

debats **Europa** Social

40 YEARS OF EUROPE: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE IN THE PROTECTION OF SOCIAL RIGHTS

 **29 SEPTEMBER 2026**

 **9.30H – 13.00H (9.00H REGISTRATION)**

 **HUB SOCIAL** [CARRER GIRONA 34, INTERIOR. BARCELONA]

CONTEXT

The year 2026 marks four decades since Spain's historic accession to the then European Communities, a step that transcended the political sphere to become a driver of unprecedented social transformation. Over these 40 years, the **perception of European institutions has undergone a profound evolution**: from a Europe understood as a distant ideal of freedom and prosperity to be achieved, we have moved towards a Europe that is **our everyday framework for living together**. Today, citizens no longer look at the European project with the aspirational perspective of 1986, but with the **expectations inherent to shared governance**. European institutions have ceased to be an external reference point and have become a key pillar in protecting the Welfare State, particularly in the face of global crises that are testing our collective resilience. These crises are generating growing distrust in institutions and a shift in perspectives on governance, participation, opportunities and the construction of narratives at all levels: economic, political and social. **The seventh edition of this year's Social Europe Debate aims to analyse where we come from, where we are, where we are heading, and what opportunities for action, decision-making and influence are available to Catalonia's third sector.**

THE EUROPEAN MODEL: FROM THE IDEAL OF COOPERATION TO THE RISK OF POLARISATION

Over these four decades, we have witnessed an increasing technical complexity in our relations with Europe. While accession brought an injection of cohesion funding that made it possible to professionalise social action, the current challenge lies in ensuring that bureaucratic complexity does not distance institutions from realities on the ground. Our understanding of Europe has moved from the idealism of the transition to a more technical and sectoral analysis: the European Pillar of Social Rights has become the new roadmap. This institutional maturity now enables us to participate in European civil dialogue with a voice of our own, arguing that the success of the common project should not be measured solely in terms of the single market, but also in the reduction of poverty rates and the strength of services supporting people.

Despite this increasingly structured capacity for advocacy and participation, the **current crisis of confidence in traditional institutions has opened up gaps that different political and populist movements** are seeking to exploit through the proliferation of hate speech, in an attempt to fragment social cohesion. The rise of exclusionary rhetoric threatens the very founding values of the Union: **solidarity, human dignity and equal rights**. What should the Social Third Sector's response to these threats be at European level? What framework for action is available? What alliances can be built upon?

OBJECTIVES

- **Analyse** the historical and current impact of membership of the European Union from a social rights perspective.
- **Highlight** the role of Social Third Sector organisations as a bridge between regions and EU institutions.
- **Discuss** shared strategies to combat hate speech by strengthening the European social protection network.

PROGRAMME

9.00h Registration

9.30h Welcome

- ▶ **MARTA CID I PAÑELLA**, Head of International Affairs at the Board of the Taula del Tercer Sector Social.
- ▶ **LAURA FORASTER I LLORET**, Director General of Catalunya Internacional.
- ▶ **XEMA GIL I MENESES**, Secretary General of the Department of Social Rights and Inclusion of the Government of Catalonia.

9.50h Lessons from the Past for the Social Europe of the Future

- ▶ **XAVIER PRATS MONNÉ**, President of Teach For All Europe and former Director-General for Education and Health at the European Commission.

10.20h Dialogue with the Audience

10.30h Round Table – European Institutions: Crisis or Opportunities

- ▶ **LAURA AZNAR I LLUCIÀ**, journalist at Crític and contributor to various media outlets.
- ▶ **MARC PETIT**, Judge of the Constitutional Court of the German federal state of Schleswig-Holstein.
- ▶ **MARTIN MLYNÁR**, member of the No Hate Speech Network.
- ▶ **LAURA DE BONFILS**, member of the European Social Platform.

11.30h Coffee Break

12.00h Elevator Pitches – Projects

- ▶ **ROGER PALÀ I BALANYÀ**, Codirector of Crític and journalist.
- ▶ **GIANLUCA PASTORELLI**, Executive President of Diesis Network.
- ▶ **ANA MANSOA**, Executive Director of the Portuguese organisation CEPAC (Centro Padre Alves Correia).
- ▶ **GAUTIER SABRIÀ**, Northern Catalan anthropologist and sociologist specialising in nationalism and urban policies.
- ▶ **JÚLIA VIGÓ I PASCUAL**, Head of Equality and Feminism at the Taula del Tercer Sector Social.

13.00h Closing

- ▶ **XAVIER TRABADO I FARRÉ**, President of the Taula d'entitats del Tercer Sector Social de Catalunya.
- ▶ **JAUME DUCH I GUILLOT**, Minister for European Union and Foreign Action of the Government of Catalonia.

IN COLABORATION WITH: