



29 September 2017

## CIVIL SOCIETY MONTH LAUNCHED TODAY WITH THE SECOND EDITION OF THE OPEN DOOR FESTIVAL

**Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) want to engage with the public during the Festival**

**2nd Open Door Festival** that will be organized between 1<sup>st</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup> October was introduced by a press conference today.

The Festival with the motto "Civil Society on the Road" aims to encourage volunteerism, increase visibility of CSOs actions to the public for a stronger and more inclusive civil society, and increase cooperation among the CSOs island wide.

Marija J. Amberg, the Team Leader of "Civic Space" a technical assistant project funded by the European Union, introduced the main objectives of the second edition of this Festival. *"It is important for CSOs to be visible, transparent and accountable to the public, and it is also extremely important for the public to learn about CSOs, take part in and support their actions"*.

Then, the representatives of the Organization Committee, responsible for the coordination of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Open Door Festival provided information about the Festival.

Ersun Aytaç, from the Green Action Group stated that during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Open Door Festival, four Civil Society Fairs will take place every Saturday in October, on the 7<sup>th</sup> in Nicosia, on the 14<sup>th</sup> in Lefka/Lefke, on the 21<sup>st</sup> in Famagusta and on the 28<sup>th</sup> in Galateia/Mehmetcik, with the motto "Civil Society on the Road." At the CSO Fairs, in addition to events by the civil society organisations, there will be other activities such as concerts, dance shows, activities for children and many other exciting activities that will welcome the visitors.

Aytaç added that, besides the four Civil Society Fairs, throughout the month of October, there will be other activities by CSOs which will "open their doors" for the public by organising various events such as film and documentary screenings, nature walks, village festivals, workshops, panels, info-sessions, etc.

In her speech, Melis Eroğlu from the Social Transformation Centre, stated that this year 65 Civil Society Organisations are participating to the festivals and will carry out more than 120 events. Associations, foundations, platforms, initiatives and activists will inform the public about their activities and projects, and also promote volunteerism for people of all age.

Özgül Ezgin from Queer Cyprus stressed that the Open Door Festival is also important by making more visible the CSOs' work for the public benefit and how the community is benefitting from CSOs' work, as well creating the opportunity for the volunteers to meet the associations, foundations, initiatives, activists and platforms participating to the action. She mentioned that all the activities are



open to the public and that everyone is invited to meet the CSOs at the CSO Fairs or during their “open doors” events.

Özgül Ezgin, said that *"we expect that people will be more willing to engage as volunteers in associations, or provide in-kind and financial support if they become more aware of their work and can take part in their activities"*. Ezgin also mentioned that volunteers will also make the CSOs stronger and that during the Civil Society Fairs interested volunteers will be able to enrol in various CSOs' projects and activities.

Ahmet Hızlı from The Environmental Society of Lefka, stated *"this year CSOs are carrying their activities outside their home town in order to strengthen relations and partnership with CSOs from other cities"*. Hızlı emphasized that out of the 65 organisations participating at the CSO Fairs, 25 of them are based outside Nicosia and the Open Door Festival is very important for these organisations to become more visible to the public, network and make themselves known.

Hızlı noted that the first CSO Fair will take place on October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2017 in Selimiye Square, Nicosia, from 11h00 to 15h00 and that CSOs are looking forward to meet everyone interested in civil society activities.

2<sup>nd</sup> Open Door Festival Calendar is available at [www.sivilalan.eu](http://www.sivilalan.eu) and [www.facebook.com/civicspacesivilalan](https://www.facebook.com/civicspacesivilalan). For further information about the Festival please contact Civic Space at 227 65 05 or 0542 878 42 14.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Open Door Festival Organisation Committee Members:**

Green Action Group  
Naci Talat Foundation  
Universal Patients' Rights Association  
Lefka Tourism Association  
Queer Cyprus Association  
Famagusta Culture Association  
Peace Players – Cyprus  
Social Transformation Center  
Büyükkonuk Eco -Tourism Association  
The Environmental Society of Lefka  
Civic Space