



OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATIONS **IN EUROPE**



OPEN SOCIETY
FOUNDATIONS



EMPOWERING PEOPLE TO SEEK CHANGE FOR THEMSELVES

Europe is a cornerstone of the Open Society Foundations.

In 1984, George Soros established his first foundation in Central and Eastern Europe to assist civil society in the transition from communism to democracy. Since then, Open Society's work has spread throughout Europe and to almost every part of the globe. Open Society has invested more than €6 billion on human rights, justice, and democratic principles, and is now one of the largest nongovernmental funders of civil society in the world.

Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia and Poland are among the countries in Central and Eastern Europe where Open Society continues to work alongside civil society, helping to promote tolerance and accountability. As well as this thriving and historic presence, Open Society is also active in Western Europe including in France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, and Spain.

The Open Society Foundations work day-to-day with civil society organizations across Europe to respond to discrimination, prejudice, and injustice; to understand the emergence of new and sometimes worrying political phenomena; to inform better practices in policing and security; to connect those seeking justice and equality with policymakers and institutions; to promote inclusion for Europe's minorities; to support a critical and informed discourse among nongovernmental actors; and to empower grassroots organizations to seek change for themselves, unique to their own local context.

Protestors gather at a demonstration on June 19, 2011, in Brussels, Belgium, questioning the nature of the country's democracy.

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PROMOTING INCLUSION

MINORITY COMMUNITIES—whether Muslim, migrant or Roma—continue to come under intense scrutiny in Europe today. This complex situation presents Europe with one of its greatest challenges: how to ensure equal rights and social cohesion in a climate of political tension, global recession, and rapidly expanding diversity.

Open Society has sought to improve the social inclusion of Europe's diverse Muslim and marginalized communities in different ways. In one project, Open Society examined local government policies and practices in 11 European Union (EU) cities to determine their effectiveness in achieving meaningful integration.

The *Muslims in EU Cities* report series analyzes communities in Antwerp (Belgium), Copenhagen (Denmark), Marseille and Paris (France), Berlin and Hamburg (Germany), Amsterdam and Rotterdam (the Netherlands), Stockholm (Sweden), and Leicester and Waltham Forest–London (United Kingdom). The city reports focus on civic and political participation, identity and belonging, and the roles and impact that media, education, employment, housing, health care, and the criminal justice system play in various Muslim communities. The reports also offer recommendations for improving living conditions and on the ground advocacy efforts to push for the adoption of recommendations at the local, national and European levels that will foster greater inclusion. Similar research is underway on the situation of Somalis in western European and Scandinavian cities and of marginalized majority populations and communities.

Open Society supports civil society organizations across Europe working to promote inclusion and

counter xenophobia. In one example between January and June 2012, Open Society supported the think tank Graines de France in carrying out media monitoring on xenophobic public discourse during the presidential and legislative elections; in Catalonia, the strategy by the municipality of Barcelona to counter xenophobic discourse is now being expanded with the help of an Open Society grant; in Italy the Archive of Migrant Memories made the documentary *Benvenuti in Italia* (Welcome to Italy), offering a glimpse of migrant life in Italy—from the perspective of the migrants themselves; in Brussels, a mentoring scheme by the European Women's Lobby is connecting female members of the European Parliament from different political parties and countries with women of foreign origin or ethnic minority background who are interested in running for the European Parliament Elections in May 2014.

These are just some of the civil society organizations Open Society works with and supports in Europe.

Members of the Muslim community perform on May 31, 2009, in Berlin, Germany, at the Carnival of Cultures parade in Berlin's Kreuzberg district.

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A man attending the 2010 Eid Festival provides his answer to the question: "Who are you?" at a photography booth organized by the Open Society's At Home in Europe project in Copenhagen, Denmark.

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RESPONDING TO DISCRIMINATION AND PREJUDICE

IN 2009, THE OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATIONS exposed the pervasive—and illegal—use of ethnic profiling by police in France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and other EU countries—a practice which disproportionately affects Muslim and black communities in Europe. Ethnic profiling occurs when law enforcement officials use stereotypes, rather than specific information about behavior, as the basis for deciding to stop, search, or detain people. Police across Europe continue the practice even though there is no evidence that it prevents terrorism or lowers crime rates.

