ISRAEL

EU COUNTRY ROADMAP FOR ENGAGEMENT WITH CIVIL SOCIETY

2014 - 2017

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1 STATE OF CIVIL SOCIETY

1.1 ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

Freedom of Expression, Association and Assembly

By all international standards both freedom of expression and association are well respected in Israel. In the absence of a formal constitution, however the legal framework that underpins these freedoms is rather dispersed, and the Basic Laws do not specifically address these freedoms. The Supreme Court has affirmed that **freedom of expression** is an essential component of human dignity. Hate speech and incitement to violence as well as expressing support for illegal or terrorist organizations is punishable by imprisonment (art. 4 of the 1948 Prevention of Terrorism Ordinance).

Freedom of association is recognized by the Israeli Supreme Court as a fundamental right, and is respected in practice.

Civil society organisations are registered either under Israel's *Law of Associations* of 1980 or under the *Companies Law* of 1999. Both registered and non-registered associations may conduct activities, but only legal associations are authorised by the Registrar of Associations/Companies to open a bank account or undertake court proceedings.

According to Article 3 of the *Law of Associations*, the registration of an association may be rejected if: 1) it negates the right of Israel to exist; 2) negates the democratic character of Israel; and 3) uses the association as a cover for illegal activities.

Under the Associations Law, an association may be dissolved by the attorney general or the registrar, who must first provide warning to the association unless its aims are found to be the negation of the right of the State of Israel to exist.

No prior authorization is required to obtain **foreign funding**. Organizations are required to submit annual, audited financial reports divulging all sources of income above 20,000 shekels and all sources of income coming from a foreign government donor, no matter the sum. As of 2008, organizations are required to post this information on their websites. In 2011 the reporting requirements for NGOs receiving foreign public funding increased from an annual to a quarterly basis, and foreign public donations explicitly provided for public information campaigns must now be disclosed in relevant campaign materials.

Israeli civil law provides strong protection for **freedom of assembly**. Several Supreme Court rulings have stated that restricting the right of assembly must only be a last resort. Under Israeli civil law a permit is required when 50 or more people gather and when speeches are made.

Some cases of arrest, travel bans and harassment against human rights activists have been reported. In June 2012 the police called several leaders of the social protest movement in for questioning about their plans for demonstrations and, reportedly, to dissuade them from planning new protests. Also in June, the police arrested social justice movement leader Daphni Leef and 11 others during a rally on Rothschild Boulevard in Tel Aviv which included some of the most heated confrontations between police and protesters since the movement began in the summer of 2011.

The **Freedom of Information** *Law* of 1998 specifies that it is applicable to specific categories of public bodies. As instructed by this Law, the government published the list of all bodies that fall within those categories. However, exempted bodies are legion. This legislation has resulted in a

burdensome procedure. Citizens must explicitly request official information that has not been made public. Appealing a negative decision in this matter to the District Court or eventually the Supreme Court is costly and time consuming.

On 6 March 2011 the Israeli Cabinet approved the creation of a Central **Freedom of Information Unit**, in order to streamline and improve this procedure. This unit, to be housed in the Ministry of Justice, will "*guide government ministries with regard to wrong-doing revealed in their handling of FOI requests.*"

Against this backdrop, there has recently been increased political lobbying for more restrictions on freedom of expression. In particular, there have been recurrent attempts by some parliamentarians to curb activities of politically active CSOs and their sources of funding through private bill legislation. An example of this was a bill proposed in the outgoing Knesset that sought to define organisations receiving donations from foreign countries as foreign agents and therefore subjecting them to closer scrutiny. The Foreign Agents bill followed the drafting of a bill aiming to limit donations to organizations that call for i) IDF soldiers to be brought to international courts, ii) boycott, divestment and sanctions in relation to Israel or its citizens, iii) the denial of Israel's right to exist as a Jewish and democratic state, or which incite to racism or support armed combat by an enemy state or terrorist organization against Israel. In consultations with the EU Delegation on the issue, social change CSOs assessed that there was no genuine government will to pass these laws. Their aim would spear mostly to be to harass and intimidate social actors while they generate an atmosphere of intolerance to different narratives. These actions strengthen the sense that the framework in which CSOs operate discriminates in favour of "non-challenging" and/or "service oriented" organisations, while politically active organisations are under greater political scrutiny. Despite this, such organizations do not appear to have curbed their activities.

