

OPERATING IN THE YEAR OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

***A UNIQUE YEAR WITH
UNIQUE CHALLENGES
AND OPPORTUNITIES***

***2020
ANNUAL REPORT***

The Civil Liberties Union For Europe

Established as the leader of a unique collaborative network, Liberties continued to work closely with our network of members, applying trailblazing advocacy and communications techniques to guide the EU and national governments in upholding everyone's rights. In 2020, we welcomed three membership requests. Following a thorough evaluation process, the General Assembly of Liberties in December approved the addition of a new Slovakian member organization, but rejected the other two candidates. With 18 organisations in our network of members, Liberties is closer to achieving its strategic goal of having at least one member organisation from each European Union Member State:



18

*member
organisations
– and still growing*

12

project started

34

*workshops and
trainings given to
members and partner
organisations*

191

*participants trained
in strategic
communication*

14

*project
cooperation
continued*

100+

*media
appearances*

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FOREWORD

2020 brought unprecedented changes and, at the same time, unexpected possibilities to steward transformative processes. The global epidemic forced Liberties, as well as other organisations, to rethink ongoing projects and regroup resources to better react to the changes in political and social climate in the wake of the pandemic. The growth in support for politicians with authoritarian agendas and the pace at which new technologies are permeating social and political life have been accelerated by the - oftentimes necessary - responses of governments to the COVID-19 pandemic. The more and more obvious effects of climate change provide further indirect opportunities for autocrats and populists to mar rights-based principles. Finally, we faced a practical challenge with the prohibition of travel and assembly: our core activities include awareness raising and public education through workshops and trainings, as well as advocacy in the form of a close exchange with the EU institutions to ensure compliance with the values set out in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union. Similarly to other organisations, we had to bring our operations into the virtual space while retaining our efficiency and assuring quality and impact.

Against this background, Liberties found opportunities to respond with creativity, speed and expertise to the legal challenges which emerged from the unprecedented circumstances the world has faced in 2020. Our contribution to the EU's rule of law, the implementation of the Charter of Fundamental Rights,

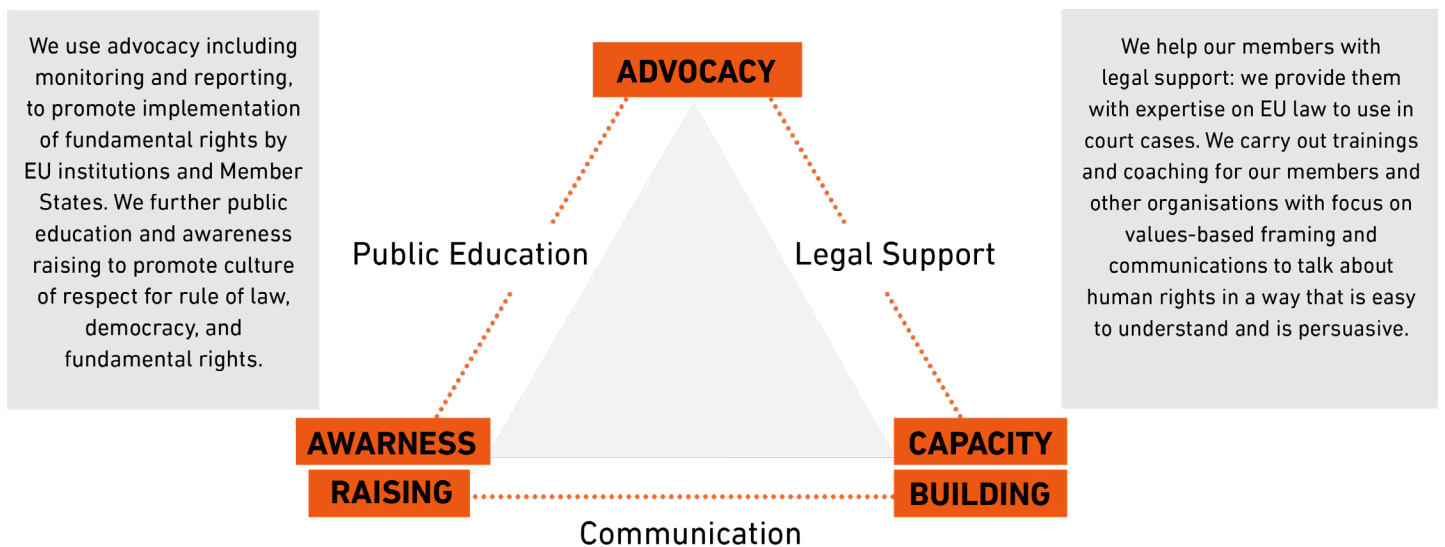
as well as legal advice on the anti-SLAPP directive constitute major steps in fighting authoritarianism. We successfully ran various digital rights campaigns and awareness-raising activities, for instance on the danger posed to democracy by user profiling or political micro-targeting, on more extensive users' rights regulations, and on more safeguards for freedom of expression and freedom of information. In delivering our strategic communication trainings, we have successfully conducted dozens of online workshops and were able to adapt the online workshops into more comprehensive webinars.

