

# Eastern Partnership - Civil Society Forum

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Newsletter June 2010



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Civil Society Forum**

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## The second Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum (CSF) will take place on 18-19 November 2010 in Berlin. Invitation to submit expressions of interest

In the preparation of the Civil Society Forum of 2010, in the course of 2009 the European Commission consulted the modalities of the Forum with all interested stakeholders. The consulted parties favoured a comprehensive approach allowing for the participation of a wide range of CSOs: trade unions, employers' organisations, professional associations, NGOs, think-tanks, nonprofit foundations, national and international CSOs/networks and other relevant Civil Society actors from EaP Partner Countries, but also from EU Member States and international organisations/networks.

The first EaP CSF took place on 16-17 November 2009 and gathered more than 200 CSOs. During the Forum participants elected the CSF Steering Committee and tasked it with the responsibility of developing a procedure for selection of the participants for the next Forum. The CSF Steering Committee elaborated the procedure which can be found below. The procedure will be applied in the process of selection of the participants to the second meeting of the EaP CSF which will be held on 18-19 November in Berlin.

Although the Forum will be organized by the EC and co-hosted by the German Ministry for Foreign Affairs, all decisions regarding the aims of the meeting and its agenda will be taken on the basis of proposals worked out by the CSF Steering Committee.

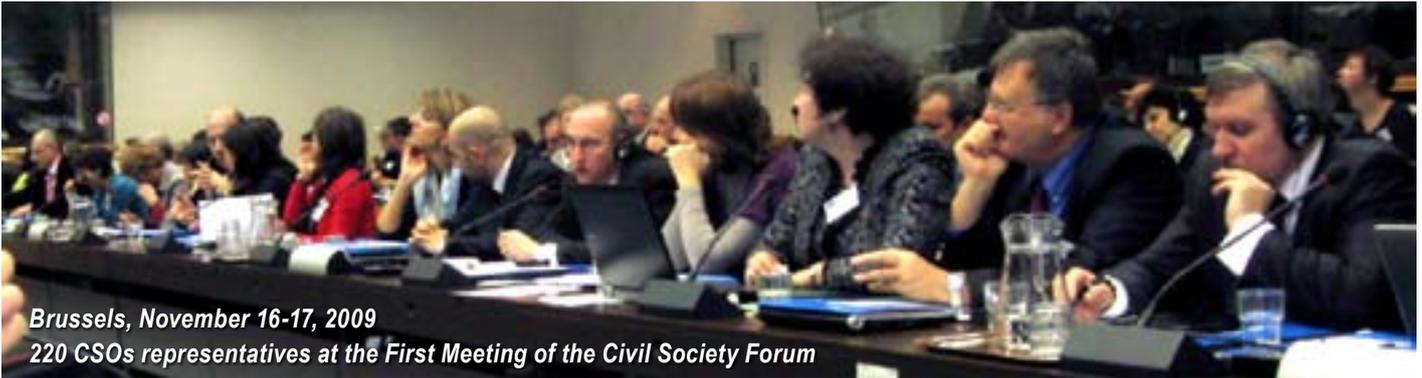
**Hence, the European Commission is now inviting all interested parties to submit expressions of interest to participate in the second meeting of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum. The submission of the expressions of interest is a necessary step in the selection process to participate in the EaP CSF meeting on 18-19 November 2010. The application form prepared by the CSF Steering Committee can be found [here](#)**

**Submissions of expressions of interest should be sent before 2 July 2010 to:**  
[RELEX-EAP-CIVIL-SOCIETY@ec.europa.eu](mailto:RELEX-EAP-CIVIL-SOCIETY@ec.europa.eu)

*European Commission – External Relations*  
[http://ec.europa.eu/external\\_relations/eastern/civil\\_society/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/eastern/civil_society/index_en.htm)

**IMPORTANT NOTICE:** Due to the budgetary constraints, the Commission will be able to fund the travel and hotel stay during the Forum only for the CSOs from EaP countries. **It will not be possible for the EC to cover any expenses of the CSOs from EU Member State, international organisations, networks or from a third country.**





Brussels, November 16-17, 2009  
220 CSOs representatives at the First Meeting of the Civil Society Forum

## Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum (Brussels, 16-17 Nov. 2009) Recommendations

The participants of the Civil Society Forum believe that Civil society organizations should be treated as institutional partners of EU bodies, Member States and the EaP countries in the planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluation of EaP programs, on both bilateral and multilateral levels.

For their part, the EaP countries must strive to fulfil the Copenhagen Criteria and the conditions and recommendations made by the Council of Europe and the United Nations.

I would like to stress at this point that the Forum strongly condemns the holding of political prisoners in some EaP countries and appeals for their immediate release.

The Eastern Partnership provides an opportunity for the partner countries to integrate with the European Union by developing stable democratic structures, and by enabling stronger participation of civil society in areas such as human rights, electoral standards, media freedom, combating corruption, training and the networking of local authorities.

### WORKING GROUP 1: DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, GOOD GOVERNANCE AND STABILITY

1. The EU should encourage the authorities in EaP countries to introduce and strengthen democratic principles at national and local levels: it should encourage high standards of governance, supremacy of the law, effective civil controls over the implementation of laws as well as over prosecutors and the police. The EaP countries should strengthen judicial independence and ensure access to justice and effective mechanisms for combating corruption.

### HUMAN RIGHTS

2. The EU should demonstrate the centrality of international human rights standards in its foreign policy and agreements with third countries by according human rights a distinctive space. Enforcing these human rights standards should be an integral part of the EaP. The evaluation of human rights in EaP countries should be treated as a basic criterion for the overall assessment of their democratic progress.

### ELECTIONS AND ELECTION CAMPAIGNS

3. The EU should enhance effective assistance to the EaP countries to ensure free, fair and transparent elections. It is the responsibility of governments and parliaments of the EaP countries to ensure a proper environment for elections that safeguards equal access of candidates and parties to public media and equality in exercising citizens' rights.

### MEDIA

4. The role of the Eastern Partnership is to support media independence, pluralism and diversity and to ensure the rights of journalists, guaranteeing their security so they can perform their professional duties.

### SECURITY AND PEACE BUILDING

5. Stability and democratic change must be based on tolerance and security for all. A pragmatic approach aimed at conflict prevention, mitigation and resolution must not negate EU values, as our principle should be: "Democracy is the best policy for security."

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Parallel to the peer review carried out on the basis of Council of Europe conventions, the Civil Society Forum should prepare country-specific NGO progress reports on democratic governance that will present an independent assessment of compliance with international standards and conventions in democratic governance.

## WORKING GROUP 2: ECONOMIC INTEGRATION AND CONVERGENCE WITH THE EU POLICIES

1. The Civil Society Forum supports the core objectives and program of work approved by the thematic platform for economic integration and convergence with EU policies. The program of work calls for Civil society organisations to be involved in the work of the thematic platform and of the panel on trade and trade-related regulatory cooperation linked to Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas.
2. The Civil Society Forum draws the attention of the EU and EaP countries to the necessity of including the following economic and social issues into the agenda of the Eastern Partnership:
  - a. Increasing the performance of social security and social protection systems and intensifying the fight against poverty;
  - b. Introducing the principles of sustainable development and adequate responses to climate change;
  - c. Facilitating labour mobility and flexicurity;
  - d. Supporting the efforts of those partner countries that are not yet members of WTO to become members;
3. Support for consumer protection organisations as an important player in the market economy should become part of the new national action plans.
4. A new flagship initiative to put in place a program aimed at upgrading the support of business contacts, internationalization and market access, including the transfer of know-how from the Chambers of commerce and industry and the business associations of EU member states to their partners in the EaP countries should be developed.
5. The support for the social partners and for the social dialogue should become part of the legal approximation between the EU and EaP countries including the implementation of core labour standards.



## WORKING GROUP 3: ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENERGY SECURITY

### ENERGY SECURITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

1. Shape an integrated sustainable energy policy for the EaP region, which takes into account national interests and aims to improve environmental protection (including biodiversity), energy efficiency, as well as the capacity to face climate change and to mitigate dependency on energy imports.
2. EU Member States and EaP countries to work together towards higher security of energy transportation. The European Initiative on Gas Transparency should be promoted as a pilot project within the Eastern Partnership, open to third countries as a mechanism for crisis prevention.

### ENVIRONMENT, BIODIVERSITY, AND AGRICULTURE

3. Support the integration of environmental aspects into all national policies of EaP countries (e.g. industry, transport, regional development, budget, agriculture, forestry, EU acquis compliance), in particular through promotion of Strategic Environmental Assessment.

### INFORMATION, EDUCATION, CAPACITY BUILDING, AND AWARENESS RAISING

4. Implement the principles of education for sustainable development in national educational systems; promote the transfer of knowledge from EU to EaP countries.

## WORKING GROUP 4: CONTACTS BETWEEN PEOPLE

1. Promote and disseminate information on EU issues and the opportunities provided by the EU by developing an information society and by enlarging the network of European Information Points.



2. Address specific situations and levels of development of civil society in each EaP country, in particular through using existing leaders' networks (such as Eúclid Network and the Civil Society Leadership Network) for strengthening common understanding, sharing of values, and cooperation between NGOs from EaP countries and EU Member States.

### VISA FACILITATION AND LIBERALISATION

3. The EU and its Member states should offer all six EaP countries roadmaps towards visa free regimes and waive visa fees as soon as possible. As a first step simplify visa procedures and provide multiple-entry long term visas.

### EDUCATION

4. Facilitate non-formal education and increase significantly funding for internships and volunteer opportunities, school exchange programmes and distance learning.

### YOUTH

5. Enhance the active participation of young people in decision making processes at all levels and develop mechanisms for involving them in the achievement of the EaP goals. Develop special programmes for peace and intercultural education for young people in post conflict areas.

