



# NEF State of Play

Network<sup>of</sup>  
European  
Foundations

Update September 2024

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## Alliance for Gender Equality in Europe

**Foundations involved:** Fondation CHANEL (Chair), Fonds L'Oréal pour les Femmes, King Baudouin Foundation, Bodossaki Foundation, JPMorgan Chase, Fondation de France, Fondation RAJA-Danièle Marcovici

**Forecasted budget 2024:** approx. €2.5 million

**Timeframe:** Current phase from 2021 to 2024. A strategic consolidation for 2025-2027 is currently under development.

### Background:

The Alliance for Gender Equality in Europe (the Alliance) was created in spring 2021 to support progress for gender equality and women's rights in Europe. The Alliance supports the strengthening of small, frontline organisations working on gender equality in Europe to improve the lives of individuals, ensure that they have equal access to opportunities, and help them to live free from violence, while also addressing the underlying structures and power dynamics that uphold inequality and exclusion.

### Latest developments:

#### *2023 economic opportunities fund*

Grants awarded to 26 small and medium-size frontline organisations under the 2023 economic opportunities fund are ongoing and mid-term reporting was completed in July 2024.

Grantees are on track with the initiatives being funded. The rise of the far-right, inflation, reduced public funds, and a restrictive political environment in Hungary emerged as key challenges for grantees. Despite this, the 2023 fund has already achieved positive results in expanding economic opportunities for marginalised women and LGBTQIA+ individuals.

To ensure the reporting process is accessible for small frontline organisations, the Alliance team introduced oral narrative reporting. This approach led to several key benefits:

- Reduced time required from grantee partners in preparing a report.
- More time for grantee partners to focus on their core mission.
- Improved communication for those who face challenges with written English.
- Better understanding of the grantees' work by the Alliance team.
- Stronger relationships between the Alliance team and grantee partners.

#### *Organisational development grants*

In April 2024, the Alliance introduced new organisational development grants. Each grantee and partner can request up to €15,000 in one or several grants, which will remain available on a rolling basis until 30 May 2025. The grants aim to enhance the sustainability and capacity of these organisations, while offering them the flexibility to define their own development needs within their unique contexts. Thus far, six out of 28 eligible organisations have had their development grants approved.

#### *Site visits*

We conducted site visits to grantees in Sweden (Internationella Kvinnoföreningen i Malmö), the Netherlands (Single SuperMom), France (Contemporaines, Lallab, MedFemiNiswiya.Network), Belgium (Arab Women's Solidarity Association), Czech Republic (ALICE), and Hungary (NANE and Romaverstias). During our site visits, we also met with other stakeholders active in the gender equality sector, such as civil society organisations and women's funds.

#### *Steering committee of June 2024*

In June 2024, the Alliance held a steering committee meeting during which members approved new objectives for the growth strategy, updated communications goals, and revised governance structures. The committee also

agreed to the creation of a new grantmaking area focused on movement building. Additionally, a learning session was hosted on the anti-gender movement.

#### *Strategy consolidation process: Evaluation report*

With support from two consultants, the Alliance continued its evaluation process, which involved gathering data on previous contributions, achievements, and lessons learned. This process, conducted through interviews and surveys, resulted in a report summarising key findings and recommendations. These insights will inform the consolidation of the Alliance's strategic and operational framework for our next phase (2025-2029).

#### *Annual Report*

The 2023 Annual Report provides a snapshot of our key activities and figures from the past year. It also spotlights our diverse grantee partners and the important work they do, as well as our lessons learned in the areas of grantmaking, organisational development, strategy, and operations.

#### *Welcoming a new Program Officer*

In May 2024, the Alliance welcomed Maria Cipriani as its new Program Officer. Maria Cipriani will provide grant management, implement capacity strengthening activities, and provide essential coordination support to grantee partners.

## **European Alliance for Socially Engaged Arts**

**Foundations involved:** Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (Chair), Cariplo Foundation, King Baudouin Foundation, 'la Caixa' Foundation, European Cultural Foundation, Moleskine Foundation.

**Budget 2024- 2026:** approx. €1.7 million

**Timeframe:** Pilot phase- July 2024 to end 2026.

#### Background:

The European Alliance for Socially Engaged Arts (EASEA) is a new funding programme, formally created and operationalised as a collaborative partnership under NEF mid-summer this year, to grow support for and recognition of arts organisations working for positive social change at a European level. The Alliance aims at building capacity and international connections of socially engaged arts organisations within the European arts ecosystem, with a focus on influencing policy and public investment.

