Programme	

November 20, 2026, Vilnius

Day 2 - Partnerships Building & Late Afternoon Departure

Time	Activity
9:00 - 9:30	Welcome Coffee
9:30 - 10:00	Civil Society Fund Funding Opportunities
10:00 - 11:00	Outcomes from Parallel Sessions
11:00 - 13:00	Partnership & Project Development
13:00 - 13:30	Closing & Networking
13:30 - 14:30	Lunch
Departures	

This event is funded by EEA & Norway Grants.

This event is co-organized by:

