Adopted by
General Assembly

Brussels, Belgium
13-14 November 2026

Motion

Defending Civic Space: Youth Solidarity Against "Foreign Agent" Laws

Signed by: Czech Council of Children and Youth (CRDM)

Co-signed by: Council of the German-speaking Youth of Belgium (RdJ), Slovak Youth Council (RMS)

Introduction

Across Europe and beyond, governments are adopting or proposing so-called "foreign agent" laws. These rules force civil society organisations, independent media and, increasingly, individuals who receive funding from abroad to register and label themselves as agents of foreign interests.[1] What began as a single national experiment has become a transnational template, now visible on every inhabited continent.[2] For youth organisations, which rely on international cooperation, cross-border partnerships and European funding programmes, these laws are a direct and existential threat to our ability to operate, take part in democratic life and speak freely on matters of public concern.

Freedom of association and freedom of expression are the foundations of democratic societies. They are guaranteed by the European Convention on Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,[3] and the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association has made clear that the ability to seek and receive resources from domestic and foreign sources alike is an integral part of freedom of association.[4] Article 13 of the 1998 UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders likewise recognises the right to seek, receive and use resources.[5]

The European Youth Forum is deeply concerned by the spread of "foreign agent" legislation. These laws stigmatise civil society, choke legitimate funding and shrink the civic space where young people organise, learn, lead and shape democracy.

1 Kirova, I. (2024, September 19). Foreign agent laws in the authoritarian playbook. Human Rights Watch.

2 CIVICUS. (2025). 2024–2025: Foreign agent laws go global. In Foreign agents laws report.

3 Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (adopted 4 November 1950, entered into force 3 September 1953) 213 UNTS 221 (ECHR), arts 10–11; International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (adopted 16 December 1966, entered into force 23 March 1976) 999 UNTS 171 (ICCPR), arts 19 and 22.

4 UN Human Rights Council, 'Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Association, Maina Kiai' (24 April 2013) UN Doc A/HRC/23/39, para 8.

5 Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, UNGA Res 53/144 (9 December 1998) UN Doc A/RES/53/144, art 13; N Kantaria, 'Spread of "Foreign Agent" Laws in Central, Eastern Europe a Growing Threat to Civil Society' (International Service for Human Rights, 26 February 2025) https://ishr.ch/latest-updates/spread-of-foreign-agent-laws-in-eastern-europe-pose-increasing-threats-to-civil-society/ accessed 14 November 2026.

Context and Background

The legal nature of "foreign agent" laws

Although the details differ, "foreign agent" laws follow the same pattern: groups that receive foreign funds and engage in broadly defined "political activity" must register as "foreign agents", "foreign representatives" or "organisations serving the interests of a foreign power", and label their publications accordingly.[6] "Political activity" can include advocacy, research, policy analysis, public debate, election monitoring, opinion polling and monitoring public institutions, in other words, almost every legitimate function of civil society.[7] These laws typically apply whether funding comes from state or non-state sources and whether the recipient acts for the donor at all, while commercial lobbying actors doing the same work remain untouched.[8]

Governments present these regimes as transparency measures.[9] In practice, they create excessive reporting and auditing burdens, expose organisations to disproportionate fines and closure, and impose a stigma designed to destroy their credibility and legitimacy.[10] Vague wording gives authorities wide discretion to decide who is targeted and how the law is enforced.[11] These regimes are often defended by invoking the United States Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA), even though FARA applies only to actors operating under the direction and control of a foreign principal, it does not equate receiving foreign funding with such control.[12]

The Russian prototype and its consequences

Russia's 2012 law is the archetypal "foreign agent" regime. Adopted shortly after large-scale protests, it became a tool for entrenching authoritarian rule.[13] It led to the closure or decimation of human rights, anti-corruption, environmental and polling groups, HIV-prevention providers and media organisations.[14]Memorial International's Human Rights Centre, one of the first NGOs of post-Soviet Russia, was forcibly closed because it failed to label social media posts as coming from a "foreign agent".[15] An independent election monitor, the League of Voters Foundation, was designated after receiving a donation of 225 roubles from a Moldovan citizen,[16] while the Vybor Association was targeted for HIV harm-reduction work

despite the law's express exemption for health-related activities.[17] Since 2022, authorities no longer need to prove any foreign funding: the regime now reaches anyone deemed to be under vaguely defined "foreign influence", with penalties of up to five years' imprisonment.[18] Between the full-scale invasion of Ukraine and the end of 2023, the register more than doubled, from 336 to over 700 entries.[19]

6 Kirova (n 1).

7 Kirova (n 1).

8 Kirova (n 1).

9 Osler, T. J. S., "Foreign Agent Laws: Understanding the Emerging Threat to Human Rights Organizations in Eastern Europe," McGill CHRLP / IHRIP Working Paper No. 13/6 (2024).