Arts organisations play a key role as civil society actors to advance democracy and create positive social impact. Despite some level of support for socially engaged arts practice and community engagement growing in the last decade, the impact and visibility of their work often stays locked at the local or national level. A recent survey conducted by the partner Foundations demonstrates that despite differences in context, socially engaged arts organisations across Europe, often, address similar issues and fight for similar causes, ranging from climate change to increasing accessibility or supporting public health strategies and wellbeing. By bringing together local changemakers, new solutions can be generated to influence the wider European ecosystem and to deliver greater impact locally.

EASEA will support the arts sector to drive narrative change demonstrating why social engagement is central rather than secondary to the sector's mission, by scaling organizational and leadership capacity, increasing visibility and international connections and fostering a space for influencing policy and investment.

#### Latest developments:

##### *Governance:*

Multilateral partnership agreement signed by six partner Foundations and NEF in mid July 2024.

Four more foundations expected to formally commit and join the Alliance before the public launch of the project in January 25.

Governing bodies currently include the Steering Committee formed of members appointed by the partner Foundations, the Chair of the SC, the Executive Committee and the Programme Manager (role under recruitment). There are also three working groups on the fellowship, advocacy and communications respectively.

A Consultative Group of external stakeholders has been set up to provide feedback and advice (non-binding).

At the last SC of August, Luis Jeronimo, Director Equity at CGF has been unanimously elected as Chair of the SC until end of 2026.

A dedicated Programme Manager embedded at NEF is to be appointed later in the fall, once the recruitment process is finalized. In the meantime, Irini Voulezakou, NEF Senior Hub Lead is coordinating the project with Luis Correia, Gulbenkian Foundation PM.

A detailed governance plan is to be developed and submitted for approval in the SC in late 2024/early 2025, once the PM and different Suppliers/implementation partners are in place. This will enhance the integration of the project into the NEF portfolio.

*Kick off phase and Launch event:*

Launch event of the EASEA scheduled on 23-24 January 2025 in Lisbon: This is envisioned as a wider convening of the arts sector, philanthropy and policy makers to reflect on and highlight the key role of civic arts and arts for social change movement across Europe. The purpose is also to launch the open call for Fellows.

To advance with the ‘content’ of the fellowship programme, EASEA launched a Request for Proposals in July for the design and implementation of the inaugural edition of the Fellowship programme. The fellowship programme will encompass capacity-building, training, networking and project development support for the Fellows and their organisation. 12 out of 18 invited Suppliers have expressed interest and will be submitting a proposal. Selection is expected to be finalized by mid-October.

In parallel, an invitation to Tender for a Comms agency to develop the programme’s brand identity and support the launch event has been sent out mid-September so that the agency can start its work in November. The need for external comms support will be reassessed mid-2025 once the NEF/EASEA PM is in place.

Next in person Steering Committee will take place on the 18th and 19th of November in Brussels at the PH.

## **Civitates - A Philanthropic Initiative for Democracy and Solidarity in Europe**

Foundations involved: Adessium Foundation, Bodossaki Foundation, Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, Erste Stiftung, European Cultural Foundation, Ford Foundation, Fondation de France, Fritt Ord Foundation, King Baudouin Foundation (Chair), Mercator Switzerland, Oak Foundation, Limelight Foundation, Luminate Foundation, Isocrates Foundation, Open Society Foundations, Philanthropy for Impact, Porticus, Robert Bosch Stiftung, Rudolf Augstein Stiftung, Sigrid Rausing Trust, Stefan Batory Foundation, Veronika, and Shoepflin Foundation.

Budget 2024: around 4 million €

Timeframe: 2024-2026

Background:

Civitates is the European Democracy Fund. It provides funding to organisations that protect civic space (offline and online), the freedoms to assemble and associate, and that enable access to trustworthy information. Through its three portfolios (or “sub funds”) – civic power; tech and democracy; media – it supports strong, inclusive and resilient civil society networks to defend civil liberties; a solid regulatory framework at European and national level to safeguard civil public discourse and hold Big Tech to account; and independent public interest media to support a healthy information ecosystem. In addition to providing long-term funding, Civitates has a Funding Plus component, through which the fund supports capacity development, special projects and convenings. At the time of writing, Civitates had [22 foundation partners](#).

## Latest developments

**Strategy:** the new [5-year strategy](#), which was adopted by the Steering Committee in March in Amsterdam, was widely circulated among Civitates stakeholders. We received positive feedback (clarity, relevance, complementarity with other initiatives, etc.). The team organised a series of public webinars in April-May to present our updated objectives and priorities, which drew some 200 participants. The webinars are available on our [YouTube channel](#).

In conjunction with the launch of the new strategy, we revamped our [website](#), brand and colour palette and are in the process of preparing the re-launch of our newsletter.

**New foundation partners:** following the launch of the new strategy, 7 new foundations joined or re-joined the pooled fund: EFC/Philanthropy for Impact (all subfunds), Ford Foundation (SF2), Luminate (SF2), Open Society Foundation (SF2), Veronika (SF3), Bodossaki (SF3), Shoepflin (SF3). Conversations are on-going with another 3 active prospects. Philanthropy for Impact is the second Polish donor and Bodossaki the first Greek foundation to join Civitates.

**Partnership building and fundraising:** the Fund Director co-authored a concept note with consultant Daniel Stid to make the case for a stronger trans-Atlantic alliance of pro-democracy donors and to inform conversations with US-based foundations, think tanks and CSOs and explore collaboration opportunities. A new version of the note will be circulated to the Steering Committee in the next few weeks. In parallel, the Fund Director is working with a consultant to develop a HNWI engagement strategy. Civitates also supported a mapping effort led by Philea Democracy Network consultants to assess the appetite among climate, gender and other donors to frame their work in a democracy context. Conversations are on-going with EU institutions on how to increase and align public and private funding.

**Grant-making:** following the adopting of the new strategy, and for the first time in years, Civitates launched a series of open calls for proposals:

- SF1 open call in six priority countries, to support national civil society coalitions defending civic space. We received 67 proposals, of which 52 are eligible and the selection process is under way. We expect the new cohort to start in January 2025 (2-year core grants).
- SF1 open call in Austria, to support 6 civil society projects to defend civic space and address democratic decline. We received 24 proposals, of which 16 are eligible and the selection process is on-going. We expect projects to start in January 2025 (2-year project grants).
- SF2 open call for organizations working in France and Ireland to support the implementation and enforcement of the DSA at the national level (2-year grants). The deadline for submission is 9 September. We also have a closed call for organizations working on tech regulation at the EU level that can support the national level cohort. We expect to fund six organizations at national level and 3 EU-level organizations. Finally we have kept the Opportunity Fund (smaller grants up to €30k) for field building and coordination activities at national and cross-national level.
- Civitates also expanded the remit of its learning grants (up to Eur 5k) to include support for well-being and psycho-social security among our grantees, and we have already received several requests.

**Learning:** we have commissioned an external learning review for the Civitates Ukraine Solidarity Fund, which will be completed by the end of November. We are also working with a Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) consultant to develop our MEL agenda and practice.

**Publications:** Our 2023 annual report is available [here](#). It gives a voice to our grantee partners, highlighting their successes and the challenges they face. In addition, an internal mid-year update was circulated to all Civitates foundation partners at the end of August, including a commentary from the team on trends and lessons learnt across the field.

## European Artificial Intelligence & Society Fund

Foundations involved: Luminate (Co-Chair), Stiftung Mercator (Co-Chair), Adessium Foundation, Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, Fondazione Compagnia di San Paolo, Ford Foundation, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, King Baudouin Foundation, Limelight Foundation, Mozilla Foundation, Oak Foundation, Open Society Foundations, Porticus, Robert Bosch Foundation

Budget 2024: 3,1 million euros

Timeframe: 2020-2025

### Background:

The European AI & Society galvanises resources from funders and uses these to empower public interest advocates across Europe to shape Artificial Intelligence to better serve people and society. Too often the development, use and regulation of Artificial Intelligence is driven by the interests of governments and the tech industry without adequate concern for the individuals and communities it affects. This can lead to AI that exacerbates social injustice, amplifies structural inequalities, infringes people's rights, undermines democracy and compromises climate action.

We support public interest experts and advocates in Europe working towards AI policy and governance that secures fundamental rights, challenges social injustice and promotes fair, inclusive and sustainable societies.

### Latest developments:

#### **New Initiatives**

In July we launched the [Build & Breakthrough](#), two new initiatives to empower public interest advocates working on social and technology justice across Europe to drive the agenda on AI.

**Our Build Initiative** deepens our commitment to supporting a diverse and resilient civil society ecosystem working on AI in Europe with [renewed funding for 18 of our current grantees](#).

**Our Breakthrough Initiative** seizes the current window of strategic opportunities to fight for AI that upholds our shared democratic values. We are fundraising an additional €10m for four new grantmaking programmes to support bold work to use European regulation to challenge the harmful impacts of AI, work collectively towards global governance grounded in human rights, build a new political agenda for AI in the public interest and write new narratives that centre people – not the tech industry.

We have an internal process in place for developing each of the grantmaking programmes under the Breakthrough Initiative and we have begun consultation and outreach with stakeholders, including our current partner foundations.

We have also now publicly shared our [mid-term strategy update](#) on the website and on social media, with great support from our partner network in ensuring a wide reach. We are also updating our communications strategy to align with the new initiatives.

#### **Grantmaking**

##### **Grant renewals – Build Initiative**

From July 2024 - December 2025 we have [extended funding totaling €1.9m to 18 grantees](#) within our existing community so that a core civil society infrastructure has sustained capacity and expertise to engage in shaping AI across a wide range of contexts and approaches.

This funding will support those most affected by the impacts of AI, including racialised people, sex workers, people with disabilities and migrants to be active advocates in AI debates. It will enable civil society to coordinate policy action and spearhead evidence-based policy proposals on AI accountability, rooted in lived-experiences and human rights expertise.

Info on grantees and their work [here](#), and about the lessons from the renewal process [here](#).

## AI & Market Power Fellowships - Breakthrough Initiative

At the end of May, we launched [the AI & Market Power Fellowships](#) with \$500,000 funding provided by OSF. This Fellowship Programme supports investigative research and critical analysis into the political economy of large-scale AI systems and aims to sharpen our collective understanding of market concentration in the AI ecosystem. This work will create a body of knowledge for the field that will inform the work of CSOs, regulators, competition authorities, legislators, start-ups, and other businesses, and provide a foundation to generate new thinking on how to contend with market power dynamics in the complex ecosystem of large-scale AI.

We received 201 applications from 39 countries. The EAISF team shortlisted 30 applications which were then reviewed by the expert panel (Vera Franz, Udbhav Tiwari, Andrew Strait, Erin Simpson, Philip Marsden). During the selection panel meeting, the group selected 8 applications, totalling \$479,175.80. Selected fellows will be announced soon.

## Making Regulation Programme – Breakthrough Initiative

Our team has completed the strategy and planning for the Making Regulation Work Programme, and the Steering Committee will be discussing and approving grantmaking plans at the next meeting on 11-12 September.

We plan to launch funding opportunities in October 2024.

## Growing the Fund & strengthening the field

**The Steering Committee and Fund's team have set a goal to bring an additional €10m into the field over the next 18 months**, aiming to scale philanthropy's response to ensure rapid developments in AI serve people and society, now and into the future.

In recent months, our existing and new partners have already pledged more than €4.5m towards our target, which will allow us to start strategic grantmaking under the new Breakthrough Initiative programmes quickly. We've welcomed new partners to the Fund and new partnerships are currently being formalised.

**In August we published a new report "[Towards an AI Act that serves people and society](#)"** that examines how philanthropy can support and resource public interest advocates in the implementation of the new European AI regulation. With effective implementation and enforcement, the AI Act presents an opportunity to challenge the harmful impacts of AI on people and communities and demand accountability over its use. We commissioned this report to help guide resources towards organisations and movements that can advocate, litigate, gather evidence, monitor, campaign and build coalitions to make sure the new AI regulation serves people and society.

**Our next funders' learning lunch on 26 September will** feature the authors of the report from the European Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ECNL) and will provide funders working on technology, social justice, and human rights with an opportunity to delve deeper into the findings and recommendations of this important work and get involved.

## Internal updates

In April and May this year we welcomed two new colleagues into our team. [Peggye Totozafy](#) is the Senior Partnerships Manager and leads our engagement with philanthropic foundations, and [Johanna Pruessing](#) is our new Senior Programme Manager working on the programming of the new Breakthrough Initiative, bringing rich expertise on grantmaking and programming for technology and social justice.

## Our priorities in 2024-2025:

- Use the pivotal moment for AI to bring additional €10m into the field over the next 18 months.
- Launch the funding opportunities under the Making Regulation Work programme in October 2024.
- Develop our new Breakthrough Initiative and do grantmaking within the four programmes of the initiative.
- Continue supporting our community of grantees through community building, forging new partnerships and effective collaborations among grantee partners.
- Continue providing flexible support to our grantees to support development of leadership and fundraising.



## European Fund for the Balkans

Foundations involved: King Baudouin Foundation (Chair); Robert Bosch Stiftung; ERSTE Stiftung

Budget 2024: 1.3 million €

Timeframe: 2007-2025

NEF-EFB has a registered representation office in Belgrade, Serbia.

### Background:

The European Fund for the Balkans is a joint endeavour that envisions, runs and supports initiatives aimed at strengthening democracy, fostering European integration and affirming the role of the Western Balkans in addressing Europe's emerging challenges. The current programme strategy is focused on three overarching areas – fostering democratisation, enhancing regional cooperation and boosting EU integration. By implementing different projects, initiatives and activities, the Fund supports the process of affirming the political credibility of the enlargement policy across the Western Balkans region, improving regional cooperation among the civil society based on solidarity and demand-driven dialogue, as well as providing means and platforms for informed and empowered citizens to take action and demand accountable institutions and democracy.

### Latest developments:

Latest developments:

#### **Engaged Democracy Initiative**

The Engaged Democracy Initiative (EDI) brought together local movements, organizations, and citizens to promote democratic values across the Western Balkans. After appointing Local Advisors in each WB country, they proposed and implemented projects during the spring and summer of 2024. Regarding the very impactful mining agenda of various governments of the region, a regional meeting in Bor, Serbia, with participants from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, and North Macedonia was held. In June, a regional meeting on urban commons, focusing on housing, public spaces, services, art, and infrastructure, took place in Belgrade.

#### **Response Hub**

In 2021, the Response Hub, a micro-granting instrument providing a flexible response to local partners, has been established. Each year, the Response hub has three calls (January, May/June, and September). Until now, around 140 initiatives have been supported.

#### **Engaged Balkans Platform**

The Engaged Balkans Platform, launched in 2022, represents a safe online place for over 500 members of the EDI network fostering connection, knowledge sharing, and collaboration. This year, two online coaching sessions on mobile storytelling were organized exclusively for platform members. To stay informed, members receive a bi-monthly newsletter with the latest posts and updates from the platform.

#### **Balkans in Europe Policy Advisory Group (BiEPAG)**

BiEPAG just went through an internal evaluation process, whose results are now being included into the new EFB strategy for 2025-2029.

BiEPAG fellow Alejandro Estesos Perez finalized the policy output of his BiEPAG fellowship programme at the CSEES Graz - "A triangle of (mis)trust - Hungary's enlargement stakes in Serbia and Kosovo". This policy analysis and brief are tackling Orbán's multifaceted relations with the six countries of the Western Balkans, among which Serbia undoubtedly stands out as his preferred partner. Several concerns emerge not only in relation to Budapest's enlargement vision but also with respect to its political ties to other countries in the region-where Kosovo stands out as the most critical case.

The policy brief is available in English, Serbian, Macedonian and Albanian.

Long read: <https://shorturl.at/rvyN4>

Short read: <https://shorturl.at/iptz2>

The latest format BiEPAG introduced, *“BiEPAG to the point”* offers a brief overview of the main facts on current topics from the Western Balkans region and EU.

The 7th episode of the "Seriously Balkans - The BiEPAG Talks" podcast was about the analysis of the elections in North Macedonia. BiEPAG Coordinator Florian Bieber hosted the discussion on the presidential and parliamentary elections in North Macedonia with Simonida Kacarska, Director of the European Policy Institute (EPI) - Skopje / Member of the EFB Steering Committee and Lura Pollozhani, Researcher at the University of Graz / BiEPAG member. They analyzed the results and the prospects for future developments and power games. The 8th episode touched upon the results of the June 2nd local elections in Serbia. BiEPAG member Tena Prelec was the host and she discussed this topic with her guests - Tamara Brankovic from CRTA and Aleksandar Ivkovic from European Western Balkans.

### **Bee Alumni**

The beeEFB Alumni Network launched the call for the third beeEffect program edition, looking for new young professionals with impact-making potential in various domains including education, employment, leadership, health, and civic engagement. 144 applications from across the region and EU were received, and a new cohort of 12 participants was selected. The new group and their mentors will take part in the 5-month programme that has been launched on 13th of September in Podgorica.

## **EPIM – European Philanthropic Initiative for Migration**

### Partner Foundations:

Adessium Foundation, Aga Khan Foundation, Barrow Cadbury Trust, Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, Compagnia di San Paolo, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Fondation de France, The Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, King Baudouin Foundation, Oak Foundation, Robert Bosch Stiftung, Open Society Foundations, Fondation Abbé Pierre, Porticus Foundation, Kahane Foundation, Paul Hamlyn Foundation, Fred Foundation

### Budget 2024:

3.6 million €

### Timeframe:

EPIM has existed since 2005. Its current strategy covers the timeframe 2024-2028.

### Background:

EPIM is Europe's largest and longest standing philanthropic collaborative working on issues of migration and inclusion. We fund and nurture alliances and partnerships, curate the migration ecosystem and cultivate a shared narrative for belonging and democratic resilience.

Working in a collaborative manner, EPIM's Mission is to build dialogue, alliances and partnerships between those working on migration directly and indirectly, with a systemic approach. We combine funds, expertise and networks to connect and support people, organisations, institutions and movements to change the way migration is being addressed and perceived.

EPIM's vision is a Europe where migration is accepted as part of its history, present and future, where its societies thrive, and where migrants belong, assert their rights and have the agency to shape their future. We see change as complex, interconnected and never linear. We believe that to truly change migration in Europe for the better, we need to sustain it by creating a shared sense of purpose amongst a diversity of actors across the ecosystem. See [EPIM's Pathway to Change](#).

EPIM's approach is structured around four Action Pillars, three Thematic Clusters and a Political Response, Opportunity and Innovation Fund.

### Latest developments:

EPIM's Renewed Visual Identity – In April, EPIM became the European Philanthropic Initiative for Migration. Our new logo symbolises what this new EPIM stands for: ecosystems, interconnectedness, trust, networks, alliances, and humanity, and reflects our transformation from a philanthropic re-granter to our new role as an ecosystem curator and field catalyst in the migration space in Europe.

EPIM welcome two new philanthropic partners to the fold in May – The Paul Hamlyn Foundation represented by Letícia Ishibashi and the Fred Foundation represented by Manou Boulogne, who joined the new EPIM Forum.

The Inaugural EPIM Forum – EPIM and its partner the International Alumni Centre are making steady progress in the planning of the inaugural Forum gathering in Brussels in November. All 17 new members are now onboarded and will join our partner foundations online and at the meeting.

#### Programme Updates:

*Learning Journey in Brussels* - At the beginning of May, we embarked on a journey with 19 partners (CSOs and foundations) to learn and connect in a way that centres personal histories and relationships to migration. Read more about the goals of the long-term learning journey [here](#).

*CEE Network Gathering in Bratislava* – At the end of May, EPIM convened 50 partners from across CEE in Slovakia for the inaugural gathering of the Central and Eastern European Network on Migration and Inclusion Gathering, hosted by partner Mareena, focussing on the creation of inclusive societies in the region.

#### EPIM's New Cluster Updates:

##### **Cluster on the Future of European Migration Governance**

Aim: Support civil society organisations in co-shaping viable and effective alternatives to migration governance defined by deterrence, ensuring alignment with existing EU law and international human rights standards

Partners: Transition Grants in Progress – New strategy being built

Updates:

- Since the beginning of 2024, EPIM is co-creating systems map of the Migration Governance system in collaboration with practitioners who have both lived and professional experience, as well as expert knowledge of relevant laws, policies, and issues. This sensemaking process along with the resulting map have been helping gain clarity about the system and will facilitate identifying opportunities for leverage.
- It will also help develop an approach to learning, adapting, and understanding the system, enabling EPIM to engage it effectively through an appropriate Migration Governance cluster strategy, to pinpoint strategic leverage pathways to invest resources, networks, and energy, supporting organisations and initiatives that are currently working along, or are capable of working along, these identified pathways.