This report provides a comprehensive insight into our activities, showcasing how our work has contributed to a European Union where everyone is able to enjoy and use their fundamental rights and freedoms. Throughout the report, we will be giving a short overview of all the activities we have conducted with our members, nevertheless, the focus of the reporting is on the scope of activities realised by Liberties.

OUR VISION OUR MISSION

We strive to achieve full implementation of fundamental rights in the EU. Governance in the EU is divided between the EU institutions and national governments. Accordingly, Liberties' mission is to support the EU in applying its powers to respect (refrain from actively violating), protect (prevent third parties such as national governments and companies from violating), and promote (take measures to create an environment where rights are more likely to be realised) fundamental rights, the rule of law and democracy.

We determined our current focus of thematic topics based on the chief threats to fundamental rights, democracy and the rule of law, the potential to add value with expertise and activities not carried out by other organisations, and the potential to strengthen the ability of the sector as a whole to implement Article 2 values. Our activities reflect a dynamic, modular set of tools.



Our team

With the introduction of an unpaid internship scheme, our team of 12 received valuable support from interns throughout 2020. We are grateful to their dedication and contributions!

I. ADVOCACY

During 2020, Liberties continued to develop and strengthen its position as a leader on the themes we work on. We continue to be a respected and valued source of expertise for EU institutions seeking analysis and information, and we see our advocacy goals reflected in the results of EU law and policy-making. We have become an increasingly attractive partner for other civil society organizations, including those outside our sector, such as Greenpeace. We have also collaborated closely with many of our members on joint trans-European projects, as well as continuing to facilitate direct contact between our members and the EU institutions.

Rule of Law and the State of our Democracy

Liberties contributed to the Commission's reflection process initiated by the Communication 'Further strengthening the rule of law within the Union'. Together with our members, Liberties has been carrying out advocacy, campaigning and public education activities to explain what the rule of law is, what the EU and national governments are doing to protect or harm it, and to gather public support to press leaders at EU and national level to fully respect, promote and protect our basic rights and values. We assist our members to alert EU-decision-makers on challenges to the rule of law at national level as well as contributing policy papers to help EU and national

policy-makers strengthen the rule of law, democracy and fundamental rights in the EU.

Liberties compiled a report on the state of the rule of law in the EU, based on contributions from members in 8 countries: **Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania and Spain**. This report formed an integral part of our contribution to the **European Commission's first ever annual report on the rule of law** in the EU. **The creation of such an annual report by the Commission was one of Liberties' advocacy recommendations in previous years.**

Our submission was welcomed and greatly appreciated by the European Commission, which praised it for its timeliness, comprehensiveness and the quality of reporting. Liberties and our contributing members had the opportunity to discuss the country-specific situations in a dedicated meeting with the Commission's services. Liberties' submission is frequently referenced in all relevant country chapters of the Commission's report, giving us a further push and dedication to follow up with the Commission with reactions from our members on the Commission's analysis.

While the existence of the Commission's annual report is a welcomed development, nevertheless, **Liberties has carried out advocacy activities with recommendations for how future reports should be strengthened** and, crucially, how they should lead to measures by the institutions.

Liberties also contributed to the **European Parliament's resolution repeating its call from 2016 for a comprehensive monitoring and follow-up mechanism** covering the state of democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights in the EU and involving all EU institutions. After Liberties' valuable contributions to the 2016 resolution and our contributions on the topic in intervening years, MEPs proactively approached Liberties for advice and input. The resolution, as adopted, reflected a number of the suggestions made by Liberties.

Liberties facilitated input from our members with MEPs and the Commission on emerging problems at national level. This included feeding into European Parliament **resolutions on Poland and Bulgaria**, as well as publishing commentary on the Polish elections and the enabling law in Hungary. Liberties also collaborated with our Hungarian member, HCLU, to draft advocacy letters to the European Commission with information and analysis on threats to **media pluralism**.