In 2006-2007, Open Society collaborated on a pilot project with municipal police in Fuenlabrada, a town on the outskirts of Madrid, Spain. The pilot achieved dramatic results in police effectiveness by moving away from ethnic profiling. Over a six-month period, the Fuenlabrada police stopped half the number of people, including far fewer minorities. Yet the number of stops that uncovered a crime or other infraction increased from 6 to 28 percent—a powerful demonstration of what happens when police make stops based on information and evidence rather than stereotypes.

Across Europe, Open Society provides legal support and advice for victims of unfair stop and search tactics and works with organizations that promote fair, effective, and accountable policing. Open Society has funded organizations like Stop Watch in the United Kingdom—a unique mix of academics, activists, young people, and lawyers who have effectively challenged the current use of stop and search practices and drawn attention to the harm that stop and search causes in minority communities—or the Collectif Contre le Contrôle au Faciès (Collective Against Identity Checks) in France that has campaigned for fairer, more accountable stop and search tactics and legal recourse in the case of discriminatory practices.

Since 2010, Open Society in Italy has supported a range of efforts to improve the inclusion of ethnic minorities, including reviewing the practice of

administrative detention of migrants, ending the controversial “push back” policy which prevents migrants—predominantly asylum seekers—from landing on Italian shores, and ensuring responsible coverage of minority issues in the media. Open Society has also supported efforts to improve the situation of Roma in Italy, including ending the “Nomad Emergency,” a state of emergency in five Italian regions that labelled Roma a threat to public security, as well as the policy of publicly funded segregated Roma camps.

Over the past decade, in tandem with long-term partners, Open Society has proven its ability to respond quickly to some of the most urgent flashpoints in the pursuit of fair and just societies in Western Europe: the Paris riots in 2005 and the ensuing debate on belonging in France; counterterrorism in Europe and the illegal rendition of European citizens; attempts to roll back the Human Rights Act in the United Kingdom; the rise of extremist political parties in the European Union; the banning of the face veil in France in 2011; and the riots in Britain in 2011 which saw looting, arson, and violence and over 3,000 people arrested.

Ismail A., a business student studying in Rotterdam, has first-hand experience of the frequent stop and searches by police that often target young men of Moroccan descent. In May 2012, he described being stopped and searched at the train station. “They do have the right to do it,” he said. “But the way they did it, I thought it was disrespectful. They should treat all people with respect.”

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HELPING ACCOUNTABILITY

SNATCHING PEOPLE OFF THE STREETS.

Hanging people from the ceiling. A man freezing to death alone on a concrete floor. These are the grim realities revealed in the Open Society report *Globalizing Torture*. It tells the story of how 54 countries, many of them in Europe, participated in the CIA's secret campaign of global rendition and torture. Released in 2013, the report weaves together the details of the abuse of 136 victims, giving them names and lifting the layers of secrecy that have surrounded this program, which began following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.

Holding decision-makers and those in power to account is a crucial element of any open society. Governments, police and security forces, political leaders, and industry must all be open to scrutiny in accountable and fair societies.

In 2012, the European Court of Human Rights vindicated the long search for justice of Khaled El-Masri, a German citizen who was the victim of a mistaken rendition operation by the CIA. The case was brought to Strasbourg by Open Society lawyers on behalf of El-Masri. Open Society continues to urge the German government to transmit to the U.S. authorities the arrest warrants previously issued on January 31, 2007, for 13 CIA operatives involved in the case, so that U.S. officials involved in his case can be tried in Germany. Open Society is also asking that Germany clarify the extent of its knowledge of, and involvement in, El-Masri's extraordinary rendition.

In August 2011, Britain witnessed its biggest outbreak of civil unrest and rioting in 30 years. Through research partly funded by Open Society, the *Guardian* newspaper and the London School of Economics and Political Science examined the causes of the rioting by conducting the biggest study of the unrest, which included interviews with 270 people who rioted in Birmingham, Liverpool, London, Manchester, Nottingham, and Salford. While the government said "gangs" were at the heart of the disturbances, the research found that gang members played only a marginal role in the riots; instead

widespread anger and frustration at the way police engage with communities was a significant cause of the summer riots in every major city where disorder took place.

