

## EESC calls for an enabling environment for philanthropy

### PRESS RELEASE

**Brussels, 22 May 2019** - Donors and Foundations Networks in Europe (DAFNE) and the European Foundation Centre (EFC) welcome the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) adoption on 15 May of an Opinion on the European philanthropy sector. The Opinion calls on Member States to “establish an enabling environment for philanthropy in line with EU freedoms and fundamental rights”; “recognise the added value that philanthropy can bring”; and “promote philanthropy as a form of demonstrating social commitment”.

The Opinion entitled “European philanthropy: an untapped potential” was requested by the Romanian presidency. The rapporteur, Petru Sorin Dandea, was supported by Ludwig Forrest from the King Baudouin Foundation as expert.

<https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/european-philanthropy-untapped-potential-exploratory-opinion-request-romanian-presidency>

This is the first time that the EESC has dedicated an Opinion solely to the topic of philanthropy as a distinct and important element of civil society. It stresses the unique role philanthropy plays for the benefit of the common good in addressing different societal issues and providing innovative solutions from the very local to the global level in a clearly complementary role to public action. This recognition of the sector and the millions of citizens that engage in philanthropy all over Europe, along with the clear delineation of obstacles it faces, constitutes a further step along the path towards the sector’s goal of achieving a Single Market for Philanthropy.

“The vote at the EESC marks a significant milestone for our sector,” says Gerry Salole, EFC Chief Executive. “We are pleased that European philanthropy is getting this kind of recognition, and we look forward to tapping our full potential which will mean that we can play even more of a role in tackling the critical challenges societies face today.”

Max von Abendroth, Executive Director of DAFNE, says, “It is encouraging to see that the EESC is acknowledging the important role philanthropy plays in building citizens’ engagement around topics going to the core of our society today, such as indignation at injustice, care for the most vulnerable, compassion, aspirations for an innovative future and

the responsibility for preserving valuable nature and culture. The EESC’s call to ensure the application of the EU's single market principle to philanthropy is crucial to allow philanthropy to unlock its full potential.”

The specific recommendations in the Opinion relating to breaking down regulatory barriers to philanthropy are particularly encouraging, calling for an environment that is conducive to “philanthropic and citizen action, private giving to public benefit causes and the creation of philanthropic organisations, as well as ensuring that national and EU security measures are risk-based, proportionate and evidence-based”. The Opinion also addresses the need for the facilitation of cross-border philanthropy.

The Opinion recognises that philanthropy and philanthropic organisations are a critical part of our pluralistic societies and that they play a key role in defending and promoting the values enshrined in Article 2 of the EU Treaty, which include respect for human dignity, human rights and the rule of law.

The estimated 147,000 foundations in Europe give 60 billion euros per year, and manage 511 billion euros in assets and endowments. While significant, these figures are much less than those of state actors. Europe’s strong welfare states allow private funding to play a unique and complementary role, deploying their resources – not only funding but also experience, knowledge, expertise and networks – in more risky, innovative and catalytic ways or to support causes outside of governments’ capacity or reach. There are many successful examples across Europe of public/private co-financing, co-investing and co-strategising to ensure more creative solutions to complex societal needs.

DAFNE and the EFC will continue to engage with the EESC and other EU institutions on turning the recommendations in the Opinion into action.

In line with the spirit of the Opinion, the sector has developed 4 key recommendations around which it engages with policymakers at national and EU levels:

- Recognise philanthropy
- Reduce barriers to cross-border philanthropy
- Enable and protect philanthropy
- Co-grant and co-invest for public good

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## NOTES TO EDITORS

**LINK:** [European Philanthropy Manifesto – Private resources for public good](#)

### About Philanthropy Advocacy

The DAFNE and EFC joint advocacy project Philanthropy Advocacy acts as a monitoring, legal analysis and policy engagement hub for European philanthropy. Its main objective is to shape the national, European and international legislative environment by implementing the European advocacy roadmap for a Single Market for Philanthropy.

[www.philanthropyadvocacy.eu](http://www.philanthropyadvocacy.eu)

### About Donors and Foundations Networks in Europe (DAFNE)



DAFNE is Europe's only network of donors and foundations associations. DAFNE is a leading voice of European donors and foundations with 27 member associations and a collective

membership of more than 10,000 donors, foundations and grant-makers. DAFNE underpins individual activities of its members by encouraging dialogue and collaboration between the national associations. DAFNE is a member of WINGS, an associate partner of OECD netFWD and an active supporter of #NextPhilanthropy. DAFNE and the EFC jointly lead the Philanthropy Advocacy project.

[www.dafne-online.eu](http://www.dafne-online.eu)

### About the European Foundation Centre (EFC)



As a leading platform for philanthropy in Europe, the EFC works to strengthen the sector and make the case for institutional philanthropy as a formidable means of effecting change. We believe institutional philanthropy has a unique, crucial and timely role to play in meeting the critical challenges societies face. More people and causes benefit from institutional philanthropy

than ever before, from eradicating deadly diseases and making the world's populations healthier to combating climate change and fighting for global human rights and equality. Working in close collaboration with our members, a dynamic network of strategically-minded philanthropic organisations from more than 30 countries, we:

- Foster peer-learning by surfacing expertise and experience embedded in the sector
- Enhance collaboration by connecting people for inspiration and joint action
- Represent philanthropy for favourable policy and regulatory environments
- Build a solid evidence base through knowledge and intelligence
- Raise the visibility of philanthropy's value and impact

The EFC and DAFNE jointly lead the Philanthropy Advocacy project.

[www.efc.be](http://www.efc.be)

### More information

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