
CENTER FOR PUBLIC INNOVATION

Annual Report 2025

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About us

Mission

The Association Centre for Public Innovation (CPI) is an organization established in 2014. Based in Bucharest, CPI is doing research and advocacy work at national level, on topics related to human rights, democratic institutions, and inclusive society, and it is developing innovative grassroots civic education projects.

Our mission is to promote the open society in Romania. We are building a country where citizens are in solidarity with each other, without exception, and at the same time take an informed attitude towards what is happening around them. We are building a country where transparent institutions provide access to information in open formats and decide together with and in the interest of the citizens, guaranteeing equal rights for all people.

Scope of work

We implement programs and projects on three pillars:

- *Democratic institutions and human rights* - our work comprises a mix of advocacy, policy research, and watchdog activities. We are working in coalitions, together with like-minded organizations and individuals.
- *Civic education* - focusing on developing innovative grassroots projects, supporting communities, schools, and students with civic education projects.
- *Inclusive Society* - our work is currently focusing on the migrants living in Romania. Our tools remain advocacy and policy analysis, and we are not providing direct services to migrants.

We are also providing services (consultancy), and we use the profits generated to advance our mission and objectives.

Organization

CPI is registered as an Association. According to the national legislation, the overseeing body is the General Assembly, currently comprised of five persons (four women, one man). The executive body is the Council of Directors (CD), comprising of three members of the association (as required by the law). The executive director (member of both the association and CD) is in charge with the daily management and the representation of the Association.

In 2025, the total number of persons involved in the Association's projects was 15, including two permanent staff members and 13 project-based collaborators.

In 2025, the total spending of the Association was 696,399.42 lei (approximate 140,000 euro). The most important funders were, in this order: Open Society Foundations, Stephan Batory Foundation, Civitates Foundation, and Civil Society Development Foundation.

More information

Please visit our website: www.inovarepublica.ro, or contact us by email at: scrie@inovarepublica.ro

Our work in 2025

I. Democratic institutions and human rights

We believe in liberal democracy and the universality of the fundamental rights

Our work on democratic institutions and human rights comprises a mix of advocacy, policy research, and watchdog activities. We are working in coalitions, together with like-minded organizations and individuals.

Watchdog: The State of Democracy

Monitoring the health of the democracy and the civic space. Project supported by: Open Society Foundations; Civitates Foundation, Porticus Foundation

CPI is continuously monitoring the relevant developments related to the civic space, the democratic institutions, and the protection of the human rights defenders. We are a founding and active member of the Coalition NGOs for Citizen. The Coalition is aiming to convene the voice of the watchdogs and human rights organizations, in a period of civic fatigue, to defend the civic space and civil liberties. CPI is contributing with research and advocacy work.

The Coalition is monitoring the legislative framework and the government's actions, and it reacting quickly to any threat to civil liberties. The website [StareaDemocratiei.ro](https://starea-democratiei.ro) is displaying some of our work, on topics such as: legislation on national security; surveillance; access to information; transparency in decision-making; pressures and harassment of independent voices; force evictions etc. The Coalition is publishing yearly the report 'The State of Democracy', remembering the hot issues of the previous year. International organizations working on human rights are often quoting the reports.

Since 2025, the Coalition is increasing its efforts to connect directly with its constituency. In addition to the regular social media channels, we have added a series of in-person meetings, called [OFFline Civic](#) (9 editions in 2025), and a [podcast](#) that is highlighting the initiatives and the impact of the members (3 editions).

Advocacy: Active participation to public debates

Active citizenship and participation. Project supported by: Open Society Foundations; Civitates Foundation.

In 2025, the Center for Public Innovation remained an active participant to the public debates, through various mechanisms. Alone or in coalitions, we have submitted various opinions on normative acts initiated by the Parliament and Government. This way, we have participated to the formal policy dialogue regulated by the legislation on transparency in decision-making.

In 2025, the Center for Public Innovation, often acting through the NGOs for the Citizen Coalition, served as a critical watchdog for Romanian democracy. The year was characterized by intense electoral activity, challenges to media freedom, and a sustained focus on the rights of vulnerable labor groups.

Examples of relevant outputs from our advocacy work (selection)

1. Defending Democratic Institutions & Rule of Law

A primary focus was the protection of institutional independence and the transparency of the legislative process.

- **Electoral Integrity:** CPI advocated for a calm and responsible presidential election cycle, specifically calling for transparent modifications to electoral laws and a merit-based selection for the leadership of the Permanent Electoral Authority.
- **Institutional Independence:** The Center challenged political appointments that threatened the neutrality of public entities, such as the nomination of government officials to the Board of the Romanian Radio Broadcasting Society (SRR).
- **Rule of Law Reporting:** Provided substantive contributions to the 2025 Rule of Law Report, highlighting systemic issues in governance and administrative procedures, and Reaffirmed Romania's European trajectory through the "Romania is Europe!" appeal.