Helping accountability also means highlighting successes by governments and decision-makers. In 2000, the Portuguese government responded to widespread public concern over drugs by rejecting a "war on drugs" approach and instead decriminalized drug possession and use. It further rebuffed convention by placing the responsibility for decreasing drug demand as well as managing dependence under the Ministry of Health, rather than the Ministry of Justice. With this, the official response toward drug-dependent persons shifted from viewing them as criminals, to treating them as patients. *Drug Policy in Portugal: The Benefits of Decriminalizing Drug Use*, an Open Society report, provides a valuable case study of how decriminalization and evidence-based strategies can reduce drug consumption, dependence, recidivism, and HIV infection, and create safer communities for all. Research on drug policies and practices from the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, and Switzerland have also introduced policymakers to better drug policy outcomes and the processes that made them possible.

A patient receives a dose of methadone in 2008 at a drug addiction treatment center in Porto, Portugal. Since 2000, Portuguese authorities have reduced criminal penalties for drug possession and treated addiction and possession as public health issues. By 2008, the number of heroin users in the country dropped from 100,000 to 55,000.

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WORKING WITH ROMA TO ACHIEVE EQUALITY AND INCLUSION

TEN TO TWELVE MILLION ROMA live dispersed across Europe. They are among the continent's most vulnerable people and face barriers in all areas of life. Racism, discrimination, and social exclusion are a daily reality for most Roma, many of whom live in deep poverty, lacking access to health care and decent housing. Evictions of Roma settlements, sometimes centuries old, are commonplace. Lagging education levels are compounded by education systems that shunt Roma children into "special schools." Discrimination in labor markets has led to high unemployment or low quality, low skill, and low paid jobs for Roma.

Since the early 1990s, George Soros and the Open Society Foundations have led an unprecedented campaign working alongside Europe's Roma community to enable Roma to take their rightful place in European society. The involvement of Open Society with Roma in Europe takes many different forms, from education, health care, employment and political participation to funding Roma backed documentary films, newspapers, magazines, television, radio stations, and music. Empowering local actors to advocate for themselves is a central part of Open Society's mission.

In 1996, Open Society helped set up the European Roma Rights Centre, an international public interest organization that assists the Roma with strategic litigation, international advocacy, research, policy development, and training Roma activists. Open Society and the World Bank are major backers of the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015, an unprecedented international initiative whose signatory-states have committed themselves to fight discrimination against the Roma, to end widespread segregation, to help Roma communities free themselves from the clutches of poverty, and to close the gap in living conditions between Roma and the overall population.

Open Society has helped back strategic litigation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Kosovo, and Slovakia including

landmark litigation before the European Court of Human Rights to halt the widespread practice of segregating Roma children into separate classrooms or schools for children with developmental disabilities. In Spain, the Federation of Roma Associations in Catalonia and the EMIGRA Research Group produced, with Open Society support, *Lost in Action*, an evaluation of Roma policy in Catalonia with detailed recommendations on how it should be improved.

Improving educational outcomes extends beyond the courtroom. Open Society, the World Bank, the European Commission, and other organizations have backed the Roma Education Fund, which helps Roma to overcome daunting barriers and obtain a quality education. Open Society also funds scholarships for Roma students to pursue degrees in medicine, nursing, pharmacology, and related disciplines at accredited schools and universities in Romania, along with training health mediators, most of them Roma women, to bridge the gap between Roma patients, their families, and the health care systems in Romania, Ukraine, and other Eastern European countries.

The Soros Economic Development Fund has assisted local partner financial organizations to undertake loan and microcredit programs to expand economic opportunities for the Roma, who all too often have difficulty lifting themselves out of poverty because they lack access to conventional bank loans. The fund works with artisans in Moldova, provides loans to Roma organizations in Hungary, and helps manage a loan program for housing construction and improvement in Slovakia.

Children attending a community center kindergarten on November 16, 2012, in a Roma settlement in Moldova and Bodvou, Slovakia.

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ENABLING FREE AND OPEN DEBATE

THE ABILITY AND SPACE TO DEBATE nourishes critical inquiry in societies, fosters dialogue and builds mutual understanding. Since 1995, the Open Society Foundations have operated a debate program in all of the European Union's member states and Turkey which aims to encourage the culture of debate and critical inquiry, particularly among less typical participants including minorities and the poor.

