

# Joint statement as EU Commission boosts funding to strengthen rights, equality, and democracy

[article, non-discrimination](#)

**Civil society organisations welcome the European Commission's proposal to more than double the CERV+ budget within the new seven-year EU Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF).**

**As civil society organisations committed to securing equality and non-discrimination across Europe, we welcome the increased funding for the essential objectives of protecting and promoting fundamental rights, equality and non-discrimination in the European Commission's proposal for the new seven-year budget.**

On 16 July, the European Commission unveiled its plans for the EU's 2028-2034 budget. While a detailed analysis of all its programmes is ongoing, one of the positive elements of the draft is that the new expanded programme 'Agora EU' contains a strong CERV+ strand (Democracy, Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values). CERV+ has been allocated a budget of EUR 3.593 billion (out of the total MFF budget of EUR 2 trillion), representing more than a doubling of the current CERV (Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values) budget, and remains under direct management by the European Commission.

It is important that during a time when the rule of law and fundamental rights are under attack globally as well as across the EU, the European Commission has responded and stepped up to the challenge. The continuation of CERV+ is an important tool for protecting fundamental rights and supporting civil society. The increased budget sends a clear political message that safeguarding EU values, fundamental rights, and democracy matters now more than ever.

CERV+ recommits to key objectives of protecting fundamental rights, equality and combating discrimination, in line with core EU values outlined in the EU treaties and the Charter of Fundamental Rights. It complements the objectives related to fighting against gender-based violence, violence against children and other groups at risk of such violence under the Daphne strand, as well as introducing the new objectives of supporting democracy and respect for the rule of law.

In addition, the European Commission has proposed a horizontal condition of respect for the rule of law and fundamental rights across all its programmes, which is an important step to ensuring EU money is spent in line with its laws and values and violations of fundamental rights are sanctioned.

It is now up to the European Parliament and EU Member States to protect an ambitious budget and the essence of the CERV programme, ensuring that the objectives of fundamental rights, equality, non-discrimination, democracy and respect for the rule of law are maintained in the future MFF.

## Signatories

- Center for Reproductive Rights
- End FGM European Network
- ILGA-Europe
- International Planned Parenthood Federation European Network (IPPF EN)

- TGEU – Trans Europe and Central Asia
- OII Europe – Organisation Intersex International Europe
- IGLYO – The International LGBTQI Youth & Student Organisation

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