We continue to monitor negotiations in the **Multiannual Financial Framework on the Rights and Values Programme** as well as rule of law conditionality, offering analysis and commentary where appropriate - despite limited opportunity to influence the outcome of negotiations in the Council.

We also made a detailed contribution to the Commission's consultation on the forthcoming revised **EU strategy on the Charter of Fundamental Rights**. As a response to the Commission's request for suggestions from rights and democracy groups to inform its new

strategy, **Liberties' new policy paper elaborated on what new tools and practices the Commission should implement** to bring the rights of citizens to life.

As a result of strengthening our reputation built on expertise in Brussels, we were pleased to be invited to **co-draft a submission with Civil Society Europe calling for the Commission's annual rule of law report to cover the topic of civic space**.

We also collaborated with more than 40 CSOs on a submission on the **European Action Plan on Democracy coordinated by the European Partnership for Democracy** covering a number of our advocacy themes, such as civic space, the integrity of elections, disinformation, media pluralism and the safety of journalists.

Civic Space

Liberties published a report with Greenpeace's European Unit, 'Locking down critical voices', documenting government limitations on civic space during the pandemic. The report was largely based on research from member organisations, contracted by Greenpeace, and was widely picked up in both national and EU media.

At the invitation of Greenpeace's European Unit, **Liberties also joined a coalition advocating for a directive to combat the abusive use of lawsuits (SLAPPs) against journalists and CSOs**. We provided legal and drafting expertise for the coalition's advocacy effort

of producing a model anti-SLAPP directive. The model is meant to influence the institutions and demonstrate what such a directive should look like, while also showing that the EU has the required legal authority to take these measures. As a result, Liberties was able to join high-level advocacy meetings with the Commission and MEPs.

Liberties continues to be a research partner to the **CIVICUS Monitor**. The CIVICUS Monitor offers up-to-date data on the state of civil society freedoms in all countries. **Liberties covers eight European countries - Belgium, Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Spain - and is one of three EU-based organisations providing updates for the CIVICUS Monitor.** The research is updated every eight weeks in close cooperation with Liberties' members. Normally, Liberties also participates in the CIVICUS Monitor's annual research partner workshop to exchange ideas, good practices and further develop the visibility of the Monitor. This year, however, due to the pandemic the annual workshop did not take place

Migration and Asylum

Having strategically identified that the topic of migration and asylum is already well-covered by CSOs, during 2020 Liberties has followed developments on migration and asylum in the EU only to the extent where we can make an impactful contribution.

We have narrowed our focus to researching the development of narratives on migration

and intervened in the policy debate where we saw gaps in coverage. This included **applying our framing expertise** to produce pieces relating to the **border closure by Greece**, violence and illegal push-back practices at the **Croatian-Bosnian border**, and the **Migration Pact of the European Commission**.

Digital Rights

Artificial Intelligence/Automated Decision-Making

In response to the EU starting to explore how to regulate AI/ADM, Liberties began building its in-house expertise on the topic through self-learning and external training, as well as by building a network of contacts among digital rights CSOs and other experts in the field. As we have become more known in the field, we've been asked to co-sign advocacy documents, such as letters and statements, with digital rights CSOs working on the topic.

Liberties is also continuing its efforts to strengthen the capacity of human rights CSOs to work on digital rights issues, which is a new area for many human rights CSOs. We worked with leading AI/ADM experts and practitioners (part of the AI Guild) to devise a **project that would allow 10 Liberties members** to work with these experts to improve their substantive knowledge while simultaneously building their network and creating strategies for future work on AI.

Liberties submitted a response to the Commission's public consultation on its White

Paper on Artificial Intelligence with an opportunity to shape EU policy from its infancy and encourage the EU to regulate AI/ADM based on full respect and promotion of fundamental rights.

Liberties conducted research on **contact tracing apps**, including summarizing information on apps in **different EU member states and data protection violations**.

The Advertising Technology Industry

Internet users routinely experience “behavioural” advertising when visiting webpages. These are targeted adverts based on personal data extracted by the cookies collected by web browsers and apps. This data is broadcast to advertising agents through so-called real-time bidding systems, which allow companies to bid to show their adverts to users. These systems, designed by Google and the IAB, broadcast internet users’ data to thousands of companies. **Arguably, this is the largest data breach ever recorded.**

Liberties together with seven of our members and four further partner organisations filed complaints regarding the misuse of personal data in behavioural advertising with data protection authorities across Europe (in Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, and Slovenia). As a result of the coordinated filing of complaints, our work was quoted extensively in prominent media outlets such as Reuters, Bloomberg, and the New York Times.