### CULTURE

6. Foster cultural exchanges and cooperation between EU and EaP countries and encourage ratification/fostering implementation of the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions in the six EaP countries.

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Participants of the Civil Society Forum clearly stated that the role of civil society should not be limited solely to making recommendations. The majority of participants see the Civil Society Forum not as a single meeting, but as an equal and active partner in the dialogue between national governments and the European Union.

In order to achieve this goal, the Civil Society Forum 2009 elected a Steering Committee, which consists of eight thematic platform coordinators and nine country facilitators. The first meeting of the Steering Committee took place in January 2010 in Brussels. Its main mission is to provide further development and the implementation of an appropriate strategy for the participation of Civil Society in bilateral and multilateral relations within the Eastern Partnership.

Civil Society representatives expect a supportive and participatory approach to dialogue both from EU institutions and from national governments, which will help to include a broad range of interests and increase levels of support and understanding for the Eastern Partnership among citizens of EU and EaP countries.

## Overview of activities of the WG1 on Democracy, good governance and stability

The **Working Group 1 on Democracy, Human Rights, Good Governance and Stability** is the most numerous group within the CSF and has presented a long list of recommendations at the last Forum in November 2009. Since that time the group has slowly been activated to contribute to the Eastern Partnership.

The WG1 coordinators, **Mr. Siarhiej Mackievic** and **Ms. Kristina Prunerova**, were invited to the meeting of the intergovernmental platform 1 which was held April 29, 2010 in Brussels. They have prepared a short presentation based on the program of the platform meeting but also based on the work of the steering committee and the recommendations of its members. The main highlights of the speech were the following.

The mandate of the Civil Society Forum is to work on the Eastern Partnership process by influencing the decisions of the EU institutions and national governments to take into account the recommendations of CSF. This will be done with the support of a broad civil society from both EU and Partner countries. We believe that Civil Society organizations should be treated as institutional partners of EU bodies, Member States and the Eastern Partnership countries in the planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating of Eastern Partnership programs, on both bilateral and multilateral levels.

The Eastern Partnership provides an opportunity for the partner countries to integrate with the European Union by developing stable democratic structures, and by enabling stronger participation of civil society, in areas such as human rights, electoral standards, media freedom, combating corruption, training and networking of local authorities.

CSOs are important in communication with the whole of civil society in both ways. The idea and advantages of Eastern Partnership remain not so easy to follow for common public in Partner countries so the Civil society organizations can take the role of this communication ensuring a wide support from the society regarding the EaP. With civil society support the public in Partner countries will accept and support the necessary economic and social reforms much easier.

CSOs are not only the channel for information on EaP delivery to the society, but also the invaluable source of expertise and a mean for on-site monitoring. Each of the Eastern Partnership countries as well as the EU Member States have a number of civil society organizations which deal on a good expert level with issues included in the Eastern Partnership agenda.

This allows us to put into the agenda the creation of monitoring system not only for particular projects, but also for the EaP initiative fulfillment as a whole. We propose to elaborate the set of criteria to assess the approximation to the all-European space in the Partner countries. It is necessary to approve the procedure of the expertise and evaluation for the preparation of reports on particular countries as well as the comparative report with obligatory participation of the ex-

parts of CSOs, allowing them also to prepare alternative reports. The reports and the discussion on them should be available to the public.

One of the goals of the EaP is to foster partnership of CSOs and governments. Both sides can benefit from a more cooperative approach, where the state perceives the CSOs more as partners and expert consultants. It is therefore commendable that the incentive to foster governments and NGO cooperation in these fields is communicated strongly to the governments of the EaP countries.

We regard the CSOs community as the watchdog constantly monitoring the transition towards the European principles in all EaP Platforms provided by the same Working Groups within the CSF. One of key points of today's discussion is fight against corruption. It is impossible without constant public monitoring of economic decisions occurring everywhere. This should touch upon also the deals within the EaP program of economic cooperation.

The mutual respect and confidence between the CSOs and the states is needed, taking into consideration the obvious fact that in majority of EaP countries the state is much stronger than the structured civil society and it has all the variety of instruments of influencing it, making pressure on it, or even destroying it, but not vice versa.

The more specific goal of the working groups is to follow the work of the multilateral platforms, expert panels and flagship initiatives and contribute with the expertise and knowledge that civil society has gathered through its work. For this platform meeting we have contacted all the participants of the Working Group 1 on Democracy, Good Governance and Stability and asked them for contribution. We have gathered civil society examples of good projects as well as challenges in the areas which are to be covered by this meeting - specifically judiciary reform and fight against corruption. Several examples of such project were selected in order to keep this presentation short but these examples should show the successes in projects of civil society in cooperation with the governments in the fields of judiciary reform and fight against corruption.

