

## Strong cross-party alliance in European Parliament for easing philanthropy's work for public good across Europe

### PRESS RELEASE

**Brussels, 7 October 2019** – MEPs, representatives of the European Commission and the European Economic and Social Committee and relevant stakeholders from philanthropy, civil society and social economy discussed ways to create a truly European space for donors and encourage cross-border generosity, solidarity and civil actions. “There is so much untapped potential when it comes to foundations and civil society organisations – let us unlock it all together” said the European Parliament’s Vice-President **Nicola Beer**, opening the debate on the “Single Market for Philanthropy – Helping unlock the potential for public good across Europe” on 1 October in the European Parliament. “While it is easy to make money in the EU, it is very hard to give money for public good across borders” stated **Felix Oldenburg**, Secretary General of the Association of German Foundations.

A strong cross-party alliance emerged at the debate. “There is at present a new impetus for an EU social economy, philanthropy and civic engagement initiative advancing EU values, democracy and an inclusive and sustainable prosperity” underlined **European Commission’s Kerstin Jorna**, Deputy Director General in DG ECFIN. She acknowledged that philanthropy can support European values and that the sector can partner with key stakeholders to tackle rising inequality, provide space for innovation, help overcome social and political divisions, and connect with people and their real needs.

In this light politicians at this debate agreed that the time is politically right for re-launching ideas on a single market for philanthropy, as stated by European Commission’s **Paul Nemitz**, Principle Adviser at DG Justice. MEPs **Sven Giegold** and **Sergey Lagodinsky** discussed the potential for a new proposal for a 29th regime of a “European public benefit statute” with the aim to create a truly European space for donors. This is currently undermined by several regulatory and tax barriers that affect cross-border philanthropy within the EU.

**Stefania Coni** from Fondazione CRT (Italy) and **Ludwig Forrest** from the King Baudouin Foundation (Belgium) as well as **Laurent Thieule** from FC Kraainem made clear that European philanthropy is both diverse and increasingly European. Philanthropic activity implies expertise, time, networks and resources, working in the service of society and the people in Europe. There are 147,000 public-benefit organisations across Europe, with annual giving of € 60bn. With long and diverse tradition in Europe, they are also diverse in the ways in which they contribute resources (e.g. through public, corporate, family and individual donors) and the fields in which they are involved: education, health, inclusion, gender equality, environment or international development, to name but a few.

Portuguese **MEP Maria Da Graca Carvalho** stated “the role of foundations for our society is essential, as they focus on areas often neglected by the for-profit sector and forgotten by the public sector. Their involvement is therefore perfectly complementary to EU funds, activities and expertise”. Philanthropy is focused on long-term results and is independent from political and

market cycles. Many of its activities are innovative and system-focused, addressing the root causes of problems. The importance of maximising collaboration between the philanthropic sector and the public sector, including the EU, was also highlighted by **Felix Fernández-Shaw** from DG DEVCO.

At the event it became clear that in the European Parliament a strong cross-party alliance exists between Greens, Renew, EPP and S&D. An [EESC opinion on Philanthropy](#), mandated by the Romanian Council presidency, was issued on 15 May 2019 calling for measures and initiatives at EU and national level to promote organised philanthropy. It asks for EU actions to eliminate barriers within the internal market that are hindering the realisation of philanthropy's full potential. This builds on the [European Philanthropy Manifesto](#) released in March 2019. The recognition of legal personality and supporting the free flow of philanthropic capital and civic activity within the EU is central to its propositions.

“The EESC is ready to collaborate with the European Parliament and the European Commission with future joint events on philanthropy and protecting European values, including in the context of the future European Democracy Action Plan and the two-year Conference on the Future of Europe,” said **Ionut Sibian**, Romanian Member of the EESC.

The philanthropic sector is ready to contribute to the initiative and more broadly achieving the ambitions of the InvestEU, Sustainable Europe Investment Plan and to deliver an economy that works for people.

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## NOTES TO EDITORS

### A. The debate on 1 October included the following speakers:

#### **Host and moderator:**

- Nicola Beer, Vice-President of the European Parliament, Renew, Germany

#### **Speakers and commentators**

- Laurent Thieule, Project FC Kraainem, Belgium
- Stefania Coni, Fondazione CRT, Italy
- Sven Giegold, Member of the European Parliament, Greens, Germany
- Kerstin Jorna, Deputy Director General DG ECFIN, European Commission
- Ludwig Forrest, King Baudouin Foundation, Belgium
- Maria Da Graca Carvalho Member of the European Parliament, EPP, Portugal
- Dr. Sergey Lagodinsky Member of the European Parliament, Greens, Germany
- Ionut Sibian, Member of the EESC, Romania
- Felix Fernández-Shaw, Director DG DEVCO, European Commission
- Paul Nemitz, Principle Advisor DG Justice, European Commission
- Felix Oldenburg, Secretary General Association of German Foundations, Germany

### B. Links:

- [European Philanthropy Manifesto – Private resources for public good](#)
- [EESC opinion: Philanthropy – an untapped potential](#)

### About Philanthropy Advocacy

The DAFNE and EFC joint advocacy project Philanthropy Advocacy acts as a monitoring, legal analysis and policy engagement hub for European philanthropy. Its main objective is to shape the national, European and international legislative environment by implementing the European advocacy roadmap for a Single Market for Philanthropy. [www.philanthropyadvocacy.eu](http://www.philanthropyadvocacy.eu)

### About Donors and Foundations Networks in Europe (DAFNE)



DAFNE is Europe's only network of donors and foundations associations.

DAFNE is a leading voice of European donors and foundations with 30 member associations and a collective membership of more than 10,000 donors, foundations and grant-makers. DAFNE underpins individual activities of its members by encouraging dialogue and collaboration between the national associations. DAFNE is a member of WINGS, an associate partner of OECD netFWD and an active supporter of #NextPhilanthropy. DAFNE and the EFC jointly lead the Philanthropy Advocacy project.

[www.dafne-online.eu](http://www.dafne-online.eu)

### About the European Foundation Centre (EFC)



As a leading platform for philanthropy in Europe, the EFC works to strengthen the sector and make the case for institutional philanthropy as a formidable means of effecting change. We believe institutional philanthropy has a unique, crucial and timely role to play in meeting the critical challenges societies face. More people and causes benefit from institutional philanthropy than ever before, from eradicating deadly diseases and making the world's populations healthier to combating climate change and fighting for global human rights and equality. Working in close collaboration with our members, a dynamic network of strategically-minded philanthropic organisations from more than 30 countries, we:

- Foster peer-learning by surfacing expertise and experience embedded in the sector
- Enhance collaboration by connecting people for inspiration and joint action
- Represent philanthropy for favourable policy and regulatory environments
- Build a solid evidence base through knowledge and intelligence
- Raise the visibility of philanthropy's value and impact

The EFC and DAFNE jointly lead the Philanthropy Advocacy project.

[www.efc.be](http://www.efc.be)

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