Building on our previous work - when Liberties conducted a public-facing campaign, using advertising methods other than RTB-based online methods, aiming to raise awareness about the misgivings of the AdTech industry in communities we deemed to be open to learning more about the importance of data protection - in 2020 Liberties continued to look for strategic openings to challenge the AdTech industry’s misuse of personal data.

Following the invitation of Liberties, 11 human and digital rights organizations in seven EU countries have urged their local Data Protection Authorities (DPAs) to investigate the GDPR violations involving certain popular dating, fertility tracking, and children’s apps. We built a coalition of campaign partners (including some of our members) in Croatia, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden.

The campaign outlined **how the data sharing and the consequent user profiling can lead to various problems of discrimination and exclusion, fraud, manipulation, and the chilling effects that massive commercial surveillance systems may have on democratic debate.**

Building on this success, **six new project-partnerships were established** (Cyprus, Greece, Croatia, Portugal, Romania, Malta), and one member (Sweden) filed a modified version of the original complaints to reflect changes to IAB’s standards and to include even stronger legal arguments establishing the controllership of the IAB.

The Belgian DPA has started investigating the IAB's practices. The Belgian investigation was certainly a positive development, and the Consortium is currently in the process of rethinking the project activities planned for late 2020.

Transparency in Online Political Advertising

Liberties joined a coalition of CSOs calling for full transparency of political ads online to avoid misleading and disguised ads, which can distort political preferences. The political campaigning landscape has changed significantly with the digitalization of our public life, which has created new opportunities for political participation but also poses significant risks to the integrity of elections and the political debate.

Freedom of expression

Liberties continued to advocate and campaign against the trend among policy-makers to use automated systems to filter and moderate online content.

This is the approach favoured by the EU in relation to protecting copyright, preventing the dissemination of terrorist content online, child sexual abuse materials, and more generally in the upcoming **Digital Services Act**.

Liberties supported its Hungarian and Bulgarian members with third-party interventions at the ECtHR in two important

freedom of expression cases - *Yordanovi v Bulgaria*, which our Bulgarian member, the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee, won, and *Mandli et al v Hungary*, which our Hungarian member, HCLU, won. **The Court referred to our third-party interventions in its reasoning.**

Under our Freedom of Expression umbrella, we worked on specific issues on copyright, Regulation to prevent the dissemination of online terrorist content, Child Sexual Abuse Material Online, and the Digital Services Act.

Copyright: Liberties continue to work on the Copyright stakeholder dialogue, participating in meetings with the Commission both in the copyright unit at DG level and the office of Commissioner Breton, who is responsible for the internal market.

Liberties submitted its position on the draft guidance the Commission has developed to clarify obligations resulting from the transposition of Article 17 of the Digital Single Market Directive. We also partnered with other stakeholders, including Communia, BEUC, Wikimedia and others, to flag the human rights angle to the Commission.

Liberties and other organisations representing users' rights were successful in achieving certain safeguards for freedom of expression and freedom of information in the guidelines, as well as a provision clarifying that the directive should not be interpreted to mean that upload filters are mandatory.

Regulation to prevent the dissemination of online terrorist content: As the proposed

regulation entered the triilogue phase, Liberties has published analysis criticising its potential impact on privacy and freedom of expression. This includes an opinion piece, blogs and video content. **Liberties is involved in further advocacy and campaigning in partnership with other CSOs, such as EDRi, Access Now, GFF - our German member - and Save the Internet**, to advocate against the use of upload filters and cross border content removal.

Child Sexual Abuse Material Online:

Together with other CSOs, Liberties sent an **open letter to the Commission** asking for measures that offer both effective protection for the victims of child sexual abuses and offer proper privacy protection and safeguards against surveillance.

Digital Services Act: In 2020, the Commission launched two consultations concerning DSA from the competition law angle and the renewal of the **eCommerce Services Directive**. **Liberties participated in both consultations** and offered our recommendations on a range of issues designed to protect and promote democratic participation and safeguards for human rights in the digital sphere.

Privacy

In addition to our work on coronavirus tracing apps, Liberties also carried out **advocacy on the Hungarian government's suspension of the GDPR** during the first wave of COVID-19. Together with HCLU and Access Now, we requested the European Data Protection

Board (EDPB) to analyse the Hungarian government's decree suspending several articles of the GDPR. We recommended that the EDPB ask the EU Commission to launch an infringement procedure against Hungary. The Commission subsequently reached out to HCLU for further information.