For more information about the working group please contact **Kristina Prunerova** at [kristinaprunerova@epd.eu](mailto:kristinaprunerova@epd.eu)

### Upcoming activities of the WG1

#### JUNE-AUGUST 2010

Coordination of work of working group via email exchange

#### SEPTEMBER 2010

First meeting of the Expert panel on fight against corruption. The working group coordinators have requested a participation at the panel of some of the CSF expert on anti-corruption

#### OCTOBER 7 AND 8, 2010

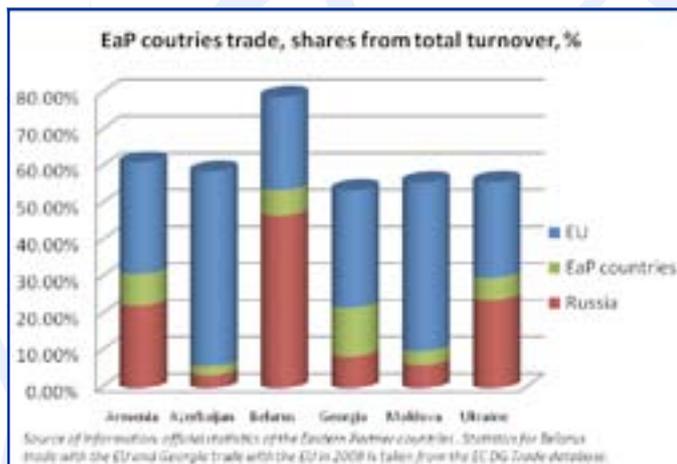
Meeting of the working group 1 in Brussels

#### OCTOBER 2010

Participation at second meeting of the Panel on the Fight against corruption (Warsaw) entitled "Cooperation with civil society in anticorruption activities" workshops

## WG2 submission to the Newsletter EaP Civil Society Forum, June 2010

The **Working Group 2 “Economic Integration and convergence with EU policies”** of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum (WG2) tackles one of the biggest ambition fixed at the Joint Declaration of the Prague Eastern Partnership Summit, signed in Prague on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2009 which aimed to regional economic integration between Eastern partner countries and opening negotiations on the deep and comprehensive free trade areas (DCFTAs) between the EU and the Eastern partner countries.



The WG2 activities are based on the Recommendations agreed in November 2009 with strong cooperation with the European Economic and Social Committee. In first half 2010 two information bulletins of the WG2 were published, which cover both the outline of the actions made and the information about the discussions at the EaP Platform 2. WG2 Coordinators and participants took part in number of the seminars and workshops in the EU member states and back home at the Eastern partner countries to promote the role of the EaP and opportunities for economic growth, better regulations, social and health safety standards. The workshop on the “EU Ukraine relations: the role of the civil society” (25-26 March, Kyiv) with participation both civil society and the officials directly addressed in its conclusions the issue on more active involvement of the civil society into the EaP and regular consultations with civil society on future DCFTA.

In January 2010 the WG2 presented the draft concept of the Eastern Partnership Business Forum to consideration of the European Commission and the SC members, the online discussions were opened in both English and Russian and the updated information was presented by the WG2 Coordinator **Mr. Kakha Gogolashvili** at the Platform 2 meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> May in Brussels. We are working to be included into the SMEs Panel and discussions which should be opened under Platform 2 in early autumn and also to business to business meetings under Trade Panel of Platform 2.

As civil society plays crucial role in implementing legislation and regulations necessary for economic integration and market liberalizations, one of the priority of the WG2 was to develop the outline for the study on the Social Dialogue in the Eastern partner countries. The next step is to find the financing to conduct such study to support the partners in the social dialogue of the EaP countries to be an effective element of the decision making process at domestic arena as far as the economic and social issues are concerned.

WG2 Coordinator participated at the Platform 2 meeting only briefly to report about the activities and plans, however he was not invited to other discussions, including on SMEs Flagship initiative although there is obvious interest from the WG2 participants to be more involved. WG2 representative also was not allowed to participate at the Trade Panel meetings, at the same time we are in discussions with the European Commission to present our views. We are pushing forward to prove that civil society, in particular WG2 and its participants can provide the added value and valuable expertise even to the technical discussions under the Trade panel and other related panel of Platform 2.

### Key dates:

- **October 2010:** next WG2 meeting;
- **October 2010:** launching SMEs Facility and SMEs Panel under Platform 2;
- **Autumn:** first business to business meeting under Trade Panel

## WG 3 representatives participated in EaP Panel on Environment and Climate Change and in EaP Platform 3 meeting

The **EaP Panel on Environment and Climate Change**, established under EaP Platform 2, met for the first time on 23 March 2010 in Brussels. Two representatives of **CSF Working Group (WG) 3 “Environment, Climate Change and Energy Security”** were invited to attend the meeting: **Anna Golubovska-Onisimova** of the Ukrainian NGO MAMA-86 and the CSF WG 3 co-chair Irene Lucius.

Main topics of the meeting were Green Economy, Climate Change and eco-innovation. In the afternoon, the EaP Flagship project on Governance was launched, aiming at improving capacity in the field of environmental monitoring and setting up an environmental information system.