10 Osler (n 9).

11 Kantaria (n 5).

12 Foreign Agents Registration Act 1938, 22 USC §§ 611–621, § 611(c)(1); Kirova (n 1).

13 Kirova (n 1).

14 Kirova (n 1).

15 Kirova (n 1); FIDH, 'Russian Courts Deal a Blow to the Very Core of Russia's Civil Society in Political Decisions to Close Memorials' (29 December 2021) https://www.fidh.org/en/region/europe-central-asia/russia/russian-courts-deal-a-blow-to-the-very-core-of-russia-s-civil-society accessed 14 November 2026.

16 *Kobaliya and Others v Russia* App nos 39446/16 and 106 others (ECtHR, 22 October 2024) para 77; The Moscow Times, 'Russian Vote Monitor Named "Foreign Agent" After $3 Donation From Armenian' (22 October 2021) https://themoscowtimes.com/2021/10/22/russian-vote-monitor-was-named-foreign-agent-after-3-donation-from-armenian-a75374 accessed 14 November 2026.

17 RFE/RL, 'Russian HIV Prevention Group Closes After Fine Under "Foreign-Agent" Law' (4 December 2018) https://www.rferl.org/a/russian-hiv-prevention-group-closes-after-fine-under-foreign-agent-law/29636884.html accessed 14 November 2026.

18 Kirova (n 1); Human Rights Watch, 'Russia: New Restrictions for "Foreign Agents"' (1 December 2022) https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/12/01/russia-new-restrictions-foreign-agents accessed 14 November 2026.

A spreading template

The Russian model has since been replicated or adapted across the region and beyond.

- In **Georgia**, a law adopted in May 2024 requires media and civil society organisations receiving more than 20 per cent of their funding from abroad to register as "organisations serving the interests of a foreign power".[20] Tens of thousands of people protested for nearly two months and were increasingly met with excessive force.[21] A further Foreign Agents Registration Act adopted in April 2025 introduced criminal penalties, including up to five years' imprisonment, in a country where civil society receives up to 95 per cent of its funding from international donors or development agencies.[22] Youth groups and LGBTQIA+ collectives have already stopped their activities rather than register.[23]

- In **Kyrgyzstan**, a "foreign representatives" law signed in April 2024 applies to any NGO receiving foreign funding, whatever the amount. Many organisations, including youth and LGBTQ+ groups, self-liquidated even before the registration deadline.[24]

- In **Republika Srpska**, a law passed in February 2025 automatically labelled any civil society organisation or media outlet receiving international funding and carrying out "political actions or political activities" as a foreign agent and banned such organisations from "influencing public opinion", effectively criminalising advocacy.[25]

- In **El Salvador**, a Foreign Agents Law entered into force in June 2025 taxes foreign funding at 30 per cent[26] and the human rights organisation have announced the closure of their operations citing the law,[27] while in Nicaragua hundreds of organisations had their legal status cancelled in 2022 as part of a wider crackdown on civil society.[28]

- In **Türkiye**, "an "agent of influence" offence punishable by three to seven years' imprisonment was proposed in 2024, and press freedom organisations warn that its vague wording could allow courts to treat critics of the government as spies.[29]

- The trend also reaches the European Union. Draft or adopted laws of this kind were recorded in 2024 in **Bulgaria**, **France**, **the Netherlands** and **Slovakia**, and in Bulgaria the Vazrazhdane party cited the planned EU Directive to justify its foreign agents bill.[30]

Hungary shows that such legislation does not always take the same form. Its 2017 NGO Transparency Law was repealed after the Court of Justice of the European Union held that it violated EU law and recognised access to funding as part of freedom of association.[31] Later initiatives followed a different legal path. Foreign agent laws can therefore appear as registration and labelling

19 Kirova (n 1).

20 Human Rights Watch, 'Georgia: "Foreign Influence" Bill Threatens Rights' (9 May 2024) https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/05/09/georgia-foreign-influence-bill-threatens-rights accessed 14 November 2026; Venice Commission, 'Georgia: Urgent Opinion on the Law on Transparency of Foreign Influence' (Opinion No 1190/2024, CDL-PI(2024)013, 21 May 2024).

21 Claire Mills, 'The Impact of Georgia's "Foreign Influence" Law' (House of Commons Library Research Briefing CBP-10047, 16 October 2024) https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-10047/ accessed 14 November 2026; Human Rights Watch, 'Georgia: "Foreign Influence" Bill' (n 20).

22 FIDH, 'Georgia: Adoption of the New Foreign Agents Registration Act' (30 April 2025) https://www.fidh.org/en/region/europe-central-asia/georgia/georgia-adoption-of-the-new-foreign-agents-registration-act accessed 14 November 2026; Human Rights Watch, 'Georgia: New Laws Devastate Independent Civic Groups' (9 July 2026) https://hrw.org/news/2026/07/09/georgia-new-laws-devastate-independent-civic-groups accessed 14 November 2026.

