

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

31/05/2012, Brussels Belgium

ENNA members tackle public procurement nightmares with MEPs

Call for simplicity, clarity, and flexibility for civil society heard

The European Network of National Civil Society Associations (ENNA) met with key Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) yesterday to raise awareness of the challenges facing non-profit civil society organisations working to deliver public services for local communities. Hosted in the European Parliament by Green-EFA MEP Jill Evans, ENNA members from the UK (NCVO, WCVA), Belgium (De Verenigde Verenigingen), and Poland (OFOP) presented the MEPs with a position paper supported by its Working Group on Public Procurement outlining 16 recommendations to Europe to make it easier to achieve social impact.

The representative platforms of civil society argued for adaptations to be made to the laws governing public procurement within the EU, outlining the painful realities being experienced on the grounds that are keeping voluntary organisations from getting on with the job.

“Our members highlighted the importance of tackling the collateral damage of a regime whose risk averseness is costing contracts for the non-profit sector but is also costing taxpayers money that should be spent on the frontlines but is instead being spent on bureaucracy,” said Kim Smouter, ENNA’s Secretary General, following the meeting.

MEPs applauded the entry of ENNA and its members in the debate, highlighting how little civil society is being heard in debates that have a real measurable impact on civil society’s capacity to meet the societal challenges facing Europe today. The MEPs agreed to look at exploring how a lighter regime could be implemented specifically for civil society organisations with regards to contract sizes and thresholds, as well as supporting calls for more technical assistance to be provided to enable greater access.

ENDS

Note to editors

1. ENNA ([European Network of National Civil Society Associations](http://www.enna-europe.org)) is a network composed of 23 national cross-sectoral umbrella organisations representing the interests of civil society organisations and/or providing infrastructure support to civil society organisations at local, regional, and national level. The network's members work directly and indirectly with approximately 80.000 civil society organisations. Further information on the Network or its activities can be found at <http://www.enna-europe.org>.
2. The ENNA position paper, ***Making it Easier to Achieve Social Impact***, presented to the Members of European Parliament can be found on the ENNA website in our Resource Centre under the heading Position Papers or can be directly accessed through the URL: [http://www.enna-europe.org/ennaws/publications/view/1:59:ENNA Position Paper Public Procurement Policies in Europe Making it Easier to Achieve Social Impact.html](http://www.enna-europe.org/ennaws/publications/view/1:59:ENNA_Position_Paper_Public_Procurement_Policies_in_Europe_Making_it_Easier_to_Achieve_Social_Impact.html)
3. NCVO (National Council for Voluntary Organisations) is a registered charity which gives voice and support to civil society in England. Founded in 1919, it is the largest umbrella body for the voluntary and community sector in England. It is a founding member of ENNA. Further information can be found at <http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk>.
4. WCVA (Wales Council for Voluntary Action) is the voice of the voluntary sector in Wales. WCVA represents and campaigns for voluntary organisations, volunteers and communities. WCVA provides specific advice, guidance and support to the voluntary sector on all aspects of European funding, policy and information. Further information can be found at <http://www.wcva.org.uk>.
5. De Verenigde Verenigingen is a network of civil society organisations in Flanders and Brussels. The network includes lots of associations in Flanders and Brussels, but mainly works through several sectoral umbrella organizations. Further information can be found at <http://www.deverenigdeverenigingen.be>.
6. OFOP (Ogólnopolska Federacja Organizacji Pozarządowych), is the Polish federation of NGOs, it provides voice and support for a very broad range of organisations across Poland and coordinates EU projects for Polish NGOs. Further information can be found at: <http://ofop.eu>.