The two CSF representatives got involved in discussions and highlighted the added value of civil society participation in the issues on the agenda. The European Commission noted that REC Caucasus and Moldova as well as the EEA should be full

members of the panel and that there is the possibility to address the next platform meeting with the request to make CSF representatives also full members. Meanwhile, CSF representatives can be invited as guests, but the goal is to have CSF and governmental actors work as partners. It is the intention of the Commission to have CSF representatives also invited to seminars and other events of the Panel.

The two Working Group 3 chairs **Michael Gonchar** (Centre for Global Studies “Strategy XXI”) and **Irene Lucius** (WWF Danube-Carpathian Programme) were invited to participate in the EaP Platform 3 meeting on 20 May for half an hour in order to summarise our recommendations and discuss them with governmental actors. It is not clear yet whether the CSF will be given the chance to play a meaningful role in this platform in the future.

After the summer break, WG 3 will meet in Brussels to discuss energy and environment issues and plan future work. As support to WG 3 work, **Michael Gonchar** has also been issuing a specific newsletter.

For more information, please contact:

Michael Gonchar [geostrategy@ukr.net](mailto:geostrategy@ukr.net)

Irene Lucius [ilucius@wwfdcp.org](mailto:ilucius@wwfdcp.org)

Anna Golubovska-Onisimova [anna@mama-86.org.ua](mailto:anna@mama-86.org.ua)



## WG 4 “Contacts between people”

### I. Third meeting of the EaP Platform 4 “Contacts between people”

The WG4 coordinators, **Ben Rattenbury** and **Natalia Cojohari** were invited to the meeting of the intergovernmental platform 4 which was held on 27<sup>th</sup> of May, 2010 in Brussels. It was the first time that civil society representatives had been invited to Platform 4.

The coordinators were given a 30 minute slot to present the 16 recommendations agreed during the WG 4 sessions at the first Civil Society Forum event in Brussels in November 2009. ([http://ec.europa.eu/external\\_relations/eastern/civil\\_society/recommendations\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/eastern/civil_society/recommendations_en.htm)). The accent were put on one general recommendation: “Reduce barriers and develop effective contacts between people by enabling the full participation of citizens of the EaP countries in the EU programmes on youth, media, culture, research and education.”

In order to further promote contacts among CSOs, the EaP CSF Steering Committee has proposed a flagship project which will include exchanges for civil society leaders within the EaP countries, and also between civil society leaders in the EaP countries and their peers in the EU member states.

The impact of these activities will include increased knowledge and skills among the participants, improved cross border links, a solid foundation for regional and pan-European networking, and crucially a sense that the CSF and wider EaP is delivering concrete benefits to civil society in the region. This last point addresses the potential frustration felt by many civil society actors in the region that the CSF is losing momentum and not of practical benefit.

The formal feedback that was received was almost unanimously positive. Representatives from Lithuania, Sweden, Poland, Germany, Sweden, Moldova, France and the Council of Europe all vocally supported the involvement of civil society in the Platform. They noted that the Platform is already working towards most of the 16 recommendations that were presented, which shows that we are in broad agreement on the principle issues. However they also made very clear that in order for the CSF to be effective it must make recommendations that are more specific and practical.

The one formal objection to presence of the civil society representatives was from the Belarusian contingent, which argued strongly that civil society cannot bring a ‘notable contribution’ to the practical discussions of the Platform, and should not be involved. Further words of support and specific advice were received from a range of other participants, including representatives from Slovenia, the UK, Committee of the Regions and the European Commission.



The following useful links were provided by **Chrystelle Lucas**, Programme Manager of Regional programmes related to Culture (ENPI East and South) at EuropeAid:

- The service offered by ENPI Info Centre to follow projects and EU news in the ENPI East region: <http://www.enpi-info.eu/join.php> (also in Russian)
- The pre information on the Culture call for proposals: [http://www.enpi-info.eu/maineast.php?id=18580&id\\_type=4&lang\\_id=450](http://www.enpi-info.eu/maineast.php?id=18580&id_type=4&lang_id=450) and [http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/documents/awp/2010/awp\\_2010\\_enpi-e\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/documents/awp/2010/awp_2010_enpi-e_en.pdf)
- A list of call for tenders/ calls for proposals which might interest civil society in general in the EaP region: [http://www.enpi-info.eu/list\\_type\\_east.php?id\\_type=4](http://www.enpi-info.eu/list_type_east.php?id_type=4)
- A quick description of all regional programmes developed for the ENPI East region: <http://www.enpi-info.eu/EUAID07A-0817-Our-Neighbours-LR.EN.pdf> (also in Russian)
- A quick description of regional programmes implemented already in the ENPI South region: <http://www.enpi-info.eu/EN--Our-Neighbours.pdf> (for benchmarking purposes)

### II. Contribution to the National Indicative Programme 2011-2013 for Belarus

The members of the WG4 developed and provided a valuable set of recommendations for the Concept notes of the National Indicative Programme 2011-2013 for Belarus. The concept notes present the approach suggested by the European Commission and outline a number of possible areas of intervention. The contributions were related to two main points: co-operation priorities which should be supported until 2013 through the European Neighbourhood Partnership Instrument (ENPI) and the role of civil society organizations in achieving the cooperation objectives.

