

*Biographies of the nominated members of the
Expert Council on NGO Law
July 2018 – July 2021*



Srdjan Blagovcanin

Actively engaged in the NGO sector for over 14 years (with Transparency International and its National Chapter in Bosnia and Herzegovina as Executive Director and currently as Chairman of the Board of Directors and also as board member of the Center for Election Studies). He authored a number of studies and analyses in the field of rule of law, good governance and anti-corruption reforms, published by John Hopkins University, School of Advanced International Studies, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Transparency International. He holds a LL.M degree (Karl-Franzes University, Graz, Austria) and specialization in Law and Human Rights (Washington College of Law, American University). Srdjan Blagovcanin resides in Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina.



Antoine Buyse

Professor of human rights in a multidisciplinary perspective and director of the Netherlands Institute of Human Rights (SIM) at Utrecht University. He has served in the boards of several Dutch and international NGOs, including the Association of Human Rights Institutes and the Dutch branch advisory board of the Scholars at Risk network. His teaching and research focus on international and European human rights law, including the issue of shrinking civic space, and he hosts a weblog about the European Convention on Human Rights. Antoine Buyse resides in Utrecht, the Netherlands.



Pavel Chikov

Human rights lawyer and head of the Agora International Human Rights Group, member of the Presidential Council of Human Rights (Russia). Law School (Kazan State University, Russia) and MPA (University of North Dakota, USA) graduate, PhD in International Law. He has been working in the human rights field since 1999, organizing legal defence for hundreds of criminal cases against civic and political activists, bloggers and journalists. His team represents dozens of Russian NGOs that faced a lot of pressure since 2006, including the so-called Foreign Agents Law. Pavel Chikov resides in Kazan, Russia.



Simona Constantinescu

Legal expert actively working for a more favourable environment for civil society organizations for over 20 years. She started as a lawyer and since 2011 served as Head of Development and Advocacy for Civil Society Development Foundation. She managed grant-making programmes involving more than 250 NGOs and has been engaged in major advocacy campaigns for improving the legislation. She led or was part of some dozens of working groups on legislative changes affecting the third sector, either as legal writer, researcher, spokesperson or advocate for change at Romanian and international level. Simona Constantinescu resides in Bucharest, Romania.



Hugues de Suremain

Co-founder and legal coordinator of the NGO "European Prison Litigation Network". He was formerly responsible officer of the investigation division of the International Prison Observatory (1999-2004), before being its legal and litigation coordinator (2004-2010). Between 2011 and 2016, he was a lawyer at the Paris Bar, practicing in a law firm specialised before the judicial and administrative supreme courts. He has collaborated as a researcher with the University of Florence between 2014 and 2016. He is currently member of the board of the International Prison Observatory. Hugues de Suremain resides in Kiev, Ukraine.



Cathal Gilbert

Civic Space Research lead for global civil society alliance, CIVICUS. An LLB and MA (International Relations) graduate from Ireland, Cathal has over twelve years' experience in the civil society sector. He has led extensive research and legal analysis into the rule of law, judicial independence, democracy and the conditions facing civil society. His work has also involved support programmes to civil society, advocacy and policy dialogue. Currently, he coordinates the CIVICUS Monitor, a global platform which tracks respect for the freedoms of association, peaceful assembly and expression in 196 countries. Cathal Gilbert resides in Cork, Ireland.



Jade Glenister

Australian qualified lawyer currently working in an independent organisation which inspects and monitors the treatment and conditions of detainees in the UK. She has worked across Europe providing legal and policy advice through projects on human rights, focussing on equality and non-discrimination and the prohibition of torture and other ill-treatment. Co-author of Justice or Complicity? LGBT Rights and the Russian Courts and previous Assistant Editor of the Equal Rights Review. She has provided training on equality law to lawyers, paralegals, journalists and NGO and government staff. Ms Glenister resides in London.



Dragan Golubovic

From Serbia, an international consultant, professor of law, and member of the Expert Council on NGO Law since its inception in 2008. He holds a J.D. and LL.M from the School of Law in Novi Sad (Újvidék), LL. M from the New York State University and S.J.D. from the Central European University Budapest. He worked on projects relating to civil society, social entrepreneurship, human rights, public administration and public participation in more than twenty countries. From 1998 to 2013 he was a Senior Legal Adviser with the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (Washington D.C) and its affiliate, the European Center for Not-for-Profit Law (Budapest). Dragan Golubovic resides in Budapest.



Katerina Hadzi-Miceva Evans

Katerina has been working to protect and strengthen civil society space since she engaged in the NGO sector in Macedonia in 1998. Subsequently, she co-founded the Human Rights Students' Initiative at the Central European University where she earned a Master's degree in law. Seeing how a safe legal framework is needed to encourage citizen action, in 2001 she joined the European Center for Not-for-Profit Law and became its Executive Director. She provides expertise to NGOs, public authorities, international bodies; undertakes research, speaks at high level events and helps develop strategies that create policy and legal conditions for civil society to flourish. Katerina Hadzi-Miceva Evans is Macedonian and resides in Cambridge, United Kingdom.



Carla Ferstman

Senior lecturer in the law faculty at the University of Essex. She is the former Director of REDRESS (2004 – 2018) and previously Legal Director (2001 – 2004). After a brief period in private practice, she worked with the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in Rwanda (1995 – 1997), Amnesty International (1998 – 1999) and was Executive Legal Advisor of the Commission for Real Property Claims of Refugees and Displaced Persons in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1999 – 2001). She is a member of the experts committee of the Convention Against Torture Initiative. She also serves on the Board of Trauma Treatment International and the Nuhanovic Foundation and is a member of the Advisory Committee of Lawyers for Justice in Libya. Carla Ferstman resides in the United Kingdom.



Rytis Jokubauskas

Legal expert working more than 20 years on NGO Law. Advocate, international consultant for the Council of Europe, EU or other international organizations projects on justice sector reform and rule of law. Founded the NGO Law Institute in 2004 to improve the legal environment for NGOs and civil society and is involved in most legal drafting initiatives concerning Lithuanian NGOs. Rytis is also a consultant for NGO Coalition – a major umbrella NGO network in Lithuania. He is also representing Lithuanian organizations in the Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE) and the European Consumer Organization (BEUC). Rytis Jokubauskas resides in Vilnius.



Jeremy McBride

Barrister, Monckton Chambers, London, specialising in cases before the European Court of Human Rights and the UN Human Rights Committee. Visiting Professor, Central European University. Scientific Expert for the adoption of the Fundamental Principles on the Legal Status of NGOs and the Recommendation on the Legal Status of NGOs in Europe (CM/Rec(2007)14). Member of the ODIHR-Venice Commission Expert Working Group for the preparation of the Joint Guidelines on Freedom of Association. Co-founder and former Chair of INTERIGHTS (International Centre for the Legal Protection of Human Rights). Formerly, Reader in International Human Rights Law, University of Birmingham. Mr McBride resides in Strasbourg.



Goran Miletic

Human Rights Lawyer, Director for Europe at Civil Rights Defenders, Goran Miletic is member of European Commission of Sexual Orientation Law, author of many human rights reports in the Balkan region, mainly focused on Roma, national minorities, LGBT and human rights defenders. His work within Civil Rights Defenders is focused on protection and strengthening of human rights defenders and creating environment for work of NGOs. He is founder of many leading human rights events in the region such as Rule of Law Forum, Moot Court Competition and Roma Summit. Goran Miletic resides in Belgrade, Serbia.



Rita Patrício

Amnesty International's Senior Executive Officer for the Council of Europe since 2010. She leads on AI's advocacy with the Council of Europe. She previously worked as an adviser to the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, at the Portuguese Mission to the UN in New York, with the Human Rights Institute of the International Bar Association in Mozambique, and for the Coalition for the International Criminal Court. She holds a law degree from the University of Lisbon and a European Masters' in Human Rights and Democratisation from the European Inter-University Centre for Human Rights and Democratisation. Rita Patrício is Portuguese and resides in Strasbourg, France.



Loredana Tassone

Qualified as a Lawyer in Italy and France, a PhD from the Universities of Strasbourg and Rome, she is a Lawyer and Trainer and member of the Fédération des Barreaux d'Europe (FBE) and of the European Council of Bar Associations and Law Societies (CCBE). She started as a Lawyer at the European Court of Human Rights and worked for the Council of Europe in the Department of Human Rights and Legal Affairs and as an external Consultant for the European Programme on Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals (HELP Programme). She worked as an Associate Lecturer at the University of Salford and is member of the Manchester International Law Centre (MILC) in charge as a Rapporteur for the Project of the Oxford University Press for International Organisations (OXIO). Loredana Tassone resides in Brussels, Belgium.



Cyril Ritchie, Honorary President

Who was instrumental in the writing of the original Council of Europe Guidelines on the functioning of NGOs in Europe, and represented the Conference of INGOs to the expert committee drafting the Committee of Ministers Recommendation CM/Rec(2007) 14 on the legal status of NGOs in Europe. He was President of the NGO Grouping on Civil Society and Democracy in Europe from 2000-2008. From 2011 to 2018 Cyril Ritchie is President of the Conference of Non-governmental Organizations in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations (CoNGO) and has served as President of the Expert Council on NGO Law from January 2008 to July 2018. Cyril Ritchie resides in Geneva, Switzerland.