Track the trackers, the tracing app litigation project:

In trying to stop the **coronavirus pandemic, some EU governments are using mass surveillance**, which is unnecessary and dangerous. Liberties and its partner organisations want to make sure that European governments **comply with GDPR** requirements to prepare proper impact assessments and do not use the pandemic as a pretext for normalizing the expanded use of invasive digital surveillance technologies.

Liberties argues that it's only possible to promote public health by protecting privacy, because privacy safeguards ensure public trust, and a high level of public trust is a precondition for any successful coordinated response to the pandemic. As well as the requirement of an impact assessment, the GDPR requires surveillance measures to be necessary, proportionate and justified by legitimate public health objectives. Expanded data collection and monitoring may continue only for as long as necessary to address the current pandemic and as long as safeguards remain in place.

Liberties and its members have submitted multiple freedom of information requests asking for information about the impact assessments carried out on tracing applications that have been deployed. **We are working**

with partners and members in Bulgaria, Croatia, Italy, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Slovenia, Spain, and Sweden. We are also working closely with organisations in Belgium, Germany and Ireland.

The project is relevant not only because of COVID-19, but because of our work on AI/

ADM. The expected coordinated litigation action covering 12 countries will result in strategic lawsuits in several countries. **Currently, Liberties is the only human rights organization – in Europe, and globally - which is able to initiate and coordinate legal actions simultaneously in a dozen countries around a single topic.**

II. CAPACITY BUILDING ON VALUES-BASED FRAMING & STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

During 2020, Liberties further developed the training and support we offer on values-based framing and strategic communications and continued to mainstream this expertise into our own work.

Liberties' growing expertise on values-based framing has gradually led to **increasing interest from many organisations even outside of our network**. Many of the workshops we delivered came after invitations received from previous participants who asked us to train other colleagues and partner organisations, or were based on word-of-mouth recommendations. We were invited to give recommendations for how to financially support capacity building in communications for European civil society at an Ariadne donor briefing and an informal OSF meeting. We were **invited to contribute an article on how to frame the pandemic for Carnegie Europe's policy paper 'How the coronavirus tests European democracy'**, and we were consulted by the Netherlands Helsinki Committee for advice

on how to develop support for its partners on framing. We also offered support on narrative development to a coalition of German CSOs ("Rechtssicherheit für politische Willensbildung") campaigning to protect civic space in Germany. Liberties also explored collaboration with Komons, a capacity-building organisation based in Spain, working on framing and strategic communications.

In-house training

Liberties has been progressively implementing **values-based framing and strategic communications** in-house. All staff have now received basic training and the vast majority of our output is reviewed from a framing perspective.

We launched the video **storytelling campaign 'Grow Your Community'**, which we produced to raise empathy for newcomers to Germany. The four videos contained informal discussions with refugee entrepreneurs. Instead of

talking about hard-to-digest stories of war and persecution, we talked about their lives in Germany, German pop-culture and other issues the audience can relate to. The campaign was well received, with over 100,000 people reached and hundreds of people engaging on Facebook.

We experimented with A/B testing on Facebook as a way of getting feedback on the effectiveness of narratives and video as a format. The tests allowed us to get a better understanding of those segments of German society, identified in externally published research by More in Common, who are open to persuasion on migration. This project is now helping us develop a more full-fledged range of options for testing narratives with our own campaigns from 2021.

Workshops

We delivered one- and two-day workshops to our Dutch member organization, the Dutch branch of the International Committee of Jurists (NJCM), and the Dutch national human rights institute (NHRI). The pandemic led to the cancellation of a new three-day workshop being developed for foundations and civil society organisations in Croatia, which was due for delivery in the spring.

As the pandemic hit, Liberties noticed human rights organisations communicating with narratives that were likely to be ineffective or counterproductive. We therefore **developed a guide for organisations in the sector: ‘How to talk about human rights during**

COVID-19’. The guide was enthusiastically received by NGOs, donors, NHRIs and international organisations, such as the Council of Europe and ODIHR. It was featured on the Brussels-bubble podcast ‘EU-Scream’. It was also **endorsed by experts and leaders in the field**, including Bec Sanderson of the Public Interest Research Centre, Anat Shenker-Osorio and Thomas Coombes. In addition to the guide, Liberties produced a series of more elaborate articles to function as supplementary guidance to organisations, written with our advocacy officers in our respective fields of expertise, including migration, media freedom, civic space, rule of law and hate speech.

A new programme of support for our members

Along with the webinars, Liberties began a **new programme of support on values-based framing and strategic communications**. The programme is designed to ensure that the training is clearly integrated into the practice of the organisations. We offered this in-depth programme to a cohort of four Liberties members during 2020, for a period of 6 to 10 months. The programme consists of an initial round of 8 **online training sessions spread over five days**. **This is followed with meetings, feedback and guidance to participating organisations** as they design and implement a campaign using the values-based framing and strategic communications techniques. Participation in the programme is accompanied by a grant from Liberties of 5,000 EUR for participating organisations for implementing their campaign.

Other workshops supporting specific themes or campaigns

In the fourth quarter of 2020, Liberties carried out three more series of workshops: first for **NGOs working on the Digital Services Act** at EU level; second, for **digital rights NGOs** that are members of the European Digital Rights network working at national level; third, for NGOs working with our Spanish member (Rights International Spain) on a campaign to prohibit **ethnic profiling**

in Spain. Each of these activities includes two or three instructional training sessions and two working sessions where participants receive guidance in developing narratives for planned work. These workshops are followed by the development of short thematic guides for organisations working on these issues.

Detailed list of Workshops/trainings delivered:

ORGANISATION	TOPIC	DURATION	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS
Netherlands Institute for Human Rights	Values Based Framing	2 days	30 civil servants
NJCM (Dutch member)	Values Based Framing	1 day	10 volunteers
Liberties in-house training series (5 trainings)	Values Based Framing	1 day	10 staff members
Barcelona City Council	How to talk about human rights during COVID-19	1 day	15 civil servants, activists, journalists
International Network of Civil Liberties Organisations	How to talk about human rights during COVID-19	1 day	8 activists
Civitates	How to talk about human rights during COVID-19	1 day	8 donor staff and activists
ICCL, NJCM, HCLU, CILD (Liberties members)	As part of our new programme of support. 5 x workshops on Values Based Framing, 5 x workshops on Strategic Communication, plus continuous follow-up support in 2020 and 2021 designing and implementing a campaign with a 5,000 EUR grant supporting member's campaigns	1 day/ workshop/ topic/ organisation (~40 days)	8 activists

Netherlands Network for Human Rights Research	Values Based Framing	1 day	30 academic researchers from Dutch universities
German National Human Rights Institute	Values Based Framing and How to talk about human rights during COVID-19	1 day	8 civil servants
Croatian Ombudswoman's Office	Values Based Framing and How to talk about human rights during COVID-19	1 day	6 civil servants and board members
Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the OSCE	Values Based Framing and How to talk about human rights during COVID-19	1 day	10 civil servants
Council of Europe's European Youth Centre	Values Based Framing and How to talk about human rights during COVID-19	1 day	8 youth advocates
European Network of National Human Rights Institutions	Values Based Framing and How to talk about human rights during COVID-19	1 day	8 Communications & research staff from NHRIs across the EU

III. Communication

The beginning of 2020 saw significant changes in Liberties' communications. In only a few months, **a new organizational draft strategy was developed**. This affected our communication strategy, editorial efforts and resources and strategic promotional planning, and was followed by a strict, tailored and targeted approach in developing our communications materials as well as advertising them (among others).

As part of the strategic updates, **we ran a detailed examination of our target audiences**, their behaviours, preferences and needs (while being privacy friendly), conducted a complex channel review analysis to establish where our strengths and weaknesses are, and broke down our current behaviours into patterns to see how they relate and resonate with the public.

Months of in-depth research and analysis have shown that there are necessary changes to be introduced – starting with developing personas exemplary of our main three target audiences, setting priority channels, **developing a complete website upgrade plan, renaming our policy areas**, testing different creative communications materials, silently launching Instagram and aiming for high engagement through short and snappy videos and other content, boosted with tailor-made advertising.

Due to COVID-19, we have developed a more innovative approach to communications, restructuring **to fully online operational**

work, as well as adopting new habits of monitoring daily and weekly trends and predicting thematic influences for each coming week. This resulted in the development of proactive communication attitudes both on our social media channels and in our approach to press. As a result, our materials were timely and contained relevant hooks which ultimately had a good organic response, thus increasing our visibility both among our peers and external audiences.

We introduced the **'overall-campaigning' approach**, which allows us to maintain visibility of our initiatives across channels and a more creative approach to educational initiatives that is adapted to the audience and is not heavily dependent on our advocacy team.

With all the changes along the way, the end of 2020 and the beginning of 2021 allowed for a **complete relaunch of our visible channels**, while funnelling the relevant support gathered around targeted initiatives and expanding the target audiences to a younger, active audience.

Media relations

With more a proactive approach, we were quoted in dozens of international and EU media outlets in 2021. Our campaigns, statements and expert quotes were cited in top-tier sources, including Politico, Euractive, EUObserver, Techcrunch, the New York

Times, Reuters, Sueddeutsche Zeitung, or La Vanguardia.

We regularly reached out to media reactively, using EU regulative developments or milestones as hooks. For instance, these included the negotiations on the rule of law in the European Council (July 2020), the release of the Commission's report about GDPR enforcement (July 2020), and a European Court of Justice ruling about Hungary's law against NGOs (June 2020).

We influence campaign and legislative discussions with opinion pieces in EU media outlets. We placed an op-ed in Euronews ahead of the European Council negotiations on the rule of law and the EU budget (July 2020), as well as op-eds concerning our Tech and Rights campaigns at the beginning of the year.

Media monitoring

Liberties invested in a media monitoring tool to have a real and effective archive of all mentions in the press, as well as allowing us to monitor the debate on particular issues of interest in key countries.

IV. Fundraising

Liberties is delighted to have received funding from new sources in 2020. The **Digital Freedom Fund** supports our COVID Tracing App Litigation Project, and **we are also partners in a DFF- and OSF-supported project** led by the Open Rights Group on AdTech.

We followed major debates in Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Poland and the Netherlands as the largest countries in the EU based on population, and therefore with the most votes in the EU's Council of Ministers. We were only following the most influential media in each of those countries. For example, in Germany, we were following the likes of the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Sueddeutsche Zeitung, Deutschlandfunk and Der Spiegel, while in France, we focused on Le Monde, Europe 1, Le Figaro and RFI.

Events

Liberties has participated and organised a couple of events relevant to communications and visibility, which contributed to our reputation among other NGOs both locally and internationally.

In addition to the capacity building workshops, we were the organizers of the **Berlin chapter of the Democracy Drinks events**. Unfortunately, the monthly gatherings were not possible due to COVID-19.

The **Ford Foundation's** Internet and Society Program continues its support of Liberties in 2021 and 2022. The **Oak Foundation**, after a long evaluation process, decided to support our capacity-building work on values-based communications for three years. We are also

pleased to continue to receive support from **Civicus**. Liberties was also invited by the **EU AI Fund** to submit a project proposal, which was accepted at the end of 2020.

Thank you

Our work would not be possible without the generous support of our funding and cooperation partners. **We would like to thank the following donors:**

We are also grateful to our individual donors for their generous financial support.



How you can help us

One-time or regular donations provides essential support to our campaigns.

You can easily and simply donate online on our website in a secure environment.

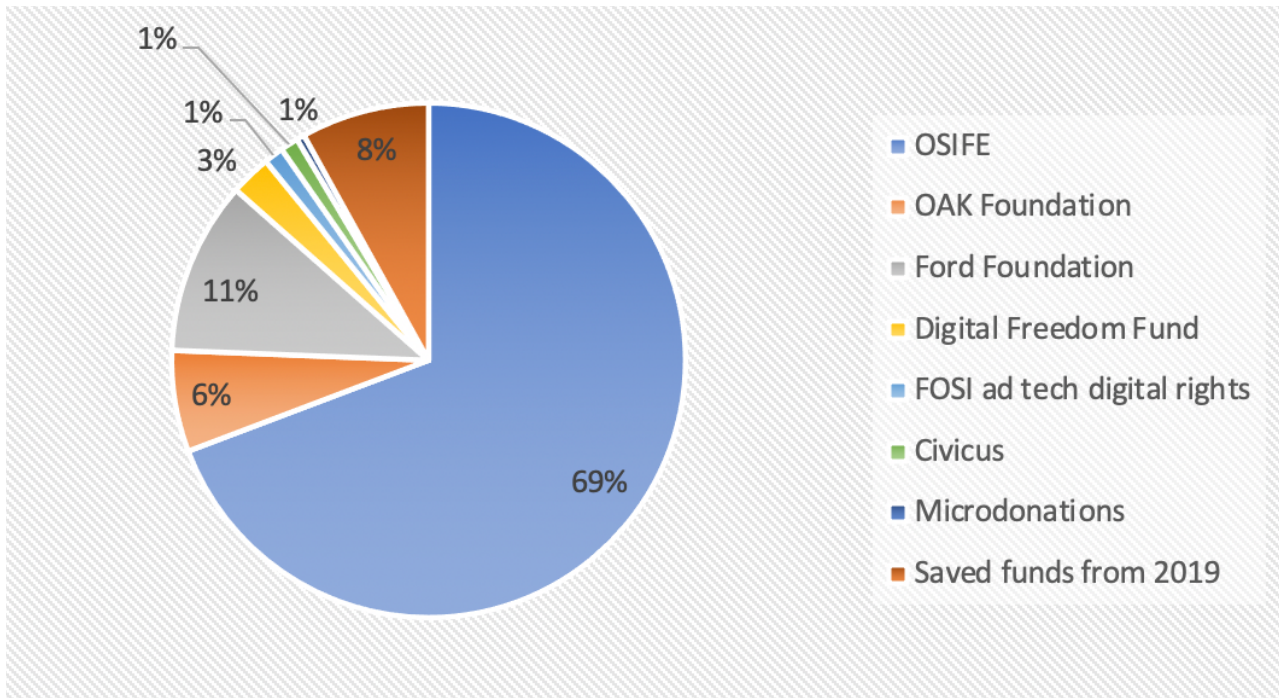
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Any gift, no matter how small, helps us to continue our work safeguarding fundamental rights, the rule of law and democracy in the European Union.