### III. Cooperation and communication among the members of the WG4

The WG4 consists of 33 member organizations from EaP and 17 organizations from EU member states. The permanent communication is done via Google group where the members of the group share project ideas and events - all related to the EaP Civil Society Forum. The members also provided their perspective on the selection process of the participants for the next Forum event. The WG4 meeting is foreseen for the September 2010.

Here are some of the ways that WG4 members can contribute to the EaP Platform 4 “Contacts between people”:

- enriching the governmental track of the EaP by providing a civil society perspective, notably through the regular provision of relevant and untapped expertise in the fields of youth, education, culture, research and media
- by disseminating information about the EaP and the EU to the grassroots in both groups of countries.
- by participating in the implementation process of the Work Programme 2009-2011 of the Platform

## Belarusian Civil Society organizations establish their own CSF national platform



*Belarusian civil society organizations within the frames of EaP process initiated holding the **Conference of the National Civil Society Forum “Roadmap of the Eastern Partnership for Belarus”**, which will take place in Minsk on July 5-6, 2010.*

*The Conference initiated by the Organizing Committee which includes 17 Belarusian NGOs is devoted to the discussion of the current and future activity of the Civil Society Forum as one of the principle institutional actors of Eastern Partnership initiative, as well as to further ways of development and strengthening of EaP both in Belarus and at the European level.*

Since April 2009 some organizations and experts in Belarus involved into discussion about EaP perspective expected that raising interest of Belarusian civil society toward this pro-European program will lead to some consolidation effect. Pro-active and coordinated participation of Belarusian organizations in the first Forum in Brussels in November 2009 has proved that it is not just a dream.

At one of the meeting of CSF participants from Belarus and other interested NGO actors of Belarusian civil society, which took place on January 29, 2010 it was decided to further develop the National platform of the EaP Civil Society Forum as an instrument of a permanent public communication and dialog with the aim to raise the effectiveness of activities within the Eastern Partnership

in Belarus. Conference “Roadmap of the Eastern Partnership for Belarus” is another important step in this direction.

One of key Belarusian EaP experts **Andrey Yahorau** (**Centre for European Transformation**) considers the nearest development aim of Civil Society Forum is establishing and practicing mechanisms of including civil society into identifying “agenda” or “road map” of EaP progress. This Conference is supposed to solve a number of tasks, facing the Belarusian civil society in the framework of further development of the Eastern Partnership.

Organizers expect participants to be able to present and discuss analytical and strategic proposals of various Belarusian analytical groups on further development of the Civil Society Forum in 2010-2012 both on the institutional level of the EaP, and in the framework of certain directions of thematic platforms of the Eastern Partnership.

Conference of the National Civil Society Forum should also prepare and recommend for participation in the second Civil Society Forum (Berlin, 18-19 November, 2010) a group of civil society organisations from Belarus, taking into consideration existing framework conditions and selection criteria.

Taking into consideration an utmost importance of the Eastern Partnership initiative for the Belarusian civil society, as well as for the state in general and for the success of regional and the European cooperation and provision of securing of openness and transparency of the public dialog, the organizers invite all interested organizations to present at this conference their assessments of the first year program “Eastern Partnership” realization by the Belarusian civil society organizations.



The pragmatic interest of the Conference is to develop further the idea of “Roadmaps” of the CSF activity on the level of the program in general, as well as in specific thematic directions. Belarusian NGOs see that the Road map for EaP is perspective way of further development of the program not only in Belarus but in general perspective of the whole initiative.

You can find more information about the Conference of CSF in Belarus on [www.eurobelarus.info](http://www.eurobelarus.info)

Ulad Vialichka  
Country facilitator for Belarus

## Azerbaijan National Platform of EaP Civil Society Forum



On June 4<sup>th</sup>, the **Azerbaijan National Committee for European Integration** (ANCEI) and **Azerbaijan National Platform of EaP Civil Society Forum** (CSF) have held a joint press conference.

**Ilgar Hasanli**, the coordinator of ANCEI, started the conference with opening remarks and underlined the importance of efficient delivering of the programs and projects realized by the organization.

**Avaz Hasanov**, the Director of Society for Humanitarian Research and Coordinator of EaP Civil Society Forum (CSF) for Azerbaijan, gave information about the CSF to be held on 17-18 November, 2010 and application procedures.

According to him, "active participation in EaP should become an important activity for civil society representatives. There should be initiatives by civil society to encourage government to take serious steps in Euro-integration processes. Particularly

considering the inclusion of civil society in this program by the European Union as an institution for active participation of Azerbaijan in EaP, the efforts will be intensified in this direction". The second meeting of CSF will be held in Berlin this year. The coordinator called on the Civil Society representatives of Azerbaijan to apply to the forum. In the meantime he stated that according to the selection procedure only 40 % of the 21 forum members selected in 2009 will be renewed and each organization will be able to be selected to the forum only 3 times.

