

## **To empower citizens**

*For a stronger and more fair society.  
Founding text, September 2017.*

This founding text was written and collectively debated by about thirty people at the first meeting of the Agora (13/09/2015), a few months before the founding of VoxPublic.

France is in a social, economic and political crisis. Extreme poverty exists, in particular for millions of unemployed people, and inequalities are worsening.

Discrimination and racism are a daily reality for millions of people because of their origin, skin colour, name, place of residence, religion, sexual orientation, gender, handicap or age.

The crisis of confidence experienced by citizens in relation to decision-makers, political parties and technocracy, is deep. For many citizens, the state and its leading representatives are not conducting themselves in an exemplary manner, often being in conflict of interest or involved in corruption or discrimination against citizens.

Finally, few media offer space for actors from civil society to express themselves. With the commodification of communication and the financialization of the economy, many economic actors (media, companies), have renounced assuming a position of civic responsibility within society.

Our country is not making progress in « living together », in accepting its multicultural identity and moving towards social cohesion. The attacks of January and November 2015 further heightened a feeling of insecurity.

In this context, more and more citizens chose to express their displeasure by abstaining from voting or by casting a protest vote for the Far Right party.

Likewise, French organizations from civil society and different actors (academics, journalists) with high-level expertise are

having difficulty in convincing decision-makers to consider the relevance of their proposals.

OSCs are also experiencing difficulty in obtaining successes favourable to the public interest. It is therefore essential to strengthen the interaction between citizens, OSCs and decision-makers. This interaction can take many forms : from denunciation to co-reflexion on public policy.

VoxPublic wishes to contribute to providing support for actors from civil society at local, regional or national level, engaged in advocacy (actions de plaidoyer) against social injustice, discrimination, corruption and conflict of interest.

The VoxPublic Agora  
13th September 2015