23 Human Rights Watch, 'Georgia: New Laws' (n 22).

24 Kirova (n 1); Times of Central Asia, 'NGOs in Kyrgyzstan Have Two Months to Register as "Foreign Agents"' (22 May 2024) https://timesca.com/ngos-in-kyrgyzstan-have-two-months-to-register-as-foreign-agents/ accessed 14 November 2026.

25 CIVICUS (n 2); Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, 'Bosnia and Herzegovina: The Authorities of Republika Srpska Should Repeal the "Foreign Agent" Law' (28 February 2025) https://www.coe.int/ka/web/commissioner/-/bosnia-and-herzegovina-the-authorities-of-republika-srpska-should-repeal-the-foreign-agent-law accessed 14 November 2026; Committee to Protect Journalists, 'Bosnian Serbs Adopt "Foreign Agent" Law Targeting Independent Media' (4 March 2025) https://cpj.org/2025/03/bosnian-serbs-adopt-foreign-agent-law-targeting-independent-media/ accessed 14 November 2026.

duties, as funding restrictions or as measures presented as protecting sovereignty or transparency, and they should be assessed by their effect on civic space rather than by their name.

Broader Standards and Implications

International and European bodies have repeatedly condemned these laws. The UN Human Rights Committee, the European Court of Human Rights, OSCE/ODIHR and the Venice Commission have found that they violate freedom of association and discriminate against non-profit groups and media.[32] In *Kobaliya and Others v. Russia* (2024), the European Court of Human Rights found violations of Articles 10 and 11 in respect of all the applicants and of Article 8 in respect of the individual applicants. It found that the reporting requirement appeared to serve "no purpose other than to burden and intimidate the applicants", that the labelling requirement creates "an environment of forced self-stigmatisation", and that the legislation examined "bears the hallmarks of a totalitarian regime"[33]. The Venice Commission has likewise declared Georgia's law incompatible with the European Convention on Human Rights.[34] Most recently, in a third-party intervention submitted in August 2026 to the European Court of Human Rights in a case brought by Georgian civil society organisations, including the Georgian Young Lawyers' Association, the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights submitted that the provisions of Georgia's 2025 For-

26 Human Rights Watch, 'El Salvador: Foreign Agents Law Targets Civil Society, Media' (23 May 2025) https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/05/23/el-salvador-foreign-agents-law-targets-civil-society-media accessed 14 November 2026; El Mundo, 'Bukele sanciona Ley de Agentes Extranjeros, que inicia su vigencia este 7 de junio' (5 June 2025) https://diario.elmundo.sv/politica/bukele-sanciona-ley-de-agentes-extranjeros-que-inicia-su-vigencia-este-7-de-junio accessed 14 November 2026.

27 El Mundo, 'Fespad anuncia su cierre de operaciones en El Salvador por Ley de Agentes Extranjeros' (4 September 2025) https://diario.elmundo.sv/politica/fespad-anuncia-su-cierre-de-operaciones-en-el-salvador-por-ley-de-agentes-extranjeros accessed 14 November 2026.

28 Redacción Confidencial, 'Hundreds of International NGOs Shut Down in Nicaragua' (Confidencial, 30 October 2022) ttps://confidencial.digital/english/hundreds-of-international-ngos-shut-down-in-nicaragua/ accessed 14 November 2026.

29 European Federation of Journalists, 'Turkey: MFRR Open Letter Urges EU to Act against Threat to Freedoms in Proposed "Agent of Influence" Bill' (10 December 2024) https://europeanjournalists.org/blog/2024/12/10/turkey-mfrr-open-letter-urges-eu-to-act-against-threat-to-freedoms-in-proposed-agent-of-influence-bill/ accessed 14 November 2026.

30 Civil Society Europe and others, *Joint Civil Society Contribution on Civic Space to the 2025 Rule of Law Report* (2025) https://civilsocietyeurope.eu/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Joint-Civil-Society-Contribution-on-Civic-Space-to-the-2025-Rule-of-Law-Report.docx.pdf accessed 14 November 2026; CIVICUS Monitor, '"Foreign Agent" Law Introduced to Parliament, Law Banning "LGBTQI+ Propaganda" Passed' (13 August 2024) https://monitor.civicus.org/explore/foreign-agent-law-introduced-to-parliament-law-banning-lgbtqi-propaganda-passed/ accessed 14 November 2026.

31 Case C-78/18 *Commission v Hungary (Transparency of Associations)* EU:C:2020:476; Kirova (n 1); Amnesty International, 'Hungary: LexNGO Finally Repealed but a New Threat Is on the Horizon' (18 May 2021) https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/press-release/2021/05/hungary-lexngo-finally-repealed-but-a-new-threat-is-on-the-horizon/ accessed 14 November 2026.

32 Kirova (n 1); see also *Ecodefence and Others v Russia* App nos 9988/13 and 60 others (ECtHR, 14 June 2022); Venice Commission, Opinion No 1190/2024 (n 20).

33 *Kobaliya* (n 16) paras 86, 98, 114 and 116.

34 Venice Commission, Opinion No 1190/2024 (n 20); Council of Europe, 'Georgia Should Repeal the Law on Transparency of Foreign Influence in Its Current Form, Says Venice Commission' (21 May 2024) https://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/-/georgia-should-repeal-the-law-on-transparency-of-foreign-influence-in-its-current-form-says-venice-commission accessed 14 November 2026.

eign Agents Registration Act are inconsistent with the criteria of legality, legitimacy, necessity and proportionality and with the principle of non-discrimination, and that its adoption forms part of a broader pattern of restrictions with a chilling effect on media outlets and civil society organisations.[35] These laws also run counter to Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)11 of the Committee of Ministers on protecting and promoting civil society space.[36] In the 2025 "Towards a New Democratic Pact for Europe" report, the Secretary General of the Council of Europe also noted the growing number of countries introducing foreign influence laws which contribute to shrinking civic space, threaten CSOs' freedom of expression and hinder their financial autonomy.[37]

Even in democratic systems, foreign-influence legislation can silence people before any sanction is imposed. Governments already invoke such measures, including the European Commission's 2023 proposal for a Directive on interest representation on behalf of third countries, to justify abusive laws of their own.[38] Any measure that tracks influence in public life must therefore be strictly necessary, proportionate, narrowly drawn and independently monitored. It should apply on an equal footing to all actors seeking to influence decision-makers, and must not be used to stigmatise civil society or to hinder legitimate cooperation with partners from third countries, including their participation in EU participation mechanisms and EU funding programmes.

Our Concern

"Foreign agent" laws attack the foundations of youth civil society. The chilling effect begins long before any sanction: organisations close preemptively, donors withdraw and young activists censor themselves.[39] The label is increasingly used to portray LGBTIQ+, anti-discrimination, climate and migration movements as serving foreign rather than national interests.[40] But resistance works. In Slovakia, civil society pressure led the government to drop the provision labelling NGOs as foreign agents before the 2025 amendment to the non-profit law was adopted, and on 17 December 2025 the Constitutional Court ruled the amendment, which required NGOs to disclose their donors, unconstitutional. [41]

In February 2026, however, the government adopted a resolution ordering intensified oversight of NGOs by state authorities.[42] In Bulgaria, parliament has rejected the foreign agents bill five times, most recently in February 2025 by 112 votes to 38.[43] In Hungary, public protest forced the government to postpone the vote on the 2025 Transparency of Public Life bill.[44] On 30 June 2026, Parliament also voted to abolish the Sovereignty Protection Office, which had seen its activities cease following the signature of the President of the Republic. [45] In Republika Srpska, the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina struck down the "foreign agents" law in May 2025 as incompatible with freedom of association,[46] and in early 2026 the entity's own Constitutional Court confirmed that the law had ceased to apply.[47] Coordinated action, strong public narratives and sustained international scrutiny can defend civic space.[48]

35 Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, 'Commissioner Intervenes in ECtHR Case on Georgia's "Foreign Agents Registration Act"' (8 September 2026) https://www.coe.int/bg/web/commissioner/-/commissioner-intervenes-in-ecthr-case-on-georgia-s-foreign-agents-registration-act- accessed 14 November 2026; JAMnews, 'Council of Europe Rights Commissioner Intervenes in Georgia FARA Case' (8 September 2026) https://jam-news.net/council-of-europe-on-fara/ accessed 14 November 2026.

36 Committee of Ministers, Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)11 to member States on the need to strengthen the protection and promotion of civil society space in Europe (adopted 28 November 2018 at the 1330th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies).

37 Secretary General of the Council of Europe, *Towards a New Democratic Pact for Europe* (Council of Europe, May 2025) 6, 14, 19–21 https://rm.coe.int/2025-report-of-the-secretary-general-of-the-council-of-europe-en-final/1680b5ad96 accessed 14 November 2026.

38 Kirova (n 1); European Commission, 'Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing harmonised requirements in the internal market on transparency of interest representation carried out on behalf of third countries and amending Directive (EU) 2019/1937' COM(2023) 637 final (12 December 2023); CIVICUS Monitor, '"Foreign Agent" Law Introduced to Parliament' (n 30).

The impact of these laws is also territorially uneven. Rural and regional youth organisations work far from national media attention, institutional support networks and alternative sources of funding. They often depend on a single international grant for all their youth work and non-formal education, and have the least capacity to absorb reporting burdens or pursue legal remedies. Where such laws are enforced, organisations outside the capital are typically the first to close, leaving young people without their only structured access to civic participation. Defending civic space must therefore explicitly include defending civic space outside capitals.

Students are particularly exposed. Young people persecuted for their student, human rights or democratic activism may be forced to interrupt their studies or leave their country. Initiatives such as a European scholarship programme for students at risk, with a single access point for applicants that coordinates and co-funds national schemes, would offer them a valuable lifeline and deserve consideration.