A further challenge to CSOs is the ambiguity regarding what a "public institution" is. The tax laws in Israel do not distinguish between legal forms or types of CSOs. Therefore, the determination of taxable income and tax exemption does not depend on how an organisation was originally formed. Only "public institutions", which benefit the "domestic sector", are granted some exemption from taxes, according to the Tax Ordinance. Although there is no automatic exemption upon incorporation of an organisation, there are some forms of organisation that are given preference in being recognised as "public institutions." This ambiguity creates another opportunity to harass politically active NGOs, whose status as "public institutions' benefiting the "domestic sector" can be periodically revoked (as was the case recently with Physicians for Human Rights). In addition, recognition as a public institution is subject to incorporation, so Israeli law only acknowledges organisations that have been awarded a certificate of incorporation. Therefore organisations that are not incorporated do not qualify for tax exemption benefits. This requirement has implications for newcomers and actors who wish to operate in less formal ways.

Participation in public life

In 2008 the government presented its policy regarding the non-for-profit section. The policy acknowledges CSOs as partners in the provision of social services, encourages the government to promote social entrepreneurship and to integrate not-for-profit organisations in government contracts for social services. The policy acknowledges the role that CSOs can play and recognises the value of consultations. Finally, it emphasises the need for an independent, accountable, professional, and law-abiding not-for-profit sector. However, there is little information or instructions available on how the policy should be implemented.

On the ground, topical round tables at line ministries were launched by the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Environmental Protection, and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Services. In parallel, several actors, including mainstream CSOs, are also working in the same direction to foster cross-sectoral cooperation, both at national and local level, where local governance practices are also at a very early stage of development. There appear to be positive developments on policy making in Israel which present an opportunity for enhanced dialogue with CSOs, and for influencing policies and the social agenda as a whole.

Some CSOs report that they have strengthened their relationship with state institutions, sometimes at the latter's initiative, and to have succeeded in developing constructive engagement approaches with a number of line ministries and institutions, including the Ministry of Social Affairs (Welfare Department), the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Public Security (police), among others. This engagement, which is usually combined with cooperation on programme implementation, has enhanced these relationships with the inclusion of broader dialogue and advocacy if and when needed.

The space for multi-stakeholder engagement also seems to be progressively opening at the local level, where a number of municipalities and councils are reported to be more open to establishing regular dialogue with local CSOs and even defining joint cooperation initiatives in areas where civil society expertise and know-how offers real added value.

On the part of CSOs, some NGOs are becoming increasingly professionalized in their dealing with national and local government. They have sophisticated strategies and hire specialized permanent policy staff, and are also working more and more with think tanks and research centers, considering their crucial influence on public policy.

At the same time, as pointed out by the mapping of CSOs report commissioned by the EU Delegation, a number of themes challenging CSO participation can be identified. First, citizen engagement processes in Israel still lack clear direction due to significant misperceptions and even "stereotypes" which continue to exist among government, civil society and private sector actors. While the government promotes CSOs through direct and indirect support that amounts to significant sums of money, it nonetheless looks to mitigate the challenges it may receive from some CSO actors. Moreover, the government directs most of its financial support to CSOs that provide services on behalf of the state and those that promote the government's agenda. On the other hand, capacities are still lacking both inside state institutions as well as within civil society to overcome stereotypes and effectively engage in policy dialogue leading to concrete outputs and outcomes.

Secondly, citizen engagement still lacks institutionalisation, particularly at the level of line ministries. Although a strong tradition of *ad hoc* interaction exists between several individual CSOs and the more or less formal networks of coalitions on the one hand, and state institutions, especially at the level of Knesset Members, on the other, this is often "non-formalised" and its personalised nature results in an unequal structure of opportunities for civic engagement and political action. Furthermore, this increases the risk of specific groups monopolising debate with their own perspectives, and even capturing the "public interest".

In the absence of a clear framework setting the goals, scope and rules for engagement, the various government bodies which interact with CSOs determine and apply their "own policies and practices". Their choices, particularly when it comes to engaging with CSOs beyond the funding contractual relationship, are very much guided by the personalities of those who lead the institutions concerned or hold key positions. It may even be the case that the policy of one state institution in this regard may substantially differ from that of another institution. This trend is also evident at the local level, where the situation appears to be exacerbated due to the lack of

coordination between central and local government and the fact that each municipality handles issues related to CSOs in a different manner.

In the wake of the Social Summer of 2011, there has been a revival of civic engagement among Israelis citizens wishing to influence policy. This has given rise to a new set of social actors voicing their discontent and alienation from state institution and policies. Some citizens have been very active in developing initiatives to deepen democracy, promote social accountability and enhance government transparency, both at local and national levels. They operate via social media and adopt different organisational patterns from the traditional CSOs (e.g. this is the case of movements and organisations such as J14, the Social Guard, Uru, Public House, Hasadna, and the Democratic Charter, among others). The sector is also witnessing stronger cooperation, and even alliances and mergers, between traditional civilian and social change organisations and the so-called new movements, often attracting a much younger generation of social activists.