2. Freedom of Expression & Access to Information

The Center responded to an increasing "chilling effect" on public discourse and journalistic inquiry.

- **Media Protections:** Issued alerts regarding the "opaque and aggressive" stance of high-level cabinets toward the press.
- **Digital Rights:** Defended the right to political expression on social media and petitioned against police overreach involving citizens' online posts.
- **Transparency Advocacy:** Opposed legislative attempts to restrict access to information of public interest and engaged with ANCOM and the European Commission regarding data access under the Digital Services Act (DSA).

3. Fiscal Responsibility & Good Governance

CPI maintained its role as a technical consultant on state spending and administrative reform.

- **Administrative Reform:** Provided expert recommendations on the 2025 State Budget rectification and the methodology for public funding allocation, and Contributed to the development of the Administrative Procedure Code to ensure a more efficient and accountable bureaucracy.
- **Political Finance:** Called for an end to party privileges to restore public trust in how political activities are funded.
- **Civic Solidarity:** Actively defended fellow NGOs (Funky Citizens, Declic) against administrative or legal pressures, and joined actions with over 300 international organizations to protest the harassment of activists.

[The documents are available on our website.](#)

Trans-national cooperation

We continued our commitment to work together with like-minded organizations from other countries, and to participate to the policy debates at EU level.

At EU level, we have submitted a contribution to the consultation on the Rule of Law Report of the European Commission, and we have participated to two consultations initiated by the Fundamental Rights Agency of the European Union.

In November 2025, with the support of the Open Society Foundations, we have organized, in Bucharest, the bi-annual meeting of OSEN – Open Society European Network. Over 80 participants from 17 countries have gathered to discuss the developments related to civic space in our countries, and to explore opportunities for cooperation. CPI remains an active and involved member of OSEN.

In 2025, we have also continued our work to support organizations and institutions from Moldova, in two projects:

- We supported the Center for Legal Resources from Moldova to implement the external evaluation of their five-years strategy, and to inform the future strategy of the organization.
- We have participated in a project initiated by the Council of Europe to support the Supreme Court of Justice from the Republic of Moldova in its efforts to draft an institutional development strategy.

Working with FRA

Contributions to the European policy processes. Project coordinated by Human European Consultancy

Since 2014, members of our team have been involved with the FRANET, the network of consultants offering expertise on demand to FRA – the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. Human European Consultancy, a company based in Netherlands, coordinates the work of the FRANET team for Romania. Our contributions are included in the chapters on Romania, [available for reading and download on the FRA website](#).

II. Civic education

We believe that informed citizens are the backbone of liberal democracy.

Our work on civic education focuses on developing innovative grassroots projects, supporting communities, schools, and students with civic education projects.

Participatory budgeting in schools

Learning participatory processes in schools. Supported by: Stephan Batory Foundation.

Since 2019, we have adapted to the Romania context the concept of Participatory Budgeting in Schools (PBS), developed by International Budget Partnership in US. PBS is a democratic process through which a community – a class or a school – decides how to use a small budget available for educational activities.

Previously, in 2019-2021, we piloted the concept in five high-schools from different backgrounds, and we found out that it is an excellent learning tool. As a result, in 2023, we continued to work with three high-schools, in which we have piloted the model in the first phase. The second process of PBS which was implemented during the 2023-2024 school year, had a novelty. Each of the three high schools co-financed from its own financial resources the educational project which won in the voting phase and was implemented by the students' team.

In the school year 2024-2025 other two high schools participated in the school budgeting process. The first high school proposed eight ideas which were developed into projects. Almost all the ideas were for a

better educational environment in their classroom and in their school. In the end, the young students voted for a project in which was created a space at the back of the classroom for relaxation and discussions during breaks and in addition as the budget allowed them, they decide to change the blinds in the classroom.

The second high school participating in the BPS identified fifteen ideas that in a later phase were developed into projects. The students had projects proposals for renovating the classroom, equipping the high school with a sound system, organizing a school trip, purchasing an air conditioner, purchasing a ping-pong table, equipping the classroom with device chargers, purchasing storage space in the classroom, renovating the sports field in the high school courtyard, developing an app for a virtual tour of the neighborhood where the high school is located, equipping the gym, purchasing furniture for the high school bathrooms or equipping the classroom with an audio-video system. In the voting phase, the project for equipping the gym received most votes.