Thousands of young people have passed through this program since then, developing their debating skills, working with their European contemporaries, and becoming active citizens in their societies along the way. Motions debated during this time include: *This House would ban children from participating in religious activities; this House believes that emerging democracies should ban the election of close family members of current or previous office-holders; this House would ban far-right parties from competing in elections in European countries.*

Debate@Europe, a debating tournament in 2012, brought nearly 5,000 young people from countries including Estonia, the Netherlands, Romania, and Slovakia to Amsterdam to debate issues related to the European Union. Debate formats have evolved over the years and recently debates have

taken place entirely online and through webcams. Styles of debate have also evolved. Debate in the Neighborhood in Romania provides alternative education for children living in the ghetto in Ferentari. Debate in the Neighborhood is a combination of street dance and communication activities that improve the self-esteem, communication skills, and creativity of children living in challenging circumstances.

Young Romanians participate in a 2013 fund-raising dance competition for Debate in the Neighborhood, a local organization that provides alternative education, street dance classes, and communication activities for impoverished youth in Ferentari, Romania.

© IOANA MOLDOVAN

Debate in the Neighborhood takes debate and its benefits out of its traditional settings and transplants it right into the heart of diverse and urban communities.



SUPPORTING INDEPENDENT MEDIA

WHEN IT COMES TO DIGITAL MEDIA in Europe, Croatia is well ahead of the curve. Experimental broadcasting via digital signals began in 2002 and the last analog television signals were switched off in September 2011. The country has the highest free-to-air digital terrestrial coverage in Europe, exceeding 99 percent of national territory. In an Open Society report *Mapping Digital Media: Croatia*, the analysis finds that the digitization process in Croatia has done much to democratize and pluralize Croatian media. It has not yet, however, neutralized the power of dominant media organizations, or indeed the influence wielded by political elites and advertisers. This report is part of an unprecedented series examining the impact of digital media in more than 50 countries worldwide, including Bosnia and Herzegovina, Hungary, the Netherlands, Slovenia, Spain and 20 other countries in Europe.

Open Society has worked in Europe for more than two decades to strengthen the role that media play in keeping societies open and accountable by informing citizens, stimulating debate and civic engagement, and holding power to account. Open Society works with a wide range of media freedom organizations, journalists, academics, and others to promote media pluralism and diversity, transparency and accountability, editorial independence, freedom of expression and information, public service and public interest content, high professional and ethical standards, watchdog journalism, and diverse voices.

Investigative reporting is a litmus test of healthy journalism—the field in which media make their most obvious and indispensable contribution to open societies. Now more than ever, the revenue streams that enable investigative journalism are under threat. Open Society supports collaborative investigative journalism projects and networking.

Over the past decade, Open Society has produced a substantial body of research into the independence and public service role of European media. Open Society has joined other donors and local partners in addressing the immense unfinished task

of reforming state broadcasters into independent public service media across Central and Eastern Europe, and of strengthening public service media independence in Western Europe—especially in France, Italy, and Spain. Independence is also key for media regulators. Open Society supports campaigns for more accountable appointment procedures to regulatory and other governance bodies.

Media power in Europe continues to be concentrated in very few hands making ownership a central issue in disputes over media pluralism. Open Society supports research into media ownership patterns in Europe's new democracies, and comparative analysis of links between ownership and content. Working with Access Info Europe, Open Society collected data in 2012 on the accessibility of information about media ownership in 19 European countries. These findings are part of efforts to advocate for a new and more robust approach to transparency of media ownership in Europe.

Open Society works with partners to strengthen the commitment by the Council of Europe, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, and the European Commission to uphold and extend Europe's unique system of agreed standards for best practice by the media. Currently, Open Society is using its research and field experience to sharpen the European Union's deliberations on media pluralism, and bolster the Council of Europe's work on media freedom.

Protestors and journalists wait outside the 2009 G-20 Summit in London, England.

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UNDERSTANDING EMERGING POLITICAL PHENOMENA

AS THE CRISIS DEEPENS, new political phenomena across Europe are giving voice to the concerns, anxieties, demands, and frustrations of European citizens. The Open Society Foundations are working with academics, researchers, political parties and activists to understand the implications of new political and social developments for open society in Europe, and to act on the insights this research provides.