There remains, however, a lack of inclusiveness of non-mainstream actors, namely the **Arab minority**, specific sectors and socially disadvantaged groups, and the "challenging" actors (i.e. social change organisations with a strong advocacy agenda, human-rights organisations, etc.). Furthermore, these often lack the appropriate channels to ensure that their voices are integrated into mainstream debates. "Challenging" groups are also often left out when it comes to "invited spaces of dialogue".

1.2 PARTICIPATION AND ROLES

Service delivery

With the spread of privatisation in Israel since the 1980s, the role of CSOs as service providers has increased, and they have become an integral part of the service provision system in Israel. Service providing CSOs are particularly present in three major areas: education, health and individual welfare services. In the education system, since 2000 the presence of CSOs, foundations, public benefit and philanthropic organisations has become increasingly apparent, almost doubling their numbers compared with previous decades. CSOs are involved in every level of the education system, from building schools, to teachers' training and curriculum development. It is estimated that CSOs are involved in up to 90% of schools.

In the health system, in 2000 there were 357 CSOs registered as active in providing health services, including servicing particular diseases, working with patient groups and providing equipment. It is estimated that about 90% of welfare services are currently provided by non-governmental organisations, including local authorities, business and third sector organisations, marking a significant rise in the role CSOs play in provision and the increasing dependency of the Welfare Ministry on them. CSOs in the field of welfare provide services to the elderly, children, and people with disabilities, families and youth at risk.

The dependency of service providing CSOs on government funding often restricts their willingness to act as the advocates of their beneficiaries and express positions that counter the government's stance. In addition, the need to win tenders move these organisations away from their roots in civil society, as they grow and become institutionalised service providers, while losing their flexibility, ability to innovate and connection to their constituencies. These organisations represent a marked difference from politically active CSOs which seek to campaign and promote the interest of various constituencies.

Transparency and accountability

Israeli CSOs are very active in monitoring domestic transparency and accountability. Many CSOs are critical of the government's policies on various issues, and are engaged in guarding the interests of their constituencies. Other CSOs are concerned with monitoring the quality of government itself, and supervise the procedures and culture of policy making, for example, to prevent corruption in government. Since the 2011 protests many new organizations have come to the fore to supervise and hold the government accountable, particularly in relation to the preparation of the budget and the cost of living.

Conflict prevention and peace-building

Israeli CSOs which work on issues related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict may identify as peacebuilding organizations, human rights organizations or as nonaligned actors which are engaged in cross-border cooperation around mutual interests such as the environment or economy. The conflict tends to create a politicized environment for CSOs working in these fields, and recent attempts to restrict foreign funding appear to be linked to some CSOs' views and activities related to the conflict. Attempts to work cooperatively with Palestinian civil society on peacebuilding issues, supported under the EU Partnership for Peace programme (EUPfP), have been impacted by anti-normalization and boycott movements in Palestinian society. Currently many such contacts between Israeli CSOs and Palestinian CSOs are dwindling or are kept largely private and, in the absence of formal peace negotiations, there is largely no 'Track 2' process to support. Groups of peace CSOs have formed new forums and coalitions to attempt to reinvigorate the process, and some are hosted by various Knesset groups in this undertaking.

Promotion of Human Rights and Democracy

Previous European Neighbourhood Policy annual progress reports on Israel have highlighted concerns with regard to the respect of international human rights in Israel and in the territories occupied by it. While some authorities have demonstrated the autonomy necessary to push for reform and the judicial sector remains a powerful safeguard, Israeli civil society have faced criticism when demonstrating like-mindedness with the EU in promoting universal values. Human rights CSOs have considerable strength, as well as domestic political support, and display a high level of capacity and political sophistication. Through their projects on human rights issues, CSOs contribute to the values of democracy and human rights shared by both Israel and the EU, and therefore contribute to protecting and promoting the different rights highlighted in this roadmap which are fundamental to any democratic environment (freedom of association, transparency and accountability). Their activities also foster equality and the inclusion of various groups, including minority groups, in democratic debate, and therefore promote involvement of civil society in a broad way, going beyond the simple involvement of organized civil society (CSOs) and actually fostering inclusion and the representation of vulnerable individuals and groups. Civil society working on these issues is nonetheless vulnerable to a number of external threats, including bills aimed at restricting foreign funding; vilification of organisations in the national press; and occasionally even physical threats and attacks.