**Vahid Gazi**, current chairman of the ANCEI reported the activities to be carried out in upcoming months at the press conference. Vahid Gazi stated ANCEI will soon hold round tables and conferences on different topics and this will contribute to the increase of the committee's influence in the society. The head of the committee highlighted the conference on transition to euro fuel standards, the accession process of Azerbaijan to World Trade Organization and other interesting events among them and mentioned that "the committee is willing to cooperate with the government and EU in numerous areas."

For the reference, the first meeting of EU EaP CSF was held in Brussels on 16-17 November, 2009. 21 organizations from Azerbaijan were accredited for participation in the forum.

It should be mentioned that the Azerbaijan ANCEI was established in 2006 and its duties are: achieving mobilization of civil society in integration processes of Azerbaijan into EU and active participation of civil society in decision-making, implementation and monitoring concerning European Integration.



## The Armenian National Platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum launched in Yerevan



145 CSOs were registered as members of the **National Platform of CSF EaP**, from which 136 organizations participated in the funding meeting held in Yerevan on June 7<sup>th</sup>, in the Conference hall of Congress Hotel. The funding meeting was sponsored by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation.

**Mr. Boris Navasardian**, the President of the Yerevan Press Club and Armenian Coordinator of the CSF EaP, opened the meeting, congratulated the participants and wished them productive and cooperative work. The participants elected Mr. Navasardian as the Chairman of the funding meeting and then started to discuss the draft of the rules of procedure. After intensive discussions, the draft was adopted with some modifications. Then participants formed 4 working groups of the platform: democracy, human rights good governance and stability; economic integration and convergence with EU policies; environment, climate change and energy security and contacts between people.

Among the invited honorable guests were **H.E. Mr. Raul de Luzenberger**, Head of the European Commission Delegation to Armenia, **H.E. Mr. Charles Lonsdale**, Ambassador of United Kingdom to Armenia, **H.E. Mr. Hans-Jochen Schmidt**, Ambassador of Federative Republic of Germany to Armenia, **H.E. Mr. Crina Prunariu**, Ambassador Romania to Armenia, **H.E. Mr. Giedrius Apuokas**, Ambassador of Lithuania to Armenia, **Mr. Andrej Didenko**, Political Advisor to the EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus, **Ms. Sylvia Zehe**, CoE Se-

cretary General's Special Representative in Armenia, **Mr. Carel Hofstra**, Deputy Head of the OSCE Office in Yerevan, **Matthias Jobelius**, South Caucasus Regional Director, Friedrich Ebert Foundation, **James Macbeth Forbes**, Country Director of German Technical Cooperation and others. Armenian authorities were represented by **Ms. Naira Zohrabyan**, Chairperson of the RA National Assembly Standing Committee on European Integration, representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Economy.

**Ms. Naira Zohrabyan, H.E. Mr. Raul de Luzenberger, H.E. Mr. Hans-Jochen Schmidt, Mr. Matthias Jobelius** greeted the official launch of the Armenian National Platform of CSF EaP.

After the official ceremony, the participants continued their work. They discussed the formation of the Coordinating Council of 21 members. According to the earlier approved rules, **Boris Navasardian**, as the Armenian Coordinator of the CSF EaP, automatically became a member of the Coordination Council. This was followed by the election of remaining 20 members. Participants voted for 50 nominated candidates. At the end of the day the results of the poll were announced and 20 other CC members were announced, 10 of them, as well as **Boris Navasardian**, in November 2009, had represented Armenian civil society in the first CSF, in Brussels.



Yerevan, June 7, 2010

145 CSOs were registered as members of the Armenian National Platform of CSF EaP

## Meeting between the Government of Georgia and CSF Georgian representatives (Tbilisi, March 22, 2010)



The meeting between the Government of Georgia (GoG) officials and Georgian Civil Society Representatives took place on March 22 in the premises of Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies (GFSIS/GEPLAC).

The meeting was organized by EaP SCF WG2 Coordinator in cooperation with Georgia Country Coordinator and State Minister's Office for European Integration of Georgia. Some 40 participants attended the meeting. Among them were State Minister for European Integration of Georgia, two deputy ministers and other officials from Georgian governmental structures. Civil Society was represented by number of NGOs, mainly participants of the EaP Civil Society Forum. The purpose was initiation of the cooperation between civil society and the GoG in the Eastern Partnership work carried out by the GoG Institutions. The idea was reflecting the decisions of the Prague Summit, May, 7, 2009 and the EaP Ministerial Meeting of December 8, 2009.

According to the agenda the representatives of the Georgian governmental institutions delivered short presentations on the subject of their participation in the EaP Multilateral Thematic Platforms and on directions of the work for implementation of the agreed plans and programs. Responsible officials from the Ministries of Justice, Interior, Economic Development, Environ-

ment, Energy, and Culture reported respectively on the Governmental work and future plans of cooperation within all 4 multilateral platforms. The Civil Society representatives asked their questions and come up with their ideas for better cooperation in all mentioned spheres. The meeting has contributed to the establishment of personal closer relations between representatives of the formal and non governmental sectors with the aim to encourage the cooperation in EaP related matters.

