

Foreword

The Advisory Board on Civil Society Policy, the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities and the Citizen Forum carried out a survey concerning the partnership between municipalities and the third sector from 14 April to 20 May 2015. The term “partnership” referred to practical cooperation between municipalities and the third sector in terms of discussion, planning, development, service provision, budget planning and organising of activities.

The aim of the survey was to establish what kind of cooperation the municipalities have with different organisations (for example social and health care associations, culture associations, sports clubs, village and district associations, hunting clubs, youth clubs, etc.). The goal was also to examine how the municipalities promote local democracy, such as citizen panels or district specific budgets, and what kind of local methods the municipalities use to hear the residents. The survey also aimed to establish the views of the municipal administration on the future development of the cooperation with the third sector.

In total 141 administrative directors and heads of divisions in municipalities responded to the electronic questionnaire. The respondents represented 114 municipalities, which means that 36 per cent of the municipalities responded to the survey. In 24 municipalities more than one person responded to the questionnaire. The respondents represented many different branches and sectors. Common job titles were head of social welfare, administrative director and head of education. The size of the municipalities varied from 1000 to over 100 000 residents. Most of the survey material concerns relatively large municipalities.

According to the answers there is a need for cooperation and voluntary work especially to supplement the municipalities' own service provision. However, it seems unlikely that the municipalities will increase the financial support to organisations in the near future.

The results of the survey will be used to strengthen the operational preconditions of the civil society and to support decision-making. The goal is to find local best practices. The material will also be used for a dissertation.