

Especially after the inclusion of the Charter of Fundamental Rights in the Lisbon Treaty, European citizens have several rights as individuals. On the contrary, while EU documents contain several references to the activity of citizens' organizations in the public arena, they completely lack legally binding texts defining the roles, rights and responsibilities of Citizens' Organizations, as well as the related obligations of Public institutions. In order to fill this gap, in 2006 FONDACA and Active Citizenship Network, in partnership with citizens' organizations operating in 11 EU countries, with the support of scholars and experts and on the base of the gathering and analysis of good practices, set up the European Charter of Active Citizenship, containing norms on the roles, rights and responsibilities of Autonomous Citizens' Organizations, as well as the related obligations of Public institutions.

The Charter contains 20 articles and is divided into five sections:

- General Principles
- Rights of Civic Participation
- Public institutions' Obligations
- Enforcement
- Implementation

Though not yet adopted as a binding document, the articles of the Charter directly refer to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and particularly from article 11 on the freedom of expression and information, article 12 on the freedom of assembly and association, article 21 on non-discrimination and article 41 on the right to good administration. The 20 articles of the Charter can thus be considered as an embodiment of fundamental rights and, as such, they exist and must be respected even when European and national laws do not explicitly provide for their protection.

[Download the text of the Charter](#)