1.3 CAPACITY

The civil society sector in Israel is comprised of very vibrant, active and diverse CSOs, working in almost every realm of life, from civil and human rights, democracy and minority rights to the environment, gender equality, social justice and welfare, education, culture and religious freedom and pluralism. To date, there are over 34,000 NGOs, non-profit making companies and foundations in Israel registered with the Registrar of Associations in the Israeli Ministry of Justice.

The concept note mentioned several themes that require attention when engaging with civil society and which were later elaborated on by the Mapping of Civil Society study. First, there are **substantial discrepancies** between a number of large individual organisations and the rest. The large mainstream organisations, many of which are active in the provision of social services, are able to mobilise large constituencies, and are often deeply rooted in Israeli society. There are also a number of solid, well-established actors, which play alternative roles and have grown to become points of reference in areas such as advocacy, awareness raising or the development of space for civic activities and the promotion of active citizenship among Israelis. Regardless of their roles, they are all highly professional organisations, with a proven track record, and the built-in capacity to manage programmes and projects and to fundraise for their activities. They entertain strong relationships with several local and international philanthropists, including the donor community active in the support to human rights and peace building-related activities.

On the other hand, there is the vast majority of CSOs, which are still at an early stage of their organisational development or are active on a very local scale, usually on the basis of less formalised and more fluid forms of structuring. Often these organisations are engaged in a struggle to survive, which drains their resources in the short term and impairs their ability to invest in developing a proper infrastructure for the long term. This is frequently the case of the CSOs emerging in the periphery and/or from minority groups, as well as the "new generation" of social activists.

Israeli civil society is also highly **fragmented**. Many actors promote similar goals, are active in the same areas and compete for scarce resources. For these reasons, they do not always actively seek partnerships with other CSOs. Likewise, most CSOs place strong emphasis on content production and/or provision, but lack skills in CSO management. Only a few organisations focus on direct interventions to strengthen civil society and promote social capital, via empowerment, networking, mentoring and capacity development. These are the so-called "infrastructure organisations". In addition to Shatil, as the most significant infrastructure organisation in Israel, other relevant actors include Sheatufim, Matam, JDC and MINGA for social entrepreneurship.

Networking efforts, though intensifying in recent years, are not yet sufficiently developed to counterbalance the "individualistic" pattern that characterises mainstream Israeli civil society. It must be underlined that coming together in formal networks and structures, beyond *ad hoc* coalitions and campaigns, is a relatively new phenomenon among CSOs in Israel (with the exception of those in some sectors such as the environment) and has often been driven by external forces and actors. Therefore the appreciation and understanding of the benefits that networks and platforms may bring is relatively underdeveloped even within the well-established civil society sector.

Within these trends lies also the dichotomy between mainstream and **peripheral** CSOs. There are many emerging organisations from the 'periphery' that have close ties to their community and an understanding of the issues faced at grassroots level. They also face fragmentation and overlapping as several organisation works in parallel and on similar issues without proper coordination. Fragmentation causes distrust and negative impressions among government institutions and philanthropic foundations, and between CSOs themselves. Some organisations have limited organizational capacities and lack professional and specialized workers, and some of the leadership is personalized and does not encourage change. The peripheral or new nature of these organisations means that they often have a tense relationship with mainstream or existing CSOs, and some are reluctant to 'share' the representation of their constituencies with others. All these challenges lead to limited availability of funding, particularly to organisations that lack the

capacity to fundraise. Since most funding is project based, many organisations face difficulties covering their overheads and retaining staff.

A new trend is the emergence of **new social-change actors** and social movements linked to the 2011 protests. These actors are mainly engaged in economic and social issues and aim to strengthen democratic governance processes by increasing the role of the active citizen. These new actors often find it difficult to move from the stage of a spontaneous protest mass movement to a sustainable institutionalised organisation, taken seriously in policy debates, without betraying the initial momentum and set of values that brought them into being. This challenge has led some of the organisations to refrain from formally registering as charities.

Finally, shortcomings in internal governance, transparency and accountability are apparent in Israeli civil society. CSOs interviewed for the mapping study recognized the need to improve their internal governance and/or their upward and downward accountability systems. Reportedly efforts were made in the past, but to date no collective standards have been adopted, in the form of a code of conduct or a set of principles to which CSOs can adhere. The most comprehensive, though controversial, effort to improve civil society internal governance and accountability lies in the seal of effectiveness developed by Midot[1]. Whilst all of the organisations interviewed support the ambition and overall goals of the initiative, some are rather critical regarding the notion of effectiveness used by Midot.