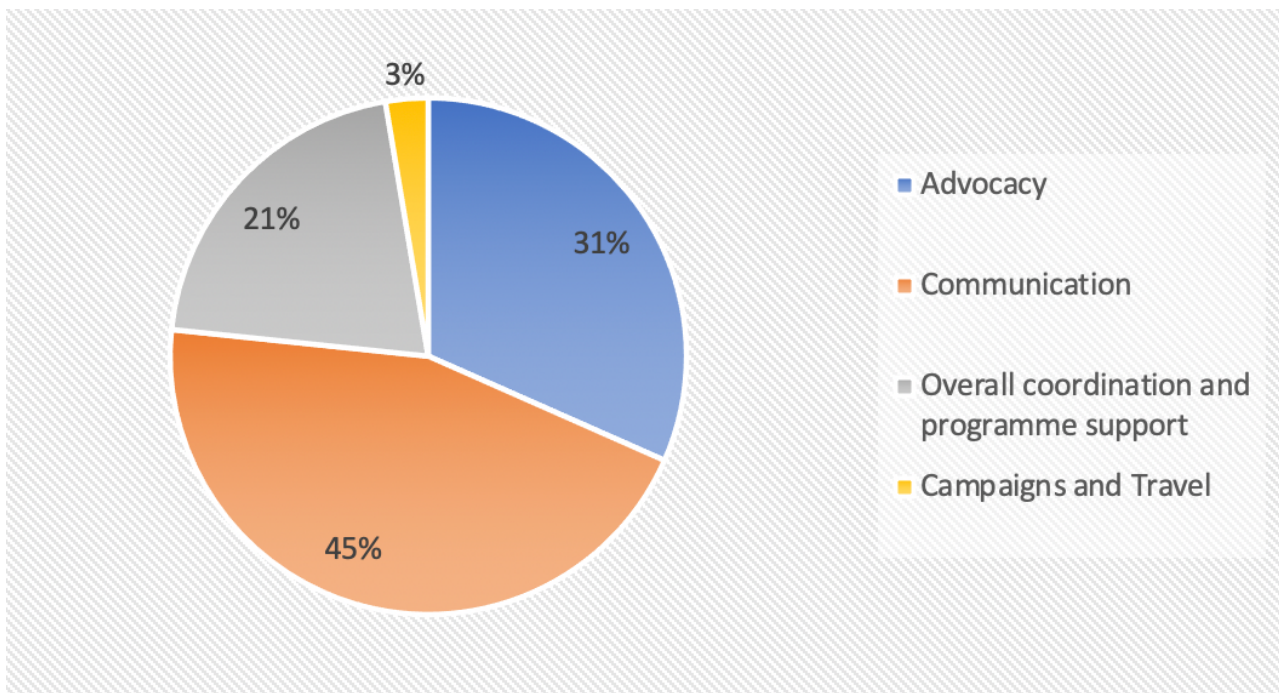
Thank you.

Financial Summary

Revenue 2020



Expenditure 2020



The Civil Liberties Union for Europe (Liberties) is a non-governmental organisation promoting and protecting the civil liberties of everyone in the European Union. We are headquartered in Berlin and have a presence in Brussels. Liberties is built on a network of national civil liberties NGOs from across the EU. Unless otherwise indicated, the opinions expressed by Liberties do not necessarily constitute the views of our member organisations.

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