

ANNUAL REPORT

2019



socialplatform

About us.



socialplatform

Social Platform is the leading alliance uniting **networks** of **civil society organisations** advocating for **social justice** and **participatory democracy** in **Europe**.

Driven by a membership of 49 pan-European networks, Social Platform campaigns to ensure that EU policies are developed in partnership with the people they affect, respecting fundamental rights, promoting solidarity and improving lives.

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Europe for Citizens.

Social Platform receives the majority of its funding from the EU's Europe for Citizens Programme (https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/europe-for-citizens_en), which is managed by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA).



Europe for Citizens is a unique and highly symbolic programme, focused on the future of the EU, debating issues related to European rights and values, democratic engagement and civic participation – values that make up the very DNA of Social Platform. It acts as a listening exercise on civil society's debates and in-depth reflections on the European project.

Introduction.

Welcome to Annual Report 2019!

The year 2019 saw the European Union step into the spotlight on the national stage thanks to the European elections. Following months of public protests calling for political leaders to do more to fight social inequalities and protect the environment, in May people went to the ballot boxes to elect their representatives to the European Parliament. Social Platform had its own role to play, launching a campaign to increase the voter turnout ([page 11](#)).

As well as a new Parliament, in 2019 we welcomed a new European Commission led by its first ever female President, Ursula von der Leyen. To ensure that social rights were at the forefront of Commissioners' minds from day one, we began to lay the groundwork for collaboration with key Commissioners over the next five years ([page 5](#)).

In the face of this upheaval in the European institutions, 2019 still saw some huge steps forward for EU social rights that we have long advocated for, including the adoption of Directives on work-life balance and transparent and predictable working conditions. Now, work continues to ensure a comprehensive and sustainable approach to implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights, through legislation and policy, governance, funding and civil dialogue ([page 13](#)).

This theme of renewal and rejuvenation at EU level was mirrored in our own organisation, with the election of a new Management Committee to steer us through the 2019-2021 period. And we certainly were not slow out of the starting blocks, with our Flagship Conference taking place in September. An official side event of the Finnish Presidency of the Council of the EU, our conference brought together over 150 people to debate the economy of wellbeing and the important role to be played by civil society organisations in shaping a socially, economically and environmentally just future for Europe ([page 14](#)).

Thank you to all our members and partners for your support in 2019. We can be proud of our collective achievements and draw strength from them to continue our march towards a social, sustainable and inclusive Europe for all.

Best wishes,



Piotr Sadowski
President



Kélig Puyet
Director

We influence.

After its adoption in November 2017, the European Pillar of Social Rights remained the focal point of our advocacy activities in 2019. Our work was centred on the four implementation goals identified in our Social Pillar position paper: legislation/policy, governance, funding and civil dialogue.

www.socialplatform.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Building-Social-Europe-A-comprehensive-implementation-plan-for-an-effective-EPSR.pdf

EUROPEAN COMMISSION 2019-2024: STEERING THE CONVERSATION

In September and October, the European Parliament played host to the Commissioners-designate appointed by new Commission President Ursula von der Leyen. To ensure that candidates had social issues high on their agendas, we submitted a series of questions for Members of the European Parliament to raise with several key Commissioners-designate. During six hearings we kept the 'social' conversation alive by tweeting our questions, reactions and visuals, garnering 31,184 impressions and 316 total engagements. We met with Vice-President-

designate for Democracy and Demography Dubravka Šuica and Commissioner-designate for Jobs and Social Rights Nicolas Schmit, to discuss upcoming opportunities in the new legislature. In September, we co-launched a petition (<https://act.wemove.eu/campaigns/celebrate-mosaic-europe>) for a change to the job title of newly appointed Vice-President of the European Commission, Magaritis Schinas – 'Vice-President for Protecting our European Way of Life'. Our petition was a success, with the portfolio renamed 'Promoting the European Way of Life'.