The issue of data and information appears to be a real concern both for CSOs themselves and their funders, as was confirmed during the focus group organised with philanthropists during the mapping assignment.

2 CURRENT EU ENGAGEMENT

2.1 STRUCTURED EU DIALOGUE WITH CIVIL SOCIETY

The different sections at the EU Delegation are engaged in dialogue and consultations with Israeli CSOs, to seek their views and opinions regarding EU policies and programmes. The operations section holds meetings and consultation sessions with grant holders and potential applicants from the CSO community, to discuss EU programmes and calls for proposals. The political, trade and scientific sections hold consultations with CSOs in the framework of both the regular EU-Israel policy dialogue under the Association Agreement and the ENP progress report exercise. Consultations led by the political section also address specifically the EU- Israel informal working group on human rights and are linked to the EU's overall objectives relating to human rights where this specifically concerns Israel.

CSOs are also routinely consulted prior to launching regional programmes, to ascertain local needs and inform stakeholders on the implementation of programmes. For example, the EU Delegation has recently organized, together with colleagues from headquarters, an information

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[1] Midot was formally established as a corporation for the public benefit in 2008. It was set up by Meitav Investment House and the JDC, in response to a proposal by Midot's founder and first manager. The core activity of Midot is to rate the effectiveness of third sector organisations, i.e. their ability to create social value and improve the lives of their beneficiaries. To do this, Midot uses a rating methodology which was developed after an in-depth examination of different organisation evaluation methods, and following consultations with organisations, donors and experts in the third sector. Midot also produces sector analysis reports, which map fields of social action in Israel in order to present social investors with various social issues and to put forward parameters and recommendations for an effective model of operation (more information at: www.midot.org.il).

session with cultural CSOs on the new Med Culture programme. A similar consultation was then held with four ministries, with the view of merging both sectors' needs into the local implementation of the programme.

All thematic programmes factor in external evaluations which include a substantial element of consultation with CSOs. External evaluations seek to assess the implementation, relevance and impact of the programmes, and to strengthen their effectiveness and efficiency. Their findings inform the formulation of future relevant planning documents. Under EUPfP, meetings are held jointly with all beneficiaries (Israeli and Palestinian) as both a networking and consultative exercise.

EU member states embassies engage in similar processes including, where relevant, those related to funding opportunities.

2.2 POLICY DIALOGUE FOR AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

In addition to raising any immediate issues with the Israeli authorities in day-to-day contacts, the enabling environment is a key component in a number of formal EU-Israel policy dialogues in the framework of the ENP, most notably the annual Informal Working Group on Human Rights as well as the Sub-Committee on Political Dialogue and Co-operation which in 2014 included for the first time a substantive agenda item addressing human rights issues in the context of Israel's responsibilities in the occupied territories. The Subcommittee on Justice and Legal Matters can also provide a forum for relevant dialogue.

2.3 MAINSTREAMING CIVIL SOCIETY

Whilst some CSOs have regular and structured engagement with government, including participation in Knesset Committee meetings (for example the Committee on the Status of Women) this tends to be via relationships developed with Knesset members or political factions. The EU Delegation has encouraged direct interaction between CSOs and government in its cooperation programming and activities. Examples are Twinning and TAIEX projects which can include direct cooperation between government and CSOs. In the Twinning programme, all projects are required to hold a consultation with a wide range of stakeholders regarding proposed changes to legislation. EIDHR and Investing in People projects may also allow for government agencies to be either a partner/associate to a project or part of its steering committee. Further, dialogue between CSOs and the relevant Israeli official bodies is an inherent component of the implementation of the Euromed Youth IV programme (Ministry of Education) and the Erasmus Plus programme (Council for Higher Education) in Israel.

The CSO-LA programme encourages local authorities to work with CSOs, and indeed in all of the first five programmes the applicant local authority has partnered with a CSO. Many of the projects under EIDHR and EUPfP feature work with government as these are considered likely to have enhanced impact and sustainability. For example, projects which work in schools or on school curricula will require the agreement of the Ministry of Education.

Support to Civil Society in its own right

While a focus on CSO-government interaction is a parameter that usually fosters systemic and sustainable changes, it is important to continue supporting civil society in its own right, as an independent organized voice in democratic debate and public policy reform. Most CSOs remain mainly oriented towards service provision (mostly that outsourced by the government), and are

perceived as such by the government. The right of initiative of CSOs should be fostered, including in the approach taken by the EU in its CSO funding avenues, in order to avoid projects and CSOs to be donor-driven. The EIDHR is specifically well-placed to support actions that are proposed by CSOs. While the priorities of EIDHR calls are set by the European Commission, they remain quite open to innovative suggested actions by CSOs which would successfully match their activities and agenda with EU priorities. Also, regular consultations with CSOs ensure that the parameters of guidelines for individual calls for proposals largely take into account information and opinions set out by CSOs.

2.4 COORDINATION

Israel as a developed country and an OECD member is not a recipient of development aid, and therefore coordination with other donors is limited and is not formal.

Several member states are active on CSO funding, including Ireland, Sweden, Germany and the UK. Some of these provide core funding to specific social change NGOs such as B'Tselem, Gisha and Yesh Din. Others support individual projects only. Norway is also a substantial funder of NGO activity, while USAID is a major player and funds NGO projects via its Middle East Partnership Initiative and other local grant schemes.

At the political level, the EU Delegation holds monthly coordination meetings with EU Member States representatives at the level of Heads of Missions and Deputy Heads of Missions in the context of the EU local presidency. A key area in the EU Delegation's activity relates to human rights and this is a standing item on the agenda of Deputy Heads of Mission meetings.

The operations section holds an annual meeting on donor coordination with EU Member States, where all parties share their annual funding strategies and lists of projects funded. In addition, the head of operations section conducts regular bilateral meetings with other donors (such as USAID and major funds working in Israel) and non-EU Member States (Norway, Switzerland etc.).

2.5 LESSONS LEARNT

Many lessons learned can be drawn from the implementation of the EIDHR and CSF instruments in Israel.

EIDHR and CSF projects have set the ground for CSO cooperation with local authorities, under projects pertaining mainly to the right to education and access to social services. They have underlined the key role to be performed by local authorities, especially in the Arab sector (e.g. as the education system for Arab youth implies specific needs and requires the involvement of local actors). However, the issue of organisational capacities to run a project and structurally perform in an efficient way as an actor (whether non-state actors – NSA – or local authority – LA) cannot be addressed through the EIDHR, which is theme/impact-oriented rather than actor/support-oriented. One EIDHR project implemented in cooperation with LAs underlined the very efficient and productive cooperation existing between NSAs and LAs in Israel.

A recent EUPfP external evaluation report noted that better engagement between civil society and government would be important to maintain the programme's link to, and have a greater impact on, the Middle East Peace Process. This is particularly important in research oriented projects which should include some action orientation as well, including direct dissemination of research reports to government officials and other political stakeholders.

The EU Delegation commissioned an external evaluation of the EIDHR and CSF implementation in Israel. The conclusions overall were very positive and encouraged the EU Delegation to strengthen its support to human rights projects taking full advantage of the added-value of, and flexibility offered by, the EIDHR (smaller targeted projects, independence of action, strong reactivity, etc.). The draft report encourages the EU to support new initiatives that reach out to new audiences and to use the EIDHR and the CSF in a complementary manner rather than in one single framework. It encourages the EU Delegation to pay higher attention to the situation of Human Rights Defenders and their organisations, and the threats facing them.

PRIORITIES

PRIORITY 1
The EU Delegation will strive to preserve a vibrant civil society, and to strengthen the enabling environment in which it operates.

The mapping study has concluded that more efforts are needed to make participation spaces more inclusive and accessible both to mainstream and non-mainstream actors and groups on an equal basis. The study asserted that more resources should be made available, and that intermediaries should be supported to facilitate this process.

To implement this priority and associated recommendations, the EU Delegation will use allocations for the Civil Society Facility (CSF) to strengthen civil society and promote an enabling environment. The rational is to strengthen the capacities of the CSO sector in Israel itself, beyond its operation on specific themes (such as human rights), through various means that are not available under thematic calls for proposals.

The use of the CSF will allow the EU Delegation to explore new funding modalities that incorporate more flexibility on the one hand, and a reduction of workload on the other (in line with the need for enhanced administrative efficiency). The need to introduce more flexibility in funding modalities has been raised by the mapping study, and will also enable better accommodation of current EU priorities.

In particular, and in line with the recommendations of the mapping of civil society, the EU Delegation will strive to:

Strengthen the capacities of infrastructure CSOs to act as facilitators between the state and civil society. For example, CSOs such as Sheatufim, Public-Trust EMUN, and Shatil/NIF (particularly at the local level) will be given an opportunity to facilitate further activities such as coordinate roundtables, conduct research etc.

Reinforce CSOs capacities and advocacy role. For example, to have special attention for new initiatives and legislative proposals that would endanger the freedom and operation of CSO's.

Improve CSO internal governance, transparency and accountability to ensure they also play a part in ensuring an enabling and conducive environment. Efforts will be made either to support existing actions to develop a set of internal standards or to promote the creation of new actions towards this aim.