Therefore, the European Youth Forum:

- Stands in full solidarity with all youth organisations, civil society actors, journalists and young human rights defenders who have been stigmatised, sanctioned or forced to close under "foreign agent" laws.

- Calls on all governments to reject and repeal legislation that designates civil society organisations or individuals as "foreign agents" on the basis of foreign funding, in line with the case law of the

39 See e.g. Human Rights Watch, 'Georgia: New Laws' (n 22); Global Focus, *When Civil Society Is Equated with Foreign Agents* (December 2025) 3–4 https://globaltfokus.dk/images/Analyser/When%20civil%20society%20is%20equated%20with%20foreign%20agents.pdf accessed 14 November 2026.

40 Global Focus (n 39).

41 Constitutional Court of the Slovak Republic, PL. ÚS 11/2025 (17 December 2025); Ivan Godársky, '[Russian Law] The Constitutional Court Ruled that the Law Is Unconstitutional' (MEMO98, 22 December 2025) https://memo98.sk/article/russian-law-the-constitutional-court-ruled-that-the-law-is-unconstitutional accessed 14 November 2026; Civitates, 'Civil Society Pushes Back against Foreign Agents Laws' (12 May 2026) https://civitates-eu.org/civil-society-pushes-back-against-foreign-agents-laws/ accessed 14 November 2026; European Commission, '2026 Rule of Law Report: Country Chapter on the Rule of Law Situation in Slovakia' SWD(2026) 925 final (17 July 2026) 21–22.

42 Jeremy Hill, 'Slovak Government Approves Tighter Oversight of NGOs after Court Strikes Down Law' (STVR, 19 February 2026) https://enrsi.stvr.sk/articles/topical-issue/433884/slovak-government-approves-tighter-oversight-of-ngos-after-court-strikes-down-law accessed 14 November 2026; European Commission, '2026 Rule of Law Report' (n 41) 21–22.

43 CIVICUS (n 2); Sofia Globe staff, 'Bulgaria's Parliament Again Rejects Pro-Kremlin Party's "Foreign Agents" Bill' (Sofia Globe, 5 February 2025) https://sofiaglobe.com/?p=122214 accessed 14 November 2026.

44 Civitates (n 41); Euronews, 'Hungary Delays Vote on "Transparency Law" Targeting Foreign-Funded NGOs and Media until Autumn' (4 June 2025) https://www.euronews.com/2025/06/04/hungary-delays-vote-on-transparency-law-targeting-foreign-funded-ngos-and-media accessed 14 November 2026.

45 Act XXIV of 2026 on the Abolition of the Sovereignty Protection Office (2026. évi XXIV. törvény a Szuverenitásvédelmi Hivatal megszüntetéséről), Magyar Közlöny 2026/82, 30 June 2026, 3226 https://magyarkozlony.hu/dokumentumok/e5da212193deee6d4d33e46d34d48dbde84fb65c/letoltes accessed 14 November 2026; Kartik Raj, 'Hungary's Sovereignty Protection Office Abolished' (Human Rights Watch, 2 July 2026) https://www.hrw.org/news/2026/07/02/hungarys-sovereignty-protection-office-abolished accessed 14 November 2026; Telex, 'Hungarian Parliament Votes to Abolish Sovereignty Protection Office' (30 June 2026) https://telex.hu/english/2026/06/30/hungarian-parliament-votes-to-abolish-sovereignty-protection-office accessed 14 November 2026.

46 Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Decision U-6/25 (29 May 2025) https://www.ustavnisud.ba/en/158th-plenary-session-the-course-of-the-session-so-far accessed 14 November 2026.

47 Balkan Civil Society Development Network, 'Republika Srpska Court Confirms "Foreign Agents" Law Unconstitutional, Ending Pressure on Civil Society and Media' (BCSDN, 13 February 2026) https://balkancsd.net/republika-srpska-court-confirms-foreign-agents-law-unconstitutional-ending-pressure-on-civil-society-and-media/ accessed 14 November 2026.

48 Civitates (n 41).

European Court of Human Rights, the Court of Justice of the European Union and the opinions of the Venice Commission.[49]

- Urges European and international institutions to keep the protection of an enabling environment

for civil society at the centre of bilateral relations and accession dialogues, and to systematically use every legal and diplomatic instrument available.[50]

- Urges member states of the Council of Europe to fully implement Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)6 on protecting youth civil society and young people, and supporting their participation in democratic processes.[51]

- Calls on the European Union to ensure that any transparency instrument it adopts is necessary, proportionate and non-discriminatory, and cannot be used to legitimise restrictive legislation elsewhere.[52]

- Commits, together with its member organisations, to sustained advocacy and public support for youth organisations under threat—through awareness-raising, coalition building and direct acts of solidarity.