PBS gives students a positive experience of civic engagement; it strengthens ties between students, teachers and administration, improving the educational climate; it establishes key competences and skills for democratic citizenship: teamwork, critical thinking, analysis, negotiation, research and documentation, and problem solving; it introduces elements of economic education: understanding and building a budget; and it raises students' awareness of community issues; public speaking and public presentation.

In addition, in March 2025 a face-to-face workshop was held for promoting the project among high school teachers and representatives of local public authorities who want to learn more about participatory budgeting. To discuss the usefulness of this tool, we have invited facilitators who have been involved in participatory budgeting since 2019. Each facilitator held an information session for the other participants on the participatory budgeting process you carried out at their high school.

15 teachers participated at the workshop during which, the project team explained how a budgeting process can be held in a classroom, what are the available resources for implementing a BPS project, what is the timeline, what were the main experiences and ideas which were developed since 2019 when the project started. During the session, the project challenge the participants to answer some relevant questions about - how can we improve the information we provide about the program to make it easier to understand, what other resources would be useful to you on this topic and what would convince the teachers participating at the workshop to try a BPS process at their school.

A new process of participatory budgeting in schools (PBS) will be launched by the end of January 2026 for three other technological high schools (preferably from disadvantaged areas).

Be active in your community!

Developing and leading a process for petitioning local authorities (and beyond) and developing a set of resources for easy replication of the process. Supported through the PROTEUS project implemented by The Transatlantic Foundation, co-funded by the European Union and co-financed by Open Society Foundations.

Through this new initiative developed the knowledge and the understanding of high school young people of the content and concepts related to civics and citizenship. One of our goals is that both civic and citizenship education provides opportunities for active participation, promotes the development of civic attitudes and develops in young people a willingness to make positive contributions to and in their

community. When young people developed their interests and inclinations towards involvement in the civic life of their community, they have learned key aspects of civil and citizenship education.

The main activities of the projects were management and administration, the development of educational materials which were used in training sessions, face-to-face or online meetings with local teams, running the process of identifying problems in the community and the process of petitioning local authorities. Three teachers from the partner high schools were facilitators of the process and received training and guidance from the CIP team during the implementation of the project, and 67 high school young people were the target group of the project.

By the end of the 10 months project implementation, through practical exercises and teamwork the young participants understood that a problem is a concrete situation that can and must be solved by the competent authorities. From communication and negotiation to organizing in working groups, participants explored their communities and reflected on the role they can play in solving local difficulties. All the 67 young people involved in the project proposed 54 ideas about problems (from their communities) which they considered can be solved by using the 'petition'. In the end 39 ideas become 39 petitions which were sent to the local, regional, national authorities. By the end of the implementation period (30 June 2025), 18 received an answer from the authorities.

At the end of the project a guideline called 'Be active in your community!' was developed by the project team. By mid-February 2026, the guidelines will be publicly launched and promoted among teachers, students, parents and local communities. This guideline serves as a comprehensive guideline for young people to engage in civic life through the petitioning process. It begins by establishing the fundamental importance of youth involvement and civic education in building a stronger community. The core of the document provides a six-step framework for drafting a petition, ranging from problem identification and stakeholder analysis to formal writing and planning. To ensure practical application, the guide includes hands-on activities, worksheets, and mini projects designed to build networks of 'participatory democracy ambassadors'. Finally, it offers resources, including a glossary, bibliography, and real-world examples of petitions addressed to school, local, and national authorities.

III. Inclusive Society

We believe that human beings must respect one other, in all their diversity of belief, culture and language.

Our work on inclusive society is currently focusing on the migrants living in Romania. Our tools remain advocacy and policy analysis, and we are not providing direct services to migrants.

Immigration policies

Human rights have no borders. Supported by: Civil Society Development Foundation (EEA Grants), Open Society Foundations

CPI is a founding member of the Coalition for the Rights of Migrants and Refugees (CDMiR), the main (and single) platform of the civil society organizations advocating for the rights of migrants, or offering direct services. Our contribution is research, advocacy, and coordination.

In 2016-2022, we were the national partner of the strategic EU-funded project NIEM (NIEM – National Integration Evaluation Mechanism. Measuring and improving integration of beneficiaries of international protection), which is a trans-national project covering 16 states and including 20 partners, financed by

the European Commission. The aim of the project is to mainstream an integration evaluation mechanism into the integration policies for refugees and beneficiaries of international protection at the national level in the participating project countries. The six-year project represents both an element of financial and organizational stability for the organization, as well as an opportunity to establish itself as a source of information on migration policy in Romania.

Since the start of the war on Ukraine, CPI was actively involved in advocacy efforts, together with the colleagues from CDMiR. Our common contribution included convening the energies of the civil society, providing expertise for the integration of the refugees, and providing input to the Parliament – constant communication with the Human Rights Committee of the Senate.