Social Platform
@social_platform

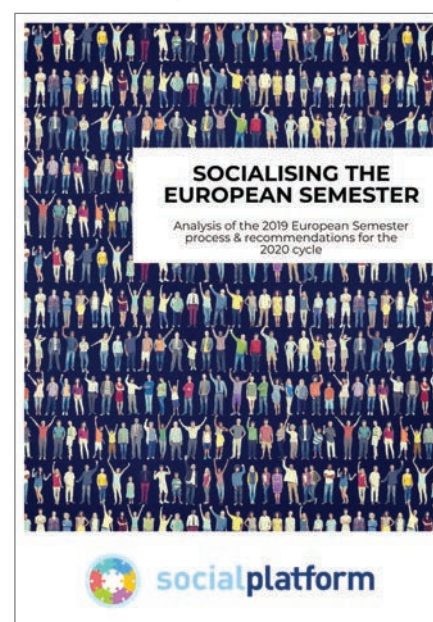
Glad that @VDombrovskis committed to social dialogue – but what about #CivilDialogue? Civil society brings real life expertise from the ground to inform policies & is a key player to achieve an economy that works for all people! We are ready to work with you #EPhearings2019



GOOD GOVERNANCE: SOCIALISING THE EUROPEAN SEMESTER

Good governance of the EU's social and economic policies has proven to be a powerful instrument to push forward reforms and policy measures at national level. In April and June, we provided input to the Social Protection Committee and Employment Committee on the 2018 and 2019 country-specific recommendations of the European Semester, the EU's main socio-economic governance tool. In November, we published and disseminated to key stakeholders our report (www.socialplatform.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Socialising-the-European-Semester-Social-Platform-analysis-of-the-2019-Semester-process-with-recommendations-for-the-2020-cycle.pdf), 'Socialising the

European Semester: analysis of the 2019 European Semester process and recommendations for the 2020 cycle'.



INVESTING IN PEOPLE: EU FUNDING FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION

The European Commission launched a public consultation to evaluate how the European Social Fund promotes social inclusion and combats poverty and discrimination. Through consultation with our members, we submitted our response ([www.socialplatform.org/wp-content/](http://www.socialplatform.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Social-Platform-answer-to-consultation-on-ESF-and-social-inclusion_submitted.pdf)

[uploads/2020/01/Social-Platform-answer-to-consultation-on-ESF-and-social-inclusion_submitted.pdf](http://www.socialplatform.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Social-Platform-answer-to-consultation-on-ESF-and-social-inclusion_submitted.pdf)) calling for better involvement of civil society, a rethink of the 'cost-effectiveness' approach, better investment in people at national and EU level and stronger integration of different EU funds.

SUSTAINABLE EUROPE: NURTURING LINKS BETWEEN SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL RIGHTS

Ahead of the May meeting of EU leaders in Sibiu, Romania, to discuss the future of Europe, we sent Heads of State and Government a letter (www.socialplatform.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Social-Platform-Letter-Building-a-Social-Europe-for-all-with-social-civil-society-organisations-Final.pdf) urging them to work closely with social civil society organisations to build a strong Social Europe. On the day of the Sibiu Summit, we

joined forces with the Green 10 to issue an opinion piece calling for leaders to put social and green issues at the heart of their discussions. Building on this new social-environmental dynamic, an open letter (https://www.socialplatform.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/SP_CONCORD_EEB_open_letter_110619.pdf) from Social Platform, the European Environmental Bureau and CONCORD Europe urged EU leaders to put people and planet first during their June European Council meeting on the EU's five-year strategic agenda: the letter was signed by 150+ other organisations and published by EurActiv. We further developed our cooperation with the environmental sector through our co-organisation of a workshop at the European Economic and Social Committee's Civil Society Days in June. The workshop looked at 'Transitioning to an economy for people and planet', and featured a keynote speech by Tim Jackson, Professor of Sustainable Development at the University of Surrey.



Paddy O Sullivan / Unsplash

IN THE SPOTLIGHT: HIGH- LEVEL SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

Recognised by the EU as a key interlocutor on social rights and a leading civil society voice on the Social Pillar, we were invited to speak at many high-level meetings across the EU. This included the European Commission's fourth Annual Convention for Inclusive Growth in May, where our Director Kélig Puyet made the case for the establishment of an annual Social Summit of EU Heads of State

and Government. In October, we joined the formal meeting of the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO), where our Vice-President Catherine Naughton addressed national ministers to call for a paradigm shift from economic growth to wellbeing of people, and to finally end the impasse on anti-discrimination.

Social Platform Director
Kélig Puyet addresses
ACIG 2019



EU Social @EU_Social · 20 May 2019

"The Pillar of #SocialRights should be a compass for the future of #SocialEurope."

