

OGP Global Summit Side event

Title: Resilient Voices, Robust Organisations: Redefining the Future of European Civil Society

Logistics Notes

- **Duration:** 2h 15m
- **Format:** In-person, interactive
- **Language:** English
- **Date:** Monday 6 October, 15:30 - 17:30
- **Venue:** [La Casa de las Mujeres](#)
- **Expected number of participants:** 30/40
- **Registration:**
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScWJIZPyAtZMcxikpLECEAbNt8Vmv10D73JmyF9Yvuc_-KJew/viewform

Event Description

In the face of overlapping global crises, from democratic backsliding to economic and environmental instability, progressive advocacy ecosystems are under immense strain. Civil society organisations, long central to democratic accountability, are increasingly constrained by shrinking civic space, financial pressure, and hostile political climates.

Simultaneously, private companies and foundations are navigating the same turbulent landscape. In some cases, their strategic choice in the face of political and economic risk is to remain silent, often at odds with their stated values and their professed and actual support for front-line progressive organisations.

This event will bring together researchers, practitioners, and advocates to explore how civil society, foundations, and business actors are adapting to political volatility and shifting power dynamics and how they are seeking to plot new pathways to influence and impact.

Drawing on findings from two major research initiatives, **Impact Under Stress** and the **Resilient Civil Society Project (ReCiv)**, we will examine the challenges facing civil society, internal organisational practices and reforms needed for resilience, the need for political philanthropy, and emerging opportunities for cross-sector collaboration.

The event will feature brief presentations, a dynamic roundtable discussion, and a participatory Q&A session to engage attendees in a critical conversation about the future of progressive political action. It aims to inform funders, policymakers, and practitioners seeking to strengthen advocacy ecosystems capable of withstanding external shocks, advancing democratic renewal, and building a robust civil society for the future.

150-word maximum description

In an era of democratic backsliding, civic space restrictions, and overlapping global crises, progressive advocacy ecosystems face unprecedented strain. Civil society organisations, essential to democratic accountability, grapple with political hostility, financial pressure, and limited capacity. Private companies and philanthropic foundations confront similar turbulence, sometimes choosing silence over advocacy—often at odds with their stated values and support for front-line organisations.

This event brings together researchers, practitioners, and advocates to explore how civil society, donors, and business actors adapt to political volatility and shifting power dynamics. Drawing on the Impact Under Stress and Resilient Civil Society Project (ReCiv) research, discussions will examine organisational resilience, the role of political philanthropy, and prospects for cross-sector collaboration. Through brief presentations, a roundtable, and interactive Q&A, participants will share insights and strategies to strengthen advocacy ecosystems capable of withstanding external shocks, advancing democratic renewal, and building a robust, inclusive civil society for the future.

Objectives

- Share new empirical insights on how civil society organisations and donors build resilience amid crisis.
- Challenge philanthropy, private donors, and foundations to embrace 'strategic courage'.
- Examine the evolving political role of businesses.
- Foster dialogue on potential collaboration between civil society and private sector actors.

Draft Programme

1. Welcome Coffee & Informal Networking (15 minutes)

Arrival, informal conversations, and refreshments.

2. Opening Remarks & Setting the Scene (5 minutes)

Moderator: Michele Crepaz

Brief overview of the event's goals and framing questions.

3. Short Presentations (Insights from Research) (20 minutes total, max. 10 mins each)

- **Neil Campbell** – *Impact Under Stress*: Overview of how CSOs and foundations have reacted to recent political disruptions and how their advocacy aligns (or not) with their values.
- **Rasa Bortkevičiūtė** – *ReCiv Project*: Emerging findings on CSO resilience and internal adaptive strategies under pressure.

4. Roundtable Discussion: Civil Society and Advocacy: Resilience in a Fragmented World (45 minutes)

Moderator: Michele Crepaz, Associate Professor and Vice Chancellor's Illuminate Fellow in Political Science at Queen's University Belfast

Participants:

- **Carina Paju**, Senior Regional Coordinator, Europe, Open Government Partnership Support Unit
- **Tonusree Basu**, Consultant, Open Government Partnership
- **Alberto Alemanno**, Jean Monnet Professor of EU Law, HEC Paris | Founder, The Good Lobby

Guiding questions:

- How are CSOs and companies redefining their political roles in today's climate?
- What do resilient organisations have in common?
- Where do opportunities for alignment or friction between civil society and business lie?
- What role can institutions like OGP play in fostering accountable political engagement?

5. Audience Q&A / Open Discussion (35 minutes)

6. Closing Remarks & Coffee (15 minutes)

Recap of key takeaways, thanks to speakers, and invitation to continue the discussion informally.