- Encourages donors to provide flexible, long-term and core funding so that targeted organisations are less vulnerable to political pressure.[53]

- Reaffirms that international cooperation is not foreign interference, and that this commitment is a collective pledge to defend young people's civic space, democratic participation and future.

49 See *Kobaliya* (n 16); *Ecodefence* (n 32); *Commission v Hungary* (n 31); Venice Commission, Opinion No 1190/2024 (n 20); see also Mariam Begadze, 'Georgia's Foreign Agent Law 2.0: Activating ECtHR's Rule 39 as a Tool of Militant Constitutionalism' (Verfassungsblog, 27 May 2025) https://verfassungsblog.de/georgias-foreign-agent-law-2-0-ecthr/ accessed 14 November 2026.

50 Clarisse Sih and Bibbi Abruzzini, 'Foreign Agents Laws: Stigmatising Civil Society and Choking Funding Flows' (Forus / EU SEE, 9 June 2026) https://eusee.hivos.org/foreign-agents-laws-stigmatising-civil-society-and-choking-funding-flows/ accessed 14 November 2026.

51 Committee of Ministers, Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)6 to member States on protecting youth civil society and young people, and supporting their participation in democratic processes (adopted 17 March 2022 at the 1429th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies).

52 European Commission, COM(2023) 637 final (n 38); Kirova (n 1).

53 Sih and Abruzzini (n 50); Global Focus (n 39) 9.

References

- Amnesty International, 'Hungary: LexNGO Finally Repealed but a New Threat Is on the Horizon' (18 May 2021) https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/press-release/2021/05/hungary-lexngo-finally-repealed-but-a-new-threat-is-on-the-horizon/ accessed 14 November 2026

- Balkan Civil Society Development Network, 'Republika Srpska Court Confirms "Foreign Agents" Law Unconstitutional, Ending Pressure on Civil Society and Media' (BCSDN, 13 February 2026) https://balkancsd.net/republika-srpska-court-confirms-foreign-agents-law-unconstitutional-ending-pressure-on-civil-society-and-media/ accessed 14 November 2026

- Begadze M, 'Georgia's Foreign Agent Law 2.0: Activating ECtHR's Rule 39 as a Tool of Militant Constitutionalism' (Verfassungsblog, 27 May 2025) https://verfassungsblog.de/georgias-foreign-agent-law-2-0-ecthr/ accessed 14 November 2026

- CIVICUS, '2024–2025: Foreign Agents Laws Go Global' in *Cutting Civil Society's Lifeline: The Global Spread of Foreign Agents Laws* (CIVICUS 2025) https://publications.civicus.org/publications/foreign-agents-laws-report/2024-2025-foreign-agents-laws-go-global/ accessed 14 November 2026

- CIVICUS Monitor, '"Foreign Agent" Law Introduced to Parliament, Law Banning "LGBTQI+ Propaganda" Passed' (13 August 2024) https://monitor.civicus.org/explore/foreign-agent-law-introduced-to-parliament-law-banning-lgbtqi-propaganda-passed/ accessed 14 November 2026

- Civil Society Europe and others, *Joint Civil Society Contribution on Civic Space to the 2025 Rule of Law Report* (2025) https://civilsocietyeurope.eu/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Joint-Civil-Society-Contribution-on-Civic-Space-to-the-2025-Rule-of-Law-Report.docx.pdf accessed 14 November 2026

- Civitates, 'Civil Society Pushes Back against Foreign Agents Laws' (12 May 2026) https://civitates-eu.org/civil-society-pushes-back-against-foreign-agents-laws/ accessed 14 November 2026

- Case C-78/18 *Commission v Hungary (Transparency of Associations)* EU:C:2020:476

- Committee of Ministers, Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)11 to member States on the need to strengthen the protection and promotion of civil society space in Europe (adopted 28 November 2018 at the 1330th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)

- Committee of Ministers, Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)6 to member States on protecting youth civil society and young people, and supporting their participation in democratic processes (adopted 17 March 2022 at the 1429th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)

- Committee to Protect Journalists, 'Bosnian Serbs Adopt "Foreign Agent" Law Targeting Independent Media' (4 March 2025) https://cpj.org/2025/03/bosnian-serbs-adopt-foreign-agent-law-targeting-independent-media/ accessed 14 November 2026

- Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Decision U-6/25 (29 May 2025) https://www.ustavnisud.ba/en/158th-plenary-session-the-course-of-the-session-so-far accessed 14 November 2026

- Constitutional Court of the Slovak Republic, PL. ÚS 11/2025 (17 December 2025)

- Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (adopted 4 November 1950, entered into force 3 September 1953) 213 UNTS 221 (ECHR)

- Council of Europe, 'Georgia Should Repeal the Law on Transparency of Foreign Influence in Its Current Form, Says Venice Commission' (21 May 2024) https://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/-/georgia-should-repeal-the-law-on-transparency-of-foreign-influence-in-its-current-form-says-venice-commission accessed 14 November 2026

- Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, 'Bosnia and Herzegovina: The Authorities of Republika Srpska Should Repeal the "Foreign Agent" Law' (28 February 2025) https://www.coe.int/ka/web/commissioner/-/bosnia-and-herzegovina-the-authorities-of-republika-srpska-should-repeal-the-foreign-agent-law accessed 14 November 2026

- Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, 'Commissioner Intervenes in ECtHR Case on Georgia's "Foreign Agents Registration Act"' (8 September 2026) https://www.coe.int/bg/web/commissioner/-/commissioner-intervenes-in-ecthr-case-on-georgia-s-foreign-agents-registration-act- accessed 14 November 2026

- Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, UNGA Res 53/144 (9 December 1998) UN Doc A/RES/53/144

- *Ecodefence and Others v Russia* App nos 9988/13 and 60 others (ECtHR, 14 June 2022)

- El Mundo, 'Bukele sanciona Ley de Agentes Extranjeros, que inicia su vigencia este 7 de junio' (5 June 2025) https://diario.elmundo.sv/politica/bukele-sanciona-ley-de-agentes-extranjeros-que-inicia-su-vigencia-este-7-de-junio accessed 14 November 2026

- El Mundo, 'Fespad anuncia su cierre de operaciones en El Salvador por Ley de Agentes Extranjeros' (4 September 2025) https://diario.elmundo.sv/politica/fespad-anuncia-su-cierre-de-operaciones-en-el-salvador-por-ley-de-agentes-extranjeros accessed 14 November 2026

- Euronews, 'Hungary Delays Vote on "Transparency Law" Targeting Foreign-Funded NGOs and Media until Autumn' (4 June 2025) https://www.euronews.com/2025/06/04/hungary-delays-vote-on-transparency-law-targeting-foreign-funded-ngos-and-media accessed 14 November 2026

- European Commission, '2026 Rule of Law Report: Country Chapter on the Rule of Law Situation in Slovakia' SWD(2026) 925 final (17 July 2026)

- European Commission, 'Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing harmonised requirements in the internal market on transparency of interest representation carried out on behalf of third countries and amending Directive (EU) 2019/1937' COM(2023) 637 final (12 December 2023)

- European Federation of Journalists, 'Turkey: MFRR Open Letter Urges EU to Act against Threat to Freedoms in Proposed "Agent of Influence" Bill' (10 December 2024) https://europeanjournalists.org/blog/2024/12/10/turkey-mfrr-open-letter-urges-eu-to-act-against-threat-to-freedoms-in-proposed-agent-of-influence-bill/ accessed 14 November 2026

- FIDH, 'Russian Courts Deal a Blow to the Very Core of Russia's Civil Society in Political Decisions to Close Memorials' (29 December 2021) https://www.fidh.org/en/region/europe-central-asia/russia/russian-courts-deal-a-blow-to-the-very-core-of-russia-s-civil-society accessed 14 November 2026

- FIDH, 'Georgia: Adoption of the New Foreign Agents Registration Act' (30 April 2025) https://www.fidh.org/en/region/europe-central-asia/georgia/georgia-adoption-of-the-new-foreign-agents-registration-act accessed 14 November 2026

- Foreign Agents Registration Act 1938, 22 USC §§ 611–621

- Global Focus, *When Civil Society Is Equated with Foreign Agents* (December 2025) https://globalt-fokus.dk/images/Analyser/When%20civil%20society%20is%20equated%20with%20foreign%20agents.pdf accessed 14 November 2026

- Godársky I, '[Russian Law] The Constitutional Court Ruled that the Law Is Unconstitutional' (MEMO98, 22 December 2025) https://memo98.sk/article/russian-law-the-constitutional-court-ruled-that-the-law-is-unconstitutional accessed 14 November 2026

- Hill J, 'Slovak Government Approves Tighter Oversight of NGOs after Court Strikes Down Law' (STVR, 19 February 2026) https://enrsi.stvr.sk/articles/topical-issue/433884/slovak-government-approves-tighter-oversight-of-ngos-after-court-strikes-down-law accessed 14 November 2026

- Human Rights Watch, 'Russia: New Restrictions for "Foreign Agents"' (1 December 2022) https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/12/01/russia-new-restrictions-foreign-agents accessed 14 November 2026

- Human Rights Watch, 'Georgia: "Foreign Influence" Bill Threatens Rights' (9 May 2024) https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/05/09/georgia-foreign-influence-bill-threatens-rights accessed 14 November 2026

- Human Rights Watch, 'El Salvador: Foreign Agents Law Targets Civil Society, Media' (23 May 2025) https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/05/23/el-salvador-foreign-agents-law-targets-civil-society-media accessed 14 November 2026

- Human Rights Watch, 'Georgia: New Laws Devastate Independent Civic Groups' (9 July 2026) https://hrw.org/news/2026/07/09/georgia-new-laws-devastate-independent-civic-groups accessed 14 November 2026