We want the next Commission to look into ways of fostering civil dialogue. This should be a political priority".

Kélig Puyet, Director @social_platform at #ACIG2019



Social Platform Vice-President
Catherine Naughton attends the
formal EPSCO Council meeting



EU2019FI @EU2019FI · 24 Oct 2019

Michael O'Flaherty, Tamás Kádár and Catherine Naughton from @EURightsAgency, @equineteurope and @social_platform came to Luxembourg to kick off the #EPSCO debate on anti-discrimination in the EU.



We learn.

In 2019, we embraced learning as a building block of our work. To do so, we held five meetings of our Social Learning Platform, which brings together our members for regular peer-to-peer learning sessions.



The aim of the Social Learning Platform is to provide members with a forum to share their expertise, to debate, and to learn about topics they are less familiar with.

Q&A WITH RYAN HEATH FROM POLITICO EUROPE

Ryan Heath, former Political Editor of POLITICO Europe, spoke to members about his predictions for the 2019 European Parliament elections, the role of the media and civil society.

THE EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS

Organised by Actiris and EUROCHAMBRES, the meeting introduced members to the European Solidarity Corps, a new initiative aimed at creating first work experiences for young people abroad.

MENTAL HEALTH IN THE WORKPLACE

Organised by our member Mental Health Europe, the meeting focused on the importance of promoting positive mental health in the workplace. While work can be beneficial for people experiencing mental health problems, it can also be the cause of them: poor working conditions, low job satisfaction, difficult relationships with colleagues etc. can all impact negatively on mental health. The workplace is therefore an important forum to identify and support mental health needs.

BOOK PRESENTATION

Former Treasurer and founding member of Social Platform, Michel Mercadié, presented his book 'Une voie sociale pour l'Europe: Emergence et luttes de la société civile organisée'. Michel shared his thoughts on the development and challenges of Social Europe and talked about Social Platform's role since its creation in 1995 by explaining how we became an important player recognised by EU institutions.

NEW ZEALAND'S WELLBEING BUDGET

Representatives of New Zealand's Mission to the EU introduced their government's ground-breaking Wellbeing Budget, and how their progressive approach to governance and the economy challenges the existing growth paradigm.



Today we are at the @social_platform to give a training on #mentalhealth in the workplace and discuss solutions for mentally #healthy workplaces



EUROCHAMBRES @EUROCHAMBRES · Jun 17, 2019

EUROCHAMBRES & @ActirisBrussels International presented the European Solidarity Corps 4 Youth project to the @social_platform members. It was a pleasure to invite organisations to take part in this initiative that offers young people an opportunity to get #jobs and #traineeships



We reach out.

With financial support from the EU's Europe for Citizens programme, Social Platform aims to reach out beyond Brussels, promoting Europe's shared values and creating a sense of ownership.

EU ELECTIONS 2019: #THISTIMEIMVOTING

On 23-26 May 2019, 50.66% of EU citizens turned out to elect a new European Parliament. The 8.06% increase in voter turnout compared to 2014 was achieved in part through the EU's #ThisTimeImVoting campaign,

of which Social Platform was an official partner. Additionally, we launched a campaign to mobilise people to vote for candidates who put people, their rights and the environment first. Watch our 'Your Vote – Your World' video here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=DzAiCt_gN5o



Over 60,000 people viewed the video, smashing our initial goal of 20,000!

MADE IN SOCIAL EUROPE: EXHIBITION ON TOUR

Through our members' national networks and partners, we collect inspiring practices to show how social projects, some of which are funded by the EU, give life to the principles of the Social Pillar and have a real positive impact on people. Our membership has a comprehensive understanding of social

realities on the ground. It includes service providers, social economy enterprises, self-advocates and human rights defenders, the majority of whom have direct experience of building inclusive societies in practice and can demonstrate what is possible. In total, the 'Made in Social Europe' exhibition was displayed eight times in six different EU Member States and contributed to the debate on a more social Europe.