Promote coalition building: provide core funding to coalitions, networks and umbrella organisations.

Promote networking: the mapping study found that coming together in formal networks and structures, beyond *ad hoc* coalitions and campaigns, is a relatively new phenomenon among CSOs

in Israel and has often been driven by external forces and actors. Therefore the appreciation and understanding of the benefits that networks and platforms may bring (i.e. strengthened "agency" to influence the public domain; support for members etc.) is relatively underdeveloped within the civil society sector.

Mainstream civil society: establish regular dialogue with civil society actors already working as process facilitators and catalysers between the state and CSOs.

Reach out to smaller (grassroots) organisations which lack the financial capacity to apply for funding under the thematic call for proposals. The mapping report identified a wide range of actors that have yet to engage with the EU, including newcomers. These are often small or new organisations that have a broad link to their grassroots but are loosely organised formally.

Under CSF the EU Delegation will consider the use of a variety of measures to reach this priority:

- **Core and programme funding** to coalitions and umbrella organisations;

- **Sub-grants to reach out through intermediaries** to either smaller, less institutionalised, and/or peripheral actors; or for more fluid forms of social action;

- **Targeted or earmarked funding** for specific themes and/or specific groups of actors, or events. This maybe done through a creation of a 'fund'.

Indicators: one local call for proposal launched reflecting the above objectives.

Although geographic bilateral cooperation is limited to the Twinning programme, which solely targets public administration, enhanced involvement of civil society in the Twinning programme and projects could be achieved through systematic inclusion of consultation of civil society in the legislative reform components of Twinning projects, as has been done in recent projects supported by the EU Delegation. It is further recommended that headquarters open the door in the Twinning Manual to the formal involvement of CSOs in certain activities of Twinning projects, including sending representatives on study visits with their governmental counterparts.

PRIORITY 2

Leverage the role of CSOs as key independent actors, especially on issues prioritised by the EU (political dialogue, human rights and peace promotion)

The EU should preserve the approach taken so far under the political reporting and support provided by the EIDHR and EUPfP. Indeed the EU Delegation actively engages with CSOs on activities related to EU political priorities, while ensuring that it does not impose a specific agenda or specific actions on the CSOs.

Politically, this is ensured through regular meetings and consultations with civil society, which are able to provide their input and expertise to the different political dialogues and reports prepared by the EU, including, as standard practice of the EU, inputs to the ENP Progress Reports.

The support provided by the EU Delegation on the issues of human rights/democracy and peace promotion, corresponds to the EU's agenda for the promotion of universal values in the world and more specifically in the region. While the EU has a clear political assessment of the challenges it aims at tackling and the issues it wishes to promote (as expressed, inter alia, in Council conclusions notably on the MEPP), the EU Delegation takes particular care to leave a right of initiative to CSOs under its EIDHR and EUPfP calls for proposals. It is open to ideas and projects

emanating from CSOs, provided that these correspond to the highest standards of quality and demonstrate high chances of success.

Indicators:

Consultations with CSOs on political dialogues and reports/briefings of CSOs on EU-Israel main political meetings.

Increased support to projects of CSOs in the field of human rights/democracy and peace-promotion, fostering the right of initiative of CSOs and their ability to propose new projects ideas in line with both the EU and the CSOs' own agendas.

PRIORITY 3

Strengthen donor coordination by institutionalising meetings between the EU Head of Operations, the EU Operations Team and other donors.

The Roadmap exercise was discussed at the Human

Rights Cluster Group on 25 November 2014. Member State representatives said that they felt civil society organisations in Israel are operating at a high capacity and questioned whether further development was needed. They stressed that the main obstacles for an optimal operation of civil society in Israel are broader **political issues**. They were in agreement that efforts to facilitate CSO participation in policy dialogue would be beneficial, and stressed that some sectors, notably the Arab minority, should be prioritized in EU programmes generally.

Member state representatives expressed an interest in holding an informal coordination meeting on a quarterly basis, with one formal annual meeting.

The meetings shall discuss:

- Updates on funding programmes, projects and partners.
- Exchange of practice, especially on funding policies.

Indicator:

- Head of Operations section to meet all member state representatives on an annual basis to brief them on the activities of the EU Delegation.
- Head of Operations Section to meet key non-EU state donor counterparts once a year.
- The operations team to meet informally operations managers from member states who are actively engage with Israeli civil society three times a year.
- Cooperation item to be introduced to DHoMs meetings on a quarterly basis.