##### **Cluster on Building Inclusive Societies in CEE**

Aim: Since 2022, EPIM has been instrumental in aiding war-displaced Ukrainians across CEE, supporting over 24 projects in the region. Earlier this year, EPIM's strategy pivoted to offer holistic, comprehensive, and long-term support for inclusive community building across CEE. Goals include creating intersectional and trans-sectoral networks among diverse stakeholders; addressing migrant needs within a broader societal context; cultivating belonging and strengthening democracy across CEE; and supporting migrant leadership

Partners: Mareena, Communities of the Future, AMIGA, MigAct, Konsorcium CZ, Hands Across Romania, eLiberare, AIPG

- Our partners span the region, addressing critical infrastructural issues like healthcare and mental health, access to education, the creative use of public spaces, civic engagement, job creation and entrepreneurship
- EPIM launched the CEE Network for Migration and Inclusion in Bratislava in May

### Cluster on Dignified Work and Housing

Aim: Creating the economic and social conditions to belonging through a future of work that centres on the dignity of all work and all workers, and a future where decent and affordable housing is a reality for all

Partners: European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE), Chico Mendes, European Sex Workers' Rights Alliance; Fonds de Dotation Merci, Next Step, ORBIT, Karibu, ACOF, Jobs4Refugees

Updates:

- EPIM continues to fund actors chosen in 2022 from its open call on Decent Work and Adequate Housing for All. The projects focus on ecosystem building and involve collaborations across sectors, as well as between CSOs and other actors, including local authorities, the corporate sector, and trade unions.
- In Fall 2023, EPIM kicked off its prototype sensemaking and grantmaking pilot to address the deskilling and under-skilling of migrants, focussing on the situation of people coming into Europe being pushed or guided into work and jobs beneath their level of skills and qualifications, as a result impacting their capacity to belong in European societies.
- EPIM tested a more inclusive, democratic and accountable sensemaking and grantmaking approach, premised on the idea that collective ideation leads to more pragmatic and impactful actions as part of the process involving: the establishment of a Council of Practitioners; and problem ideation and sensemaking workshops with the Council to identify leverage pathways for action.
- As a result, the Council pinpointed new grantee partners working upon three pathways identified: building alliances and strengthening levels of trust within the migrant jobs ecosystem to address skills and qualification recognition; enhancing coordination between support services for newly arrived migrants; and providing reliable information or better utilising information to navigate bureaucracy. The pathways are based on needs, influence, potential impact, relevance of the size of the EPIM grant and existence of previous cross-sectoral alliances or an inclination for change.

Transition and Closing Grants to Consolidate Progress:

2024 will be a year of transition for EPIM, with a new five-year strategy in place. In this context, EPIM is providing eligible partners with transition/closing grants, ranging between EUR 20K and 30K (depending on the size of the organisation's average annual budget).

## HUB for Democratic Culture – Faktor D

Foundations involved: Robert Bosch Stiftung, ERSTE Stiftung, Stiftung Mercator Schweiz

Budget 2024: 650,000 €

Timeframe: 2023-2026

Background:

In the DACH region (Germany, Austria, Switzerland), many organizations, individuals, and foundations are working with high motivation and resources to defend and further develop democracy through innovative solutions. However, these solutions are often conceived and implemented within national contexts, limiting their scalability and fostering competition rather than collaboration. There is a notable absence of a societal function that strategically brings together these democratic actors across borders.

Faktor D - The Strategic Network for Democracy seeks to address this gap. As a network, it unites and strengthens democratic forces, acting as an aggregator for new solutions, promoting scalability, and providing a platform for

mutual learning. Through cross-border collaboration, it seeks to find common answers to the challenges that democracy faces today. The initiative targets organizations and initiatives that can act as multipliers, playing an activating, reinforcing, and supportive role within their areas of influence.

Faktor D is implemented through three partners: Initiative Offene Gesellschaft e.V. in Germany, Stiftung Dialog - Campus für Demokratie in Switzerland, and Demokratie21 in Austria.

#### Latest developments:

### **Our Missions**

In our missions, we focus on a central topic through open discourse events and innovative processes. We initiate an open call for an intersectoral group of 25 people to develop solutions or scale existing ones. Through a co-budgeting process, participants can then decide to fund the most promising ideas. This collaborative approach ensures diverse perspectives and impactful outcomes.

### **Mission 2 - STRG Depolarization**

We have launched our second mission "STRG Depolarization", only a few weeks after concluding the first innovation process. While we were still processing the payments for the completed projects, we thoroughly evaluated the last innovation process and identified several areas for improvement. As a result, we took the time to enhance the second innovation process.