- Hungary, Act XXIV of 2026 on the Abolition of the Sovereignty Protection Office (2026. évi XXIV. törvény a Szuverenitásvédelmi Hivatal megszüntetéséről), Magyar Közlöny 2026/82, 30 June 2026, 3226 https://magyarkozlony.hu/dokumentumok/e5da212193deee6d4d33e46d34d48dbde84fb65c/letoltes accessed 14 November 2026

- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (adopted 16 December 1966, entered into force 23 March 1976) 999 UNTS 171 (ICCPR)

- JAMnews, 'Council of Europe Rights Commissioner Intervenes in Georgia FARA Case' (8 September 2026) https://jam-news.net/council-of-europe-on-fara/ accessed 14 November 2026

- Kantaria N, 'Spread of "Foreign Agent" Laws in Central, Eastern Europe a Growing Threat to Civil Society' (International Service for Human Rights, 26 February 2025) https://ishr.ch/latest-updates/spread-of-foreign-agent-laws-in-eastern-europe-pose-increasing-threats-to-civil-society/ accessed 14 November 2026

- Kiai M, 'Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Association' (UN Human Rights Council, 24 April 2013) UN Doc A/HRC/23/39

- Kirova I, 'Foreign Agent Laws in the Authoritarian Playbook' (Human Rights Watch, 19 September 2024) https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/09/19/foreign-agent-laws-authoritarian-playbook accessed 14 November 2026

- *Kobaliya and Others v Russia* App nos 39446/16 and 106 others (ECtHR, 22 October 2024) https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng?i=001-237425 accessed 14 November 2026

- Mills C, 'The Impact of Georgia's "Foreign Influence" Law' (House of Commons Library Research Briefing CBP-10047, 16 October 2024) https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-10047/ accessed 14 November 2026

- The Moscow Times, 'Russian Vote Monitor Named "Foreign Agent" After $3 Donation From Armenian' (22 October 2021) https://themoscowtimes.com/2021/10/22/russian-vote-monitor-was-named-foreign-agent-after-3-donation-from-armenian-a75374 accessed 14 November 2026

- Osler TJS, 'Foreign Agent Laws: Understanding the Emerging Threat to Human Rights Organizations in Eastern Europe' (McGill CHRLP / IHRIP Working Paper No 13/6, 2024)

- Raj K, 'Hungary's Sovereignty Protection Office Abolished' (Human Rights Watch, 2 July 2026) https://www.hrw.org/news/2026/07/02/hungarys-sovereignty-protection-office-abolished accessed 14 November 2026

- Redacción Confidencial, 'Hundreds of International NGOs Shut Down in Nicaragua' (Confidencial, 30 October 2022) https://confidencial.digital/english/hundreds-of-international-ngos-shut-down-in-nicaragua/ accessed 14 November 2026

- RFE/RL, 'Russian HIV Prevention Group Closes After Fine Under "Foreign-Agent" Law' (4 December 2018) https://www.rferl.org/a/russian-hiv-prevention-group-closes-after-fine-under-foreign-agent-law/29636884.html accessed 14 November 2026

- Secretary General of the Council of Europe, *Towards a New Democratic Pact for Europe* (Council of Europe, May 2025) https://rm.coe.int/2025-report-of-the-secretary-general-of-the-council-of-europe-en-final/1680b5ad96 accessed 14 November 2026

- Sih C and Abruzzini B, 'Foreign Agents Laws: Stigmatising Civil Society and Choking Funding Flows' (Forus / EU SEE, 9 June 2026) https://eusee.hivos.org/foreign-agents-laws-stigmatising-civil-society-and-choking-funding-flows/ accessed 14 November 2026

- Sofia Globe staff, 'Bulgaria's Parliament Again Rejects Pro-Kremlin Party's "Foreign Agents" Bill' (Sofia Globe, 5 February 2025) https://sofiaglobe.com/?p=122214 accessed 14 November 2026

- Telex, 'Hungarian Parliament Votes to Abolish Sovereignty Protection Office' (30 June 2026) https://telex.hu/english/2026/06/30/hungarian-parliament-votes-to-abolish-sovereignty-protection-office accessed 14 November 2026

- Times of Central Asia, 'NGOs in Kyrgyzstan Have Two Months to Register as "Foreign Agents"' (22 May 2024) https://timesca.com/ngos-in-kyrgyzstan-have-two-months-to-register-as-foreign-agents/ accessed 14 November 2026

- Venice Commission, 'Georgia: Urgent Opinion on the Law on Transparency of Foreign Influence' (Opinion No 1190/2024, CDL-PI(2024)013, 21 May 2024)







Co-funded by the European Union

The European Youth Forum is funded by the European Union and the Council of Europe. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union, the Council of Europe or the European Youth Foundation. Neither the European Union nor any other granting authority can be held responsible for them.