CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATION

Civil society refers to all forms of social action carried out by individuals or groups who are neither connected to, nor managed by, the State.

A civil society organisation is an organisational structure whose members serve the general interest through a democratic process, and which plays the role of mediator between public authorities and citizens.

Article 15 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union recognises civil society's role in the EU's good governance. Article 11 of the Treaty on European Union stresses the need for the EU to have an open, transparent and regular dialogue with civil society organisations, e.g. when preparing proposals for EU laws.

Examples of such organisations include:

- social partners (trades unions & employers' groups);
- non-governmental organisations (e.g. for environmental & consumer protection);
- grassroots organisations (e.g. youth & family groupings).

The European Economic and Social Committee represents civil society at EU level.

SEE ALSO

- European Economic and Social Committee
- Governance
- Social partners
- Civil Society on the European Commission's website