The Center acted as the advocacy lead for the CDMiR, by drafting policy documents and position papers. We have coordinated the series of eight position papers of the Coalition, and more than 20 articles and punctual inputs to legislation (available on its website, www.cdmir.ro).

The campaign "Employers for respect"

No harassment in the workplace

Since 2022, ACIP has joined the campaign "[Employers for respect – no harassment in the workplace](#)" lead by the Association A.L.E.G. Romania.

The campaign aims for Romania to ratify the ILO Convention C190 on the elimination of violence and harassment in the world of work, followed by the adaptation of legislation and practices to the provisions of the Convention. The campaign had an important milestone in March 2024, when the Parliament ratified Convention C190.

In 2025, the members of the campaign participated to the working groups coordinated by the General Secretariat of the Government for the adaptation of the national legislation needed to implement the Convention. ACIP has contributed with specific expertise on the situation of immigrant workers. The draft bill were submitted to the Parliament in November 2025, and we continue to monitor the parliamentary process.

Examples of relevant outputs from our advocacy work (selection)

Human Rights & Labor Migration

Through the "**Employers for Respect**" campaign and the **CDMiR** coalition, CPI addressed the evolving landscape of the Romanian labor market.

- **Migrant Worker Rights:** Advocated for better diplomatic representation in labor-source countries and urged the government not to ignore the precarious reality of migrant workers.
- **Workplace Safety:** Pushed for robust legislation to prevent and combat sexual harassment in the professional world.
- **Inclusion:** Formed a common front with civil society to oppose the banning of Oradea Pride 2025, framing it as a fundamental right to assembly.

Research: understanding the Young Males

Deeper understanding of the changes in our society

In 2025, we have re-launched our research program (interrupted for two years). In partnership with the FILIA Center and the Political Science Faculty of the Bucharest University, we have initiated a national research surveying the values and perceptions of young males.

Within this research, our primary focus is the mapping of opinions (identifying young men's perceptions of feminism, gender equality, LGBTQ+ rights, and other essential social themes) and the analysis of online content consumption (understanding the platforms, influencers, and types of digital content that shape their views and behaviors). To effectively address the dangerous rise of extremist discourse, it is crucial to understand what radicalizes young men and how they can be sensitized to topics concerning gender equality and human rights in general.

The research findings will be used primarily for developing targeted programs (such as Creating campaigns and projects specifically for this demographic to reduce polarization and prevent radicalization toward extremist ideologies, academic stimulation (encouraging further research on this subject within university programs), and raising public awareness (increasing general social consciousness regarding this issue).

Working with Eurofound

Contributions to the European policy processes. Project coordinated by Syndex Romania.

The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) is a tripartite agency of the European Union, whose role is to provide knowledge to help develop better social, employment and labour market policies. Eurofound provides information, advice and expertise on working conditions and sustainable work, industrial relations, labour market change and quality of life and public services, to support EU institutions and bodies, Member States and social partners in shaping and implementing social and employment policies, as well as promoting social dialogue based on information, research and comparative analysis. Eurofound relies on a network of correspondents, organisations and resource persons in all EU Member States.

Since March 2022, the Centre for Public Innovation is part of this network and provides expertise to Eurofound. Our team has contributed to over 50 studies initiated by Eurofound, and most of them are available on the [Eurofound website](#). New additions (in 2025) include:

- National-level social governance of the European Semester and the Recovery and Resilience Facility
- Representativeness of the European social partner organisations: Chemical sector
- Representativeness of the European social partner organisations: Construction sector
- Involvement of social partners in the national recovery and resilience plans
- Representativeness of the European social partner organisations: Electricity sector
- Telework in the EU: Regulatory frameworks and recent update

Financial information 2025

Income

In 2025, our total income was 1,973,333 Lei. The sources of income are:

Donor / source	Amount (Lei*)
Open Society Foundations**	894,100
Civitates Foundation	61,761
Stephan Batory Foundation**	894,100
Individual donation through the 3.5% mechanism	759
Eurofund	123,372
Total	1,973,333

*) The amounts received in other currencies were converted using the National Bank of Romania yearly average exchange rate.

***) Multi-annual programs 2025-2027

Spending

In 2025, our total spending was 1,470,802 lei. The spending on the main pillars of our work was:

Dimension	Amount (Lei)
Democratic Institutions and Human Rights	761,146
Civic Education	277,092
Inclusive Society	403,053
Administration	29,512
Total	1,470,802

Public money

In 2025, we have received public money from individual donations under the 3.5% mechanism.

The amount of 759 lei, received under the 3.5% mechanism, was added to the organizations' reserves.