A report on “subterranean politics” across Europe from the London School of Economics and Political Science—with support from the Open Society Foundations—revealed a strong undercurrent of political disillusionment that runs deeper than frustration with austerity and cuts. Groups such as the 15-M Movement (Indignados) in Spain, Occupy London, UK Uncut, Italian trade unions, women’s groups and environmental organizations, Anonymous and Occupy Berlin, community organizers, local food producers, and Hungarian media freedom activists all participated in the study. While mainstream political circles have portrayed the crisis as primarily financial, the study suggests that the crisis in Europe is primarily political, and that protests are about the failures of democracy rather than austerity.

On the other side of the political spectrum, populist and often xenophobic movements across Europe have grown in strength since 2007. In some countries, the growing political power of these parties has pulled mainstream parties toward the right and increased

hostility to migrants and minorities. A series of reports by the think tanks Demos and Counterpoint—supported by the Open Society—provides the most comprehensive look to date into the rise of populism across Europe, from Denmark to Greece, Italy and the Netherlands. One of the new insights reveals how populism thrives on social media, and how social media is changing the way many young people engage in politics. As part of the populism research, Demos analyzed the responses of 10,000 online supporters of European populist political parties and movements as to why they were attracted to extremism—and found more citing frustration with mainstream politics than xenophobia as their motivation. Future research will investigate populism on the left and its implications.

Other research argues that mainstream European politicians need to focus on winning back the “reluctant” supporters of right-wing populist parties if they want to deny parliamentary representation to extremists.

Young activists in the media tent set up during demonstrations commemorating the one-year anniversary of Spain’s Indignados movement in 2012 in Barcelona, Spain.

© GUILLEM VALLE/CORBIS

“The rise of left-wing, anti-austerity, sometimes anti-EU, parties has been the real story of the last year. In France, Germany, Greece, and Italy these parties have gone from radical fringe to major political forces.”

JAMIE BARTLETT, DEMOS



OPENING

ACCESS TO KNOWLEDGE,
PROTECTING FREEDOM
OF EXPRESSION

THE OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATIONS SUPPORT a mix of young organizations committed to advancing government accountability through experimentation with new technologies and new uses of public data. The work of these organizations creates new channels of access to information and provides both large amounts of raw data that was previously unavailable and the means of contextualizing it in ways that ensure greater citizen participation in government oversight. Many of these organizations, in parallel, are advocating to their governments to release public information in new formats, following “open data” principles that ensure government information is broadly accessible and reusable by journalists, advocates, researchers, and civil servants.

One such organization, Fundacja ePaństwo in Poland started work in 2010 by developing software tools that gather procedural and legislative data from the website of the Polish parliament, the Sejm, and republishes the data in structured ways under the name “Sejmometr.” Now, three years later, Fundacja ePaństwo has grown to become a go-to hub in Poland on government data, parliamentary activity, and open government data activism. Fundacja ePaństwo works closely with journalists, software developers, and citizen groups to develop software tools and data sets that advance their goals of building a more open and accountable public sector.

Over the past 10 years, Open Society has helped to incubate and grow an emerging European civil society movement working to protect our fundamental rights in the digital environment. This movement consists of a handful of professionally run NGOs and a large number of volunteer initiatives and activists. The most important campaign of this young movement was the recent campaign against the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA), a secretly negotiated agreement that proposed to curtail important free expression, privacy, and due process rights. In a massive outcry against ACTA, over 100,000 European citizens took to the streets. Open Society grantees worked tirelessly to coordinate protesters, brief policymakers and communicate the campaign’s concerns to the world. The European Parliament rejected ACTA in July 2012.

An activist demonstrates against the ACTA (Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement) bill on June 9, 2012, in Berlin, Germany.

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ACTA threatened to undermine freedom of expression and privacy online, due process, access to medicines and the sharing of knowledge online.



PURSUING JUSTICE AND REFORM

FORCED STERILIZATIONS FOR WOMEN from minority communities, laws denouncing “homosexual propaganda,” the erroneous diagnosis of Roma children with mental disabilities so as to shunt them into “special schools” away from the majority population: these are just some of the human rights abuses still seen in Europe today. Two decades of Open Society involvement in human rights in Central and Eastern Europe has meant the growth of a robust civil society that now represents the leading voice of human rights in the region.

The Bulgarian Helsinki Committee since the early 2000s has brought nearly a hundred successful prosecutions for egregious abuses in closed institutions such as pretrial detention centers, institutions for persons with mental disabilities, and prisons. Their advocacy resulted in the establishment of national mechanisms to prevent torture and ill-treatment in places where public scrutiny is limited.

The Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights Poland, an organization that has equipped hundreds of human rights activists from more than 20 countries with knowledge and skills to hold governments accountable for human rights abuses, has helped build the human rights movement across the region. From 2009, the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights Poland was instrumental in investigating the participation of the Polish government in the worldwide CIA rendition program for alleged terrorists and actively challenged such practices in courts, result-

ing in a case pending before the European Human Rights Court.

The work of the Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation, a women’s rights hub in the region, has resulted in the adoption of many gender equality acts in Eastern Europe and the placement of domestic violence issues on the public and policy agendas.

A decade of Open Society support to ACCEPT-Bucharest, a key LGBTI advocate, resulted in the decriminalization of consensual homosexuality in 2001. In addition, ACCEPT’s advocacy resulted in the recognition of freedom of assembly for the LGBTI community and, more recently, in the successful adoption of the comprehensive antidiscrimination act and bylaws. Currently, ACCEPT plays a leading role in the antidiscrimination movement, beyond its LGBTI work.

Participants at the “Gay Parade” march past the Romanian Parliament Building on May 23, 2009, in Bucharest, Romania. During the years of communist rule, before 1989, homosexuality was a crime, and it is still not widely accepted among many Romanian people.

© AP PHOTO

“In order to fight discrimination you need three essential elements: wise leadership, effective laws, and an empowered and vigilant civil society.”

VIOREL URSU, OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATIONS



BRINGING HUMAN RIGHTS TO HEALTH CARE

IN EUROPE, AND ELSEWHERE, people who face stigma and discrimination are often left with substandard or no health care. In Eastern Europe, ambulances routinely refuse to answer calls for help from Roma communities. In countries of the former Soviet bloc, people with mental disabilities are forced to live in remote and dilapidated institutions, without access to education or health care. People with AIDS or cancer in some parts of Europe are left to suffer in excruciating pain, without access to affordable, essential medicines such as oral morphine.

The Open Society Foundations work to grow the ability of marginalized communities across Europe to advocate for better health policies and practices, and transparency within health systems. Open Society works with Roma groups to confront discrimination from health providers and develop future generations of Roma doctors and practitioners who both understand, and feel a commitment to the needs of their communities. Open Society supports disability rights groups to advocate for the right to receive health and social services within their communities, not within inhumane long-stay institutions to which many are confined. Open Society supports innovative legal and health services, like peer-based paralegal programs and mobile harm reduction clinics, to address the needs of people who use drugs, many of whom face brutality and mistreatment in detention and a lack of access to therapeutic medicines.

The European Union and its member states have an obligation to ensure that European taxpayer money in the form of structural funds is invested in a manner that respects human rights and fundamental freedoms. These are among the basic values upon which the European Union was founded. However, some member states are acting contrary to EU law by using European money to invest in institutions for people with disabilities rather than developing alternative community-based services that promote community living. These actions contravene the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and violate the fundamental human rights of people with disabilities. Through research and advocacy, Open Society is working to ensure that EU Structural Funds are not used to perpetuate the social exclusion of any European citizen.