WG2 coordinator has prepared draft recommendations for the future cooperation of CS and the GoG in the mentioned field. The main ideas of the recommendations concern following issues:

- Civil Society organizations in Georgia to organize their smaller forums by thematic platforms and contribute to the generation of ideas for the country position and work plan in the mentioned areas;
- CS to establish a monitoring group that is responsible for developing a report on EaP implementation in Georgia;
- to establish such a system of relations between CSF and the GoG structures that CSF representatives meet the GoG respective structures before and after multilateral meetings within Platforms, Panels or other relevant formats;
- the Government is advised to develop a general (integrated) plan of actions in response to the Thematic Platform Work Programme 2009-2011.

It was agreed to follow up the cooperation between CSF Georgian organizations and GoG agencies in closer way by developing direct contacts between specialized NGOs and concrete governmental agencies.





## **European Economic and Social Committee**

### **Support of the European Economic and Social Committee to the Eastern Partnership civil society**

The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) as the consultative body representing the European civil society was instrumental in the promotion of the role of the civil society of the partner countries in the project of the Eastern Partnership since its beginning. It was invited by the European Commission and the EU member states to play an active role in the establishment of the EaP Civil Society Forum and participated in its organization and its work. The EESC is represented by one member in the CSF steering committee.

The EESC became the permanent member of the EaP thematic platforms for democracy, good governance and rule of law, economic integration and legal convergence and human contacts. The EESC representatives were actively intervening in the platforms meetings in favour of the participation of the EaP civil society and of the CSF working groups in the activities

of the thematic platforms including the expert panels that were established by them (human rights, trade panel, environmental protection etc.).

The EESC promoted the CSF also in its own activities. The joint seminar organized between the EESC and the National Tripartite Economic and Social Council of Ukraine on 25 and 26 March in Kyiv was an opportunity not only to promote the Eastern Partnership project but also to call for the more active involvement of the Ukraine civil society organizations representing the social partners and NGOs in the work of the CSF.

The EESC representatives participated in several events dedicated to the EaP such as the meeting organized by Czech Business Representation about the EaP and CSF in Brussels in March, the meeting about the EaP with the Commissioner Füle in Prague in April.

The Eastern Neighbours Contact Group of the EESC dedicated its meeting in May to the issues of the CSF and further cooperation between the EESC and civil society of the partner countries.

The EESC will continue to provide its support to the EaP civil society organizations and the CSF and would like to see more coordination and cooperation between them in future.

Ivan Voles

*Member of the Steering Committee  
Chairman of the Eastern Neighbours  
Contact Group of the EESC*





## Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum

### Visibility of the Civil Society Forum and Public Relations Activity

As the task of the Civil Society Forum was to raise the attention of main stakeholders on the Eastern Partnership and the recommendations raised during the November meeting, the lobbying group - in joined cooperation with all the Steering Committee members – approached different European leaders.

- Letters and disseminations to most of the European Foreign Affairs Ministers to support the Civil Society Forum work and the participation of our representatives in the Official Platforms.
- A lobbying activity was implemented with the Germany authorities, which agreed to host the next Civil Society Forum in Berlin in November 2010.
- The CSF received the official replies from Finland, France, Switzerland, Lithuania and Estonia. Aside meeting were held with the UK, Czeck Republic and Slovak Republic, Poland and Italy.



In consequence to these letters, the CSF representatives were invited to attend the Official platforms of the Eastern Partnership. The SC approached the Plattform coordinators and got their support. For the moment, the participation is only ad hoc on certain issues and not istituzionalised.

Thematic Platform 1: 29 April

Thematic Platform 2: 7 May

Thematic Platform 3: 20 May

Thematic Platform 4: 27 May

- The High Representative M. Ashton was invited to participate in the Berlin event in 2010 but replied she would not be able to attend. The event will be attended by the Commissioner Füle.
- The Council of Europe was officially approached to support our Civil Society Forum and recommendations since the CoE sits officially in the Plattform 1 and 4.
- An official exchange of letters with the European Social and Economic Committee of the European Union took place for a better representation of their organisations in the CSF.
- Other relevant meetings took place and gave visibility to our work:
  - ▶ Meeting with Euronest
  - ▶ January 2010, presentation of the work of the CSF at Spanish presidency Event in Madrid
  - ▶ March 2010, Round table organized by CEBRE (Czech Business Rep.)
  - ▶ Seminar on EU-Ukraine and Civil Society, Kiev, EESC event
  - ▶ Meeting with the Conference of the Non Governmental organisations, promotion of the EaP CSF, March 2010
  - ▶ European integration and EU institutions, Vilnius, March 2010
  - ▶ Meeting with Commissioner Füle, Czeck business representation in the EU, March 2010

# Members of the Steering Committee of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum elected during the meeting on 16-17 November 2009

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Brussels, January 22, 2010

Members of the Steering Committee of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum