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Opinion on the European Commission's legislative proposal on European Cross-Border Associations (ECBA)

European House Budapest, a pro-European Hungarian civil society organisation welcomes the European Commission's proposal for a Directive on European Cross-Border Associations (ECBA).

The purpose of the ECBA Directive is to facilitate cross-border activities of non-profit associations in the European Union by creating a special legislation for them. This act takes place in the context of regulating cross-border European initiatives.

The main objective of the Directive is particularly relevant for non-profit associations operating on both sides of a border facing different legal and administrative constraints when they

- engage with public administrations in creating cross-border partnerships;
- intend to meet people's needs by providing quality social services;
- receive public grants, state aid and EU fundings to carry out public benefit activities to citizens;
- enjoy equal treatment similar to national non-profit associations and are not discriminated against in the performance of their tasks aimed at providing services of public interest.

The Commission's proposal for creating specific legislation for ECBA is an appropriate tool to remove these barriers.

We see the ECBA Directive as the beginning of a process in which

- different Member States' interpretations of public good will be simplified and possibly harmonised which can improve the regulatory environment and enhance citizens' collective engagement for the public good;
- public benefit activities carried out by the ECBA can be recognised in other Member States thus stimulating and highlighting the value and unused potential to promote the work of ECBA;
- cooperation between public administrations and non-profit organisations participating in the ECBA will become more effective in order to develop cross-border partnerships.


European House Budapest believes that the ECBA Directive paves the way for a new framework for cross-border cooperation of civil society organisations and their associations and foundations. The strategic importance of this framework is enhanced by the recent progress made in the EU enlargement process.

The ECBA should therefore ensure that the widest possible range of civil society organisations can contribute to cross-border activities for the European public good. The EU's macro-regional strategies have a significant and unused potential to promote the work of the ECBA.

We propose that Articles 3 and 7 of the ECBA Directive include non-EU based associations or foundations as equal participants, thereby further strengthening the democratic and inclusive nature of ECBA.

European House Budapest is looking forward to the start of the process launched by the ECBA Directive, which aims to improve cross-border activities, including the provision of quality services of general interest by civil society organisations across Europe.

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