



# The Role of the **Third Sector** in Europe



## ONLINE AUTUMN CONFERENCE 24-25 SEPTEMBER 2020

**THURSDAY, 24 SEPTEMBER**

*All timings are CEST*

14.45-15.00 **PARTICIPANTS ENJOY A COFFEE AND CHAT BEFORE THE CONFERENCE STARTS**

15.00-15.15 **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**  
**Francesca Mineo, Chair, EUConsult**

15.15-16.15 **TRENDS AND CONCERNS IN THE THIRD SECTOR**  
**Hanneke de Bode, Co-founder, ODS, Belgium**  
Third sector organisations in Europe come in different shapes and sizes. They cover a great variety of societal issues and have as much in common as they have differences. Yet, from our practice at ODS, we can distil a number of trends and concerns that we would like to share with you in order to compare notes and deepen our insight into what is happening at a more abstract level and what our response could be.

16.15-16.30 *Networking break*

16.30-17.30 **ROUND TABLE – OUTLOOK FROM COVID-19: THE SOCIAL SOCIETY WE WANT TO BUILD**  
**Facilitated by: Martin Georgi, EUConsult Board Member, Germany**  
**Jill Bonjean, Muster for Good, UK**  
**Mary O’Kennedy, O’Kennedy Consulting, Ireland**  
**Jeremy Smith, Advocacy Hub, UK**  
**Uday Thakkar, Red Ochre, UK**

Consultants share their experiences on how the pandemic has reinvigorated or refocused the work of some organisations, and in other cases has made the work more difficult. We will also discuss how the experiences of the past months can or should affect our future consultancy work in a struggle for a better society.

- 10.00-10.15 **PARTICIPANTS ENJOY A COFFEE AND CHAT BEFORE THE DAY KICKS OFF**
- 10.15-11.15 **HOW DG EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS SEES THE THIRD SECTOR AND ITS FUTURE DEVELOPMENT IN EUROPE**  
**Maria Ilies, Policy Officer Social Inclusion, DG Employment and Social Affairs, European Commission, Belgium**  
 DG Employment and Social Affairs interacts regularly with organisations of the Third Sector in various ways, which will be described. From these interactions, some key issues have arisen which the sector will face in the coming years. The sector will need support to develop its themes and its way of working and functioning. Experts such as consultants can play a useful role in supporting organisations in the Third Sector in their development, and on the other hand there is significant support from institutions and funders such as the EU, which is redefining its priorities for the coming years.
- 11.15-11.30 *Networking break*
- 11.30-12.30 **THE RELATIONSHIP OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS AND EU INSTITUTIONS**  
**Conny Reuter, Longstanding Civil Society Leader at EU-level, Belgium**  
 The relationship of civil society organisations to the EU institutions has developed in the past years in a variety of ways, depending on the institutions as well as on the types of organisations (networks, platforms, pressure and advocacy groups, service providers, etc). In some cases the relationship is functioning quite well, in others the relationship is weak and underdeveloped. To continue to be relevant in the European context, civil society organisations will need to build on proven models of success in their interaction with the institutions, but also to develop and innovate in their own work, improve their presence in various sectors and publics (f.ex. Eastern Europe), and improve their communication and cooperation.
- 12.30-13.00 *Lunch and networking*
- 13.00-13.30 **AN INSIDERS VIEW OF THE THIRD SECTOR IN BELGIUM**  
**Ilja De Coster, Consultant, Supporting Fundraising, Belgium**  
 Size doesn't matter - the Belgians must have thought. So they made a quite complex country, and thus a complex third sector. In this brief session, we share some insights on how the complexity of the country affects the third sector and the way consultants can work. This session gives a personal view, with anecdotes from 20 years of professional activity in Belgian civil society. Some of it might actually be useful for consultants in other countries!
- 13.30-14.30 **CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS IN EASTERN EUROPE – THEIR EXPECTATIONS AND EXPERIENCE WITH EUROPE**  
**Aida Bećirović, Director, Schüler Helfen Leben, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina**  
 Aida Bećirović will focus on the problems and challenges youth organisations and young people in Eastern and South Eastern Europe face when it comes to EU-funded calls for project proposals and the implementation of the projects, and how they view the European Union in general. She will also talk about why and how the EU has to change its approach to young people in the region in order to make it possible for them to apply and learn how to implement the projects.
- 14.30-14.45 *Networking break*
- 14.45-15.45 **WORKSHOP: THE BUSINESS OF BEING A CONSULTANT IN CHANGING TIMES**  
**Robin Brady, Consultant, UK**  
 How resilient is your business? The changing environment for civil society organisations is also a changing environment for consultancies working with civil society organisations. So how do you cope? Learn about some of the different ways you can make your business more resilient, while developing a new pipeline of potential clients.
- 15.45-16.00 **CLOSING DISCUSSION**