



Protect

The Right to International Protection

WP5 Policy briefing on civil society
organisations and international
protection



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WP5 POLICY BRIEFING ON CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS AND INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) are indispensable in creating and delivering an effective, legitimate and resilient system of international protection for refugees.

Recommendations:

- **CSOs working in international protection are key partners for accessing both refugees themselves and wider social groups.** CSOs are expressions of collective social interests and priorities. This produces groups with high levels of motivation and with specialist knowledge and resource, which public bodies are likely to find of particular use when trying to enact public policy in the field. But these groups are also gateways back into the societies from which they emerge and so offer opportunities for public bodies to engage with CSOs as representatives of broader constituencies;
- **The diversity of CSO forms and interests requires policy-makers and other partners to be aware of the implications of different framings.** There is a key distinction between groups that see refugees as a case in themselves and those that see them as exemplars of humanitarian need. Consequently, public bodies need to engage closely with CSO partners to understand the particular ways in which these conceptualise and operationalise policy and actions. It cannot be assumed that a group that works well on one element of international protection will be able to translate that to other elements;
- **CSOs might be the harshest critics of the Global Compacts, but also are their strongest supporters.** Where groups have been involved, they have shown a thoughtful and well-reasoned view of the challenges involved: These groups are more than willing to make more of the Compacts, should states make material efforts to uphold their side of the arrangements, and this in turn would give cause to more CSOs to become active in their implementation and enforcement. CSOs thus represent a critical resource, but one that can only be unlocked by states;
- **Global Compact implementation cannot be separated from the general enforcement of the international legal order.** The Compacts have still to make much impact in operational terms, partly through limited knowledge among medium- and small-sized CSOs, but mostly because all CSOs see the international regime as a whole as being under threat from states, especially the 1951 Convention. States and relevant international organisations could readily build effective relations with CSOs on the Compacts if they so desired, as long as there is built on substantive action across the board on international protection.

For more detail, read CSO attitude and activity analysis:

<https://zenodo.org/record/7096484#.Y9k8CBfP2U>

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