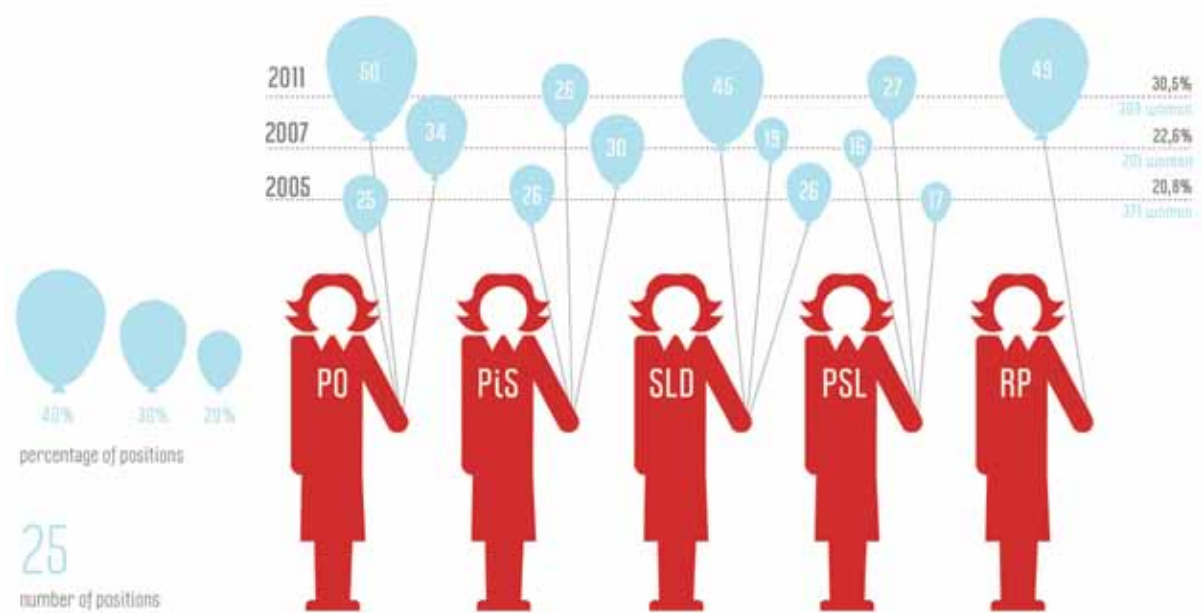
A man with Down syndrome holds a sign reading “Exclusion” and participates in a rally against government cutbacks for disabled people during International Day of Persons with Disabilities on December 3, 2012, in Seville, Spain.

© MARCELO DEL POZO/REUTERS

“Community living means that people with disabilities can live and participate in the community as equal citizens with equal rights and opportunities.”

JUDITH KLEIN, OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATIONS

WOMEN IN THE TOP THREE POSITIONS OF ELECTORAL LISTS



RIGHT-WING PARTIES:
 PO - The Civic Platform
 PiS - Law and Justice
 PSL - Polish People's Party

LEFT-WING PARTIES:
 SLD - Democratic Left Alliance
 RP - Palikot Movement

PROMOTING INFORMED DISCOURSE

IN AN OPEN SOCIETY there cannot—and should not—be a monopoly on knowledge. When data, research, and evidence are sparse, governments are more able, and more inclined, to make policy decisions that benefit those in power rather than the average citizen. The Open Society Foundations provide core funding to the think tank sector in Central and Eastern Europe, allowing think tanks to grow, develop, and play a meaningful role in achieving informed, positive change in their respective countries.

Open Society believes think tanks open up space for debate, bring new voices to bear, and provide the research, evidence, and analysis for informed decision making. Think tanks do not just identify problems, they offer solutions. This benefits everyone in society, not just the elite.

Through its support of think tanks, Open Society paves the way for critical inquiry in regions where this tradition has been stifled through a legacy of authoritarianism. Many of the countries in which Open Society works lack even the most basic data—from census data in Serbia to inflation rates in Azerbaijan—while others have only limited or poor quality research. In this data vacuum, producing reliable knowledge takes on a whole new importance. Think tanks help to ensure that policy decisions—from how to use gender quotas in elections to policing or accession to the European Union—are grounded in hard data and evidence, not personal opinions.

Open Society supports informed discourse around human rights and justice at the heart of European decision-making in Brussels. Direct advocacy with members of the European Parliament and European policymakers aims to keep the principles of open society at the forefront of European policy. Most

recently, advocacy work has focused on bringing transparency to the activity of the extractives industry in Africa, and the role that European countries must play. In challenging economic times, research and advocacy in Brussels work to ensure that European trade and energy policies do not sacrifice human rights and justice through partnerships with autocratic, resource rich regimes.

The graphic shows the number of female candidates nominated at the first three positions on the electoral list, which gives them better chances to be elected. The size of the balloon indicates the share of top-three positions on the electoral lists from all districts occupied by women. The number inside the balloon indicates the number of all top-three positions occupied by women in all electoral districts on the lists of the respective party.

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THE OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATIONS WORK TO BUILD VIBRANT
AND TOLERANT SOCIETIES WHOSE GOVERNMENTS ARE
ACCOUNTABLE TO THEIR CITIZENS. WORKING WITH LOCAL
COMMUNITIES IN MORE THAN 100 COUNTRIES, THE OPEN SOCIETY
FOUNDATIONS SUPPORT JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS, FREEDOM OF
EXPRESSION, AND ACCESS TO PUBLIC HEALTH AND EDUCATION



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