

## **EDF resolution: Defending the budget of AgoraEU**

**Adopted at the EDF Board meeting in Dublin, Ireland, on 25 October 2026**

Recalling that Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) are essential to a democratic and fully inclusive political process, and that the European Union and all its Member States are obliged under Articles 4(3), 29 and 33(3) of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) to ensure the close consultation, active involvement and participation of persons with disabilities through their representative organisations.

Noting that Article 6 of the CRPD obliges the EU and its Member States, and the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) obliges all Member States, to take all appropriate measures to ensure the full empowerment of women and girls with disabilities, and that the CERV Programme, including its Daphne strand on combating gender-based violence, is a key source of funding for organisations defending the rights of women and girls with disabilities, who face a heightened risk of discrimination and violence.

Underlining that the CRPD Committee recommended the EU to provide “sufficient financial support to organisations of persons with disabilities to protect their independence and to enable them to participate effectively” in its concluding observations (para. 17) following the second review of the EU in 2025.

Highlighting that EU values are currently under acute pressure. Democracy, the rule of law, fundamental rights and equality face growing challenges across the Union, and civic space is shrinking. OPDs in all their diversity, including smaller and less resourced organisations, are actively confronting these challenges and providing an important counterbalance to these threats to EU values.

Considering that the functioning of many OPDs is relying on EU funding, in particular operating grants under the current Citizens, Equality, Rights, and Values (CERV) Programme.

Predictable, multiannual operating grants enable OPDs to retain expertise, consult their members, respond to legislative developments and participate independently in policymaking and monitoring, functions that cannot be sustained through short-term project funding alone.

Underlining that a 2023 [FRA survey](#)<sup>1</sup> found that 75.4% of civil society organisations working on fundamental rights and democracy fear that funding cuts threaten their very existence.

Noting that within the proposed EU budget 2028-2034, the CERV Programme will become part of the new AgoraEU Regulation as a strand known as CERV+ but that operating grants were explicitly retained in the proposal, and recalling that the European Commission proposal for the AgoraEU Regulation contained a budget of EUR 8.58 billion<sup>2</sup>, which was welcomed by Civil Society Organisations.

Noting with deep concern the proposed 30% reduction in the AgoraEU budget in the Irish Presidency's negotiating proposal<sup>3</sup>, which would represent a severe cut to funding of civil society, including OPDs which currently benefit from EU operating grants.

Stressing that the damage to civil society and therefore Europe's resilience would be lasting and potentially irreversible, at a time when equality policies and civic space are under acute pressure.

**Therefore, the European Disability Forum calls on the European Commission, the European Parliament, the Council and all EU Member States, within their respective responsibilities, to:**

- Preserve and defend a robust AgoraEU budget, with funding at least equivalent to the European Commission proposal and protecting the proportion of this funding foreseen for CERV+ in the Commission's proposal.
- Recognise AgoraEU and its budget as critical infrastructure for Europe's collective future.
- Make sure that Organisations of Persons with Disabilities will still be able to benefit from EU operating grants under the CERV+ of AgoraEU to ensure real participation of persons with disabilities in EU decision-making.

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<sup>1</sup> [report-key-findings-fra-civic-space-consultation-covering-2023.pdf](#)

<sup>2</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52025PC0550>

<sup>3</sup> <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-13922-2026-INIT/en/pdf>