We introduced a new workshop, adjusted the duration of existing ones, and enhanced facilitation by improving small group management and refining the Cobudget process. These changes fostered greater collaboration and a stronger focus on systemic change. Additionally, by implementing Kumospace, we found an online tool that effectively encourages more interaction among participants throughout the process.

While planning these improvements, we also immersed ourselves deeply in the new theme. In Switzerland alone, we conducted over 30 interviews with experts, which helped us refine the theme and identify three key challenges: reducing news fatigue, enhancing online debate culture, and dismantling enemy images.

Other activities within this mission have also resonated well. At "D64", we are contributing to the development of a code of conduct for civil society's interaction with AI. Furthermore, we are part of the impact alliance AI4Democracy.

### **Festival: Mismatch**

The new [democracy festival Mitmacht](#) was organised from September 4 to 6, 2024 at the Katholische Universität Eichstätt-Ingolstadt on the Ingolstadt campus. About 150 participants from Germany, Austria and Switzerland came together to develop strategies to strengthen democracy.

### **Strategic Communication**

The main focus of the last six months was the development of the festival identity, framing it as an empowering event for collective strategies. Several milestones are to be noted: June 2024 was one of the most successful months since the beginning of Faktor D in terms of website traffic as well as user growth and engagement on LinkedIn. Furthermore, we passed the mark of 1000 active subscribers for our regular newsletter.

### **Governance**

Faktor D has Two central committees: The Rat (the council, composed by the three funding partners) and the Strategy Committee. The Strategy Committee consists of 13 people. The members represent different sectors and bring together a wide range of expertise. The committee met for the first time at the beginning of September 23 and for the second time in March 24. They decided on the topic of the Mission 1 and 2 and advised on the projects to be developed.

#### Next Steps

In development: Minimismissions

For the fall, we are planning to launch our first Mini-Mission which aims to facilitate knowledge exchange, networking, and collaborative action. As part of this effort, we will host "Im Diskurs" events. This process will consist of only 2-3 workshops and will not involve any financial grants.

## Fundraising

After developing a comprehensive fundraising strategy and timeline, we are now moving forward with the implementation phase.

## Joint Action for Farmers' Organisations in West Africa (JAFOWA)

Foundations involved: Compagnia di San Paolo (Chair); Fondazione Cariplo; Fondation de France; and King Baudouin Foundation.

Budget 2024: 850.000 €

Timeframe: 2016–2026

### Background:

JAFOWA seeks to reinforce Farmers' Organisations who work with smallholder farmers, pastoralists and fishermen, to manage good quality local food systems that benefit their families and communities in ecologically sustainable ways. It aims to support a strong and equitable farmers' movement in West Africa. This movement proposes local and regional policies, promotes ecological solutions and enables the leadership of women and youth.

JAFOWA supports farmers' organisations (FOs) through grantmaking and capacity development with a geographic focus on Burkina Faso and Senegal, shifting its focus on the agroecological transition in these two countries since 2018.

### Latest developments:

From April to August 2024, JAFOWA's Steering Committee (COPIL) focused on refining the project's Theory of Change, building on insights gathered during a two-day strategic workshop held in December 2023. The vision has been sharpened to emphasize the development of sustainable food systems rooted in robust agroecological practices. These systems aim to have a positive impact on climate change, meet local needs, and provide communities with accessible, healthy, and sustainable food products.

JAFOWA's mission has also been reaffirmed: to support family farms that are part of farmer organizations and movements in Senegal and Burkina Faso, which are partners of the program. The goal is to help these farms diversify their activities to meet the demands of a growing urban population, relying on agroecological principles and practices. Additionally, the aim is to strengthen their resilience and adaptability to climate change.

JAFOWA aims to contribute to the following changes:

- Farmer organizations, along with their partners, are the cornerstones of sustainable food systems, building on long-term multi-stakeholder partnerships.
- They integrate gender considerations as well as the roles, needs, and expectations of youth in promoting agroecological intensification.
- They also develop educational and advocacy initiatives.

To better support JAFOWA's development, strengthen its ties with project leaders, and more effectively track changes in their intervention areas and strategies, the operational team was expanded in late August with the arrival of a deputy manager, Médoune Mbengue, based in Senegal.

JAFOWA will participate at the Salone del Gusto Terra Madre in Turin at the end of September, organized by the Slow Food network, where it will host a workshop on 27/09. Field missions are also planned for October (Senegal) and December (Burkina Faso).