Social Platform @social_platform · Jun 12, 2019

Come and visit Social Platform's 'Made in Social Europe' exhibition, showcasing inspiring projects from across Europe. [#buildingsocialeurope](#) [#socialrights](#) [#CivSocDays](#)

'Made in Social Europe'
exhibition on display at
the EESC Civil Society
Days 2019



THE EUROPEAN PILLAR OF SOCIAL RIGHTS: KEEPING MOMENTUM GOING

Following the EU elections in May, we produced a video (www.youtube.com/watch?v=9knL9c-Hlj0) to build support for the Social Pillar in the new European Parliament and European Commission. The video encourages them to work with us to implement the Social Pillar, promote

civil dialogue and reform the EU economic model. In November, we launched a social media campaign and package of visuals of the 20 thematic principles of the Social Pillar (www.facebook.com/socialplatform/photos/?album_id=2837162079642082&tab=album) to mark the second anniversary of its adoption. The Twitter-based action aimed to give an insight into the realities

surrounding each of the 20 Social Pillar principles through facts and figures, earning 39,328 impressions and 601 total engagements. Following the Commission's announcement that it would launch a Social Pillar Action Plan in 2020, we produced a video that will be disseminated to make the case for comprehensive implementation of all the Social Pillar principles.



Our European Pillar of Social Rights visuals

BUILDING SOCIAL EUROPE: SOCIAL PLATFORM FLAGSHIP CONFERENCE

Flagship Conference in numbers

154

participants from

26

countries

23

speakers, including
a keynote speech by
former President of
Finland Tarja Halonen

On 16-18 September, we hosted our second annual 'Building Social Europe' Flagship Conference in Helsinki, Finland (www.socialplatform.org/what-we-do/flagship-conference/). The Conference was organised in cooperation with the Finnish Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and was an official side event of the Finnish Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

The Conference created a unique opportunity to discuss how the EU can recapture the spirit of social justice and champion democracy and trust in the EU.

We focused on two central themes: participatory democracy and civil society's role in the decision-making process; and how to achieve social justice through an economy that works for people. As well as a high-level round table – featuring the Finnish and upcoming presidencies of the Council of the EU – and expert panels, the three-day event included a public action in central

Helsinki, thematic workshops, an exhibition, and study visits to local projects that promote social inclusion.

Conference participants closed the two days by agreeing that the economy of wellbeing needs a long-term approach that:

1. Looks at the impact of policies on people
2. Is based on participatory governance
3. Ensures socioeconomic and environmental justice for all

The outcomes and key recommendations of the Conference were used by Social Platform when a delegation of its members attended the Finnish EU Presidency's high-level conference on the economy of wellbeing on 18-19 September. Piotr Sadowski, Social Platform President, was a guest speaker at the conference to convey the messages from Social Platform members.



Conference participants join a study visit to learn more about how Finnish civil society works to end homelessness



Social Platform members join national civil society for a public action in central Helsinki



Social Platform President Piotr Sadowski & Director Kélig Puyet welcome former President of Finland Tarja Halonen as keynote speaker

We plan ahead.

In 2019, we undertook a series of actions to strengthen our identity and begin planning our future strategy to achieve a social, inclusive and sustainable Europe for all.

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE ELECTIONS: STRONG LEADERSHIP IN UNCERTAIN TIMES



Management Committee 2019-2021

Members gathered for our General Assembly meeting in April to network and think collectively on the development of political priorities in Europe. Members also elected a new Management Committee.

The following people will lead the network during the 2019-2021 period:

President	Piotr Sadowski	Volonteurope
Vice-President	Catherine Naughton	European Disability Forum
Vice-President	Maciej Kucharczyk	AGE Platform Europe (outgoing in 2020)
Treasurer	Heather Roy	Eurodiaconia
Ordinary Member	Michele LeVoy	Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants
Ordinary Member	Shannon Pfohman	Caritas Europa
Ordinary Member	Leo Williams	European Anti-Poverty Network

The elections marked the end of mandate for former President Jana Hainsworth (Eurochild) and former Treasurer Jorge Nuño Mayer (Caritas Europa).

TALKING SHOP: DISCUSSIONS ON FUTURE STRATEGY AND INTERNAL STRUCTURES

Throughout autumn, we held a series of meetings between the Steering Group, Management Committee, Directors and Secretariat to launch discussions about the future identity (mission and vision) of Social Platform. As well as beginning to plan our

long-term strategy that will replace our soon-to-expire strategic documents, we consulted members about our internal structures with a view to reforming them to better meet their needs and achieve our collective priorities. This work will conclude in 2020.

Projects & partnerships.

Social Platform aims to foster debate and mutual learning by engaging with EU civil society and other stakeholders working in a range of sectors. Whether through participation in EU-wide projects, partnerships to deliver our long-term objectives, or membership of alliances promoting common values, we endeavour to cement the social needs of people in Europe, including those in vulnerable situations, high on the EU agenda.

RESOMA PROJECT



We are a partner of the Research Social Platform on Migration and Asylum (ReSOMA) project (www.resoma.eu), which brings together a network of over 1,400 practitioners, stakeholders, researchers and policy-makers around asylum, migration and inclusion policies, to better

inform EU policies and public debate in the field of migration. The nine thematic topics of 2019 include public opinion on migrants and funding a long-term comprehensive approach to integration at the local level. The latter topic was covered during our Flagship Conference in a

workshop organised by Social Platform, Mental Health Europe and the Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM). The workshop was the first of nine transnational launch events of the ReSOMA project.



**STRONGER
TOGETHER**

Thank you to all organisations and alliances with whom we collaborated in 2019, including:

- » Civil Society Europe
- » Council of Europe Conference of INGOs
- » EU Agency for Fundamental Rights
- » European Economic and Social Committee Liaison Group
- » European Institute for Gender Equality
- » European NGO Platform on Asylum and Migration
- » Europe We Want
- » Green 10
- » Human Rights and Democracy Network
- » SDG Watch Europe
- » Stand Up for the Social Pillar Alliance
- » Work-Life Balance Coalition

A look under the hood.

SECRETARIAT



Kélig Puyet
Director



Helen Joseph
Senior
Communications &
Media Officer



Marie Ranty
Policy & Advocacy
Coordinator



Juris Lavrikovs
Communications
& Campaigns
Coordinator



Katja Reuter
Policy & Advocacy
Officer



Nathalie Franck
Finance &
Administration Officer



Silvana Roebstorf
Policy & Project
Officer

Thanks also to those members of the Secretariat who left us in 2019, and those who only joined on a temporary basis:

Masha Smirnova Policy & Advocacy Advisor

Annelies Stalpaert Governance Officer

Tutut Christen Communications & Event Assistant

Etienne Castel Executive Assistant

MEMBERS

At our April General Assembly meeting members voted to welcome the European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE) (www.ecre.org) as a full member.

The ECRE alliance of 102 NGOs in 41 European countries was established in

1974. ECRE's mission is to protect and advance the rights of refugees, asylum-seekers and other forcibly displaced persons in Europe and

in Europe's external policies. Its diverse membership ranges from large INGOs with global presence to small organisations of dedicated activists. Its members' work covers the full circle of displacement from zones of conflict, to the dangerous routes and arrival in Europe, to long-term inclusion in European societies, with their activities including humanitarian relief, social service provision, legal assistance, litigation, monitoring policy and law, advocacy and campaigning.



Thank you to all our members for your expertise and dedication in 2019!



JOIN THE FAMILY!

By becoming a member of Social Platform you will add your voice to the largest alliance of civil society organisations fighting for social justice and participatory democracy in Europe. We are recognised as a key interlocutor by EU institutions and by EU Member States, and through our advocacy and communications channels can bring visibility at the highest level to the issues that matter most to your constituencies.

Are you interested in joining our family? Find out more here:
www.socialplatform.org/our-members/join-us/

Facts & figures.

2

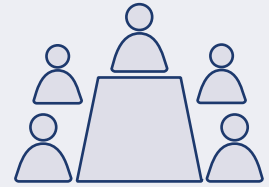
GENERAL
ASSEMBLIES



STEERING GROUP
MEETINGS

4

5

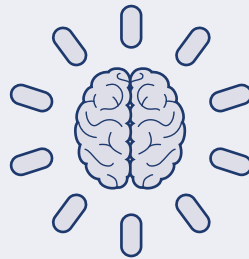


MANAGEMENT
COMMITTEE MEETINGS



13

TASK FORCE MEETINGS



5

SOCIAL LEARNING
PLATFORM MEETINGS



8

DISPLAYS OF 'MADE
IN SOCIAL EUROPE'
EXHIBITION

6

NATIONAL STUDY
VISITS



1

NEW MEMBER



5,454

FACEBOOK PAGE
LIKES



5,687

TWITTER FOLLOWERS



47

NEWSLETTERS

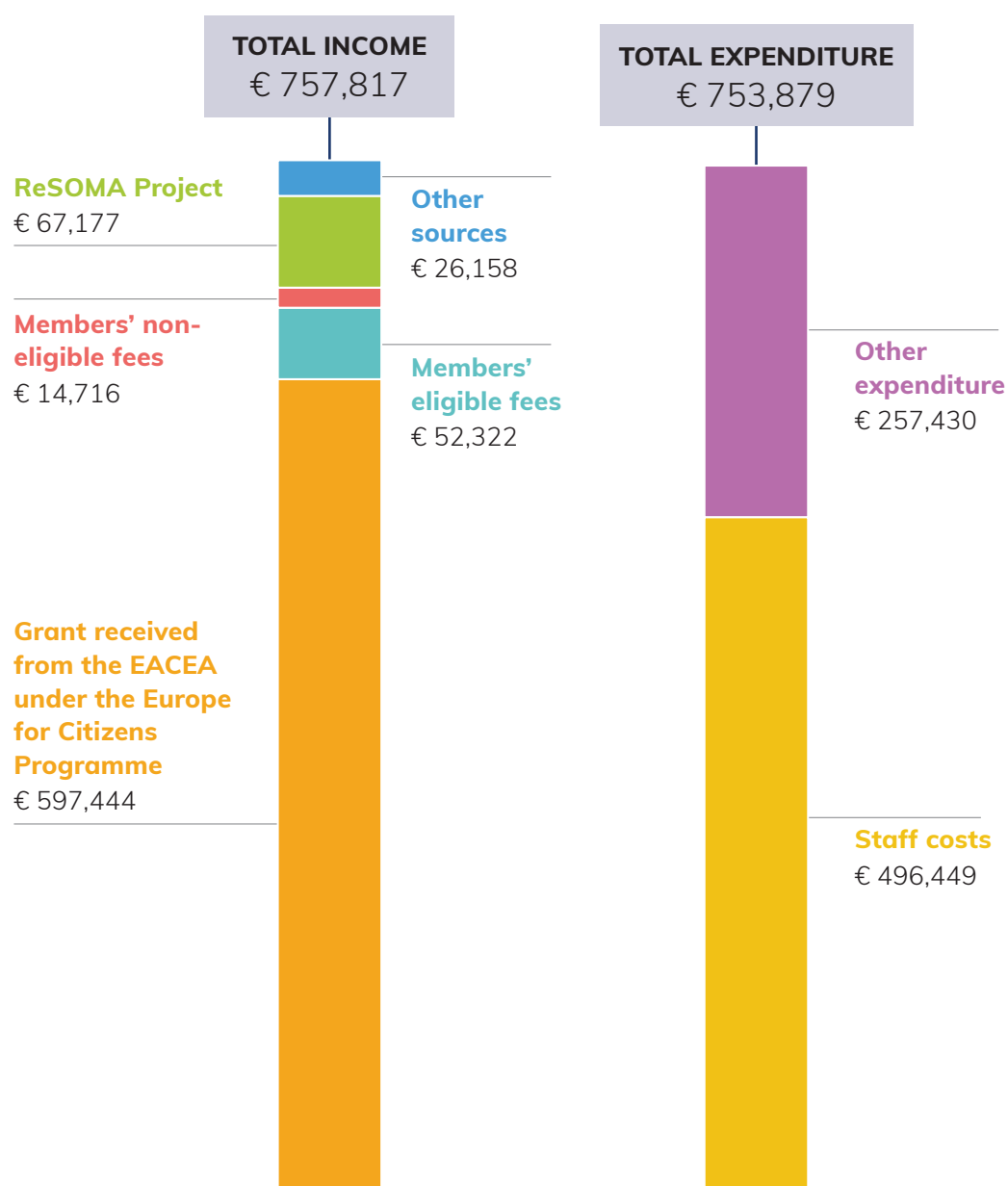


48,397

WEBSITE VISITS

Show me the money!

Below is a summary of our income and expenditure in 2019. At the time of publishing our 2019 accounts were awaiting approval by the General Assembly. Once approved the finalised accounts will be published at the Banque Nationale de Belgique (www.nbb.be/fr), where they will be available to the public.





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www.socialplatform.org



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@social_platform



SocialPlatformEU



Social Platform

ANNUAL REPORT 2019



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