3 ACTIONS

Action tables

Priority 1
The EU Delegation will strive to preserve a vibrant civil society, and to strengthen the enabling environment in which it operates.
Indicator(s)
One call for proposals in 2015-2016 launched reflecting the above objectives. Between three and five projects to be selected.
Actions:
A. Analysis: Studies, mappings and research
In addition to its overall policy framework, the EU Delegation will use the information provided in the Mapping of Civil Society in Israel study and the evaluation of the EIDHR/CSF and EUPfP programme.
A. Policy dialogue, consultation and facilitation
Consultation with CSOs prior to publishing Call for proposal to fine tune the objectives. Analysis of consultation results.
B. Funding: Operational support including mainstreaming
The Civil Society Facility instrument will be used. The EU Delegation Operations section is responsible for this action.
Priority 2
Leverage the role of CSOs as key independent actors, especially on issues prioritised by the EU Delegation (political dialogue, human rights and peace promotion).
Indicator(s)
Consultations with CSOs on political dialogues and reports/briefings of CSOs on EU-Israel policy dialogues.
Increased support to projects of CSOs in the field of human rights/democracy and peace-promotion, fostering the right of initiative of CSOs and their ability to propose new projects ideas in line with both the EU and the CSOs' own agendas.
Actions:

A. Policy dialogue, consultation and facilitation
Regular consultations with CSOs.
B. Funding: Operational support including mainstreaming
Increased allocations for EIDHR and EUPfP.
Priority 3
Strengthen donor coordination by institutionalising meetings.
Indicator(s)
Meetings between the Head of Operations, the Operation Team and other donors.
Actions:
A. Meetings with all MS and other donors
Head of Operations section to meet all member state representatives on an annual basis for mutual briefing on their respective activities.
B. Meetings with other donors
Head of Operations Section will meet key non-EU counterparts once a year.
C. Meetings with CSO
The operations team will meet operations managers from member states who actively engage with Israeli civil society three times a year on an informal basis.

4 DASHBOARD

Country: Israel		

Process		
Area	**Indicator**	**Achievement**
Involvement of Member States in Roadmap elaboration	Member States present in the country are actively involved in the elaboration of the Roadmap	Discussions on the Civil Society Roadmap at the level of the EU Heads of Mission (25 November 2014, 6 January and 18 February 2015), including reception of written comments to different drafts previously distributed. Meetings and Interviews with the Member States active in the field of civil society. Sharing of EU studies and reviews on support to the civil society in Israel. Endorsed by MSs at the level of the EU Heads of Mission (through silent procedure) on 5 June 2015.
Consultation with local civil society	The Roadmap has been prepared on the basis of consultations with a broad range of local CSOs respecting principles of access to information, sufficient advance notice, and clear provisions for feedback and follow-up.	In 2012, the EU Delegation commissioned the Mapping study of CSOs in Israel and the Evaluation and Support to Implementation of the EIDHR and the Neighbourhood CSF. Regular meetings with the EU Delegation grantees.
Consultation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs		Meeting with representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Israel (4 March 2015).
Joint actions	Member States present in the country are actively involved in the implementation of the Roadmap priorities	Civil Society Roadmap endorsed by EU Heads of Political sector (November 2014).

| | | Civil Society Roadmap approved and endorsed by EU Heads of Mission (March 2015).

Annual Civil Society Roadmap reporting (and update) in September 2015. |

Outcome		
Priority	Indicator	Achievement
1. The EU Delegation will strive to preserve a vibrant civil society, and to strengthen the enabling environment in which it operates.	One call for proposals in 2015-2016 launched reflecting the above objectives. Between three and five projects to be selected.	Consultation with CSOs prior to publishing Call for proposal.

Analysis of consultation results.

Call for Proposal successfully launched in 2016. 4 projects selected. |
| 2. Leverage the role of CSOs as key independent actors, especially on issues prioritised by the EU Delegation (political dialogue, human rights and peace promotion). | Consultations with CSOs on political dialogues and reports/briefings of CSOs on EU-Israel policy dialogues.

Increased support to projects of CSOs in the field of human rights/democracy and peace-promotion, fostering the right of initiative of CSOs and their ability to propose new projects ideas in line with both the EU and the CSOs' own agendas. | Regular consultations with CSOs.

Increased allocations for EIDHR and EUPfP. |
| 3. Strengthen donor coordination by institutionalising meetings. | Meetings between the Head of Operations, the Operation Team and other donors. | Head of Operations section to meet all member state representatives on an annual basis for mutual briefing on their respective activities.

Head of Operations Section will meet key non-EU counterparts once a year.

The operations team will meet operations managers from member states who actively |

			engage with Israeli civil society three times a year on an informal basis.