

## **The role and value of national federation of associations: some case studies**

*Facilitated by Danièle Vranken, Secretary General of FAIB*

*with*

*Cyril Ritchie, UIA*

*Sarah Impens, European Foundation Centre*

*Jan Lichota, visit.brussels*

International organizations constitute a fundamental part of organized civil society. This thought-provoking workshop provided the opportunity to reflect on the diversity of roles and functions those organizations fulfil and the benefit of the institutional networks those organizations create.

According to Cyril Ritchie, President of the Union of International Associations, federations of international organizations can help their members get access to authorities, and they provide leadership in pursuing values and ideas. Federations often open the door to funding since they have a background of solid knowledge in their specialized field. The answer to how those organizations manage to fulfil these function lies in the networks such federations create.

Many international organizations are both users and producers of knowledge: they gather knowledge in their specific field and disseminate it to a broader audience by creating networks in which knowledge and ideas float, freely available to actors who then use this knowledge. Thus international organizations create network structures that serve as access point for authorities on the one hand, and media and the public on the other hand. Ultimately, these networks become which change the broader structure – whether informal structures such as beliefs and values or formal structures such as national and international laws.