



27 January 2026

To:

President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen,

Executive Vice-President for Prosperity and Industrial Strategy Stéphane Séjourné

Subject: Reverse your decision to withdraw the Directive on European Cross-Border Associations (ECBA)

Dear President, dear Executive Vice-President,

We are civil society organisations, non-profit organisations, philanthropic organisations/actors, federations of actors of the non-profit sector, federations of non-profit social services, and actors of the social economy. We write to you concerning your decision to withdraw the Directive on European Cross-Border Associations (ECBAs), which was presented by the European Commission in September 2023, approved in the first reading by the European Parliament in March 2024, and under discussion in the Council.

The Directive would allow associations with membership and operations in different Member States to be automatically recognised throughout the Union and to operate across borders at the same conditions as national ECBAs. We underline how the Directive does not establish a new European legal form, but it creates a new national legal form with some harmonised characteristics and advantages, while leaving most of the features to be adapted to the national traditions of laws on associations. The Directive would also recognise the core-features of the non-profit model of enterprise that provides economic services of general interest in the internal market, hence providing a level-playing field with other economic enterprises.

We support the Directive as it contributes to removing legal and administrative obstacles that non-profit organisations and citizens face in cooperating in cross-border regions, macro-regions or in the different EU countries and therefore enhances their ability to contribute to the general interest and the public good. This especially will benefit cross-border regions, where structures of cross-border cooperation for public authorities already exist, but do not find a direct counterpart in the non-profit sector due to different national regulations.

Cross-border civil protection units, common mobile care units in cross-border regions, cross-country festivals and cultural events, common management and preservation of shared ecosystems, communities gathering patients treating rare diseases, citizens' associations to support and promote European Citizens' Initiatives: these are only some of the examples of the possibilities the ECBA Directive could bring.

We therefore write to you to express our support to the Directive, and urge you to reverse your decision and keep it in the Work Programme of the European Commission.

Kind regards,

Signing organisations:

European-level





International



Austria



Belgium



Bulgaria



Croatia



Cyprus



Czechia



Denmark



Estonia



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