



**10<sup>th</sup> Annual Assembly  
of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum (EaP CSF)**

***Leading the Way Towards a Democratic European Future***

**10-12 December 2018**

*Tbilisi, Georgia*

*Radisson Blu Iveria Hotel, 1 Rose Revolution Square*

*Parliament of Georgia, 8 Shota Rustaveli Avenue (11 December, first half of the day)*

Five Eastern Partnership countries - Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia and Ukraine - and some European Union member states, are celebrating the 100th anniversary of their independence this year. Today it is still necessary to fight for the democratic aspirations of 1918. Curbs on political freedoms, disregard of the rule of law and freedom of speech and a repressive environment for civil society organisations continue to thwart sustainable democratic development in these countries. The symbolism of the 100th anniversary of national independence for five EaP countries prompts self-reflection and a re-evaluation of the future for both the Eastern Partnership and the European Union. This historical date is a litmus test for the systemic struggle in the Eastern Partnership countries which are locked between democracy and authoritarian regimes. At the same time, one year before the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the initiative and the halfway stage towards the milestone of 2020 with its 20 deliverables, the time is ripe for the European Union to take a serious look at its policies towards the region. The principles underpinning the Eastern Partnership remain as relevant as ever, but today's geopolitical challenges require more ambitious approaches and greater engagement of citizens in securing the democratic rights and freedoms supported and promoted by the European Union.

Leading the way to achieving the democratic values and standards embodied by the European Union and its member states, civil society organisations continue to apply pressure to secure stable progress in political, economic and social reforms in the EaP countries. The "Velvet Revolution" in Armenia has opened the doors to hope that the ongoing reform process will not only lead to a better future for the Armenians but also could provide a model of peaceful change and reform for other countries of the Eastern Partnership. The Armenian case raises new questions as whether this is a one-off development or it can lead to change in other Eastern Partnership countries or, indeed, whether things will go back to business as usual, also in Armenia. Will what is happening in Armenia change the way we - the civil society - and our partners look at and work within the Eastern Partnership region?

Also we are entering a phase in the Eastern Partnership where populism and the threat of authoritarianism is rising in the European Union member states and the model of reform originally proposed by the European Union is no longer supported by all of the member states and not by everyone living in the member states. The elections to the European Parliament in May 2019 could witness a strengthening of populist forces, representing a stiff challenge to the European Union orthodoxy embodied in the

protection and promotion of human rights, the rule of law and democracy as embedded in the aspirations of the Eastern Partnership initiative.

Recent events in the EaP have thrown a new light on the 2020 deliverables programme with its focus on concrete changes in the way partner countries are governed in areas such as the rule of law and public administration reform. This year's Assembly will consider how the programme can be enhanced to tackle the heightened challenges of state capture, the security challenge in a region replete with simmering conflicts and the challenge of disinformation. Civil society in the Eastern Partnership countries needs to form a strong relationship with the European Union, its member states and other international actors that address these immense challenges and also to address cross-cutting themes such as gender issues, pluralism in the media and civil society involvement in transparent political decision-making.

The Annual Assembly will focus on how to proactively address the evolving political situation in the Eastern Partnership countries and in the EU. Civil society in the region, working with partners in the EU, will elaborate on how we can contribute to furthering sustainable democratic development, how we can maintain the EU's commitment to the Eastern Partnership, and how civil society can engage with citizens as a whole to counter the authoritarian backlash evident in parts of the European continent.

### Day 1

#### 10 December, Monday

11:00-18:00 Arrivals and registration of participants

17:30-21:00 **Kick-off session for all the participants**

*The goal of the session is to set the tone for the by providing the context of the challenging environment in which the civil society of the EaP and, to the growing extent, of the EU is functioning. The session will start with the inspirational speech of Haykuhi Harutyunyan, EaP CSF SC member, having the first-hand experience with the Velvet revolution in Armenia and the civil-society-driven initiatives having had a positive societal impact. The session will proceed in a world café format with participants getting to know each other, the EaP CSF, and what will be happening at the Annual Assembly. The selected activities of the EaP CSF will be presented.*

21:00-22:00 **Welcome reception** opened by David Zalkaliani, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia (TBC) and Carl Hartzell, the Head of the EU Delegation in Georgia

*Opening of the photo exhibition celebrating 100th anniversary of the independence of five EaP countries*



Day 2

11 December, Tuesday

Parliament of Georgia, 8 Shota Rustaveli Avenue (11 December, first half of the day)

- 8:30-9:00 Registration of locally-based attendees
- 9:00-9:10 Introductory word by Co-Chairs of the Steering Committee – #10yearstogether campaign
- 9:10-9:40 **Opening speeches**
- Speakers:  
Johannes Hahn, European Commissioner for Enlargement Negotiations and Neighbourhood Policy (TBC)  
Irakli Kobakhidze, Speaker of the Parliament of Georgia (TBC)  
Thomas Buchsbaum, Special Envoy for Eastern Partnership, Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs of Austria
- 09:40-11:00 **Panel focusing on combatting corruption and violations of human rights in the EU and EaP countries**
- Speakers:  
Bill Browder, financier, economist and human rights defender via a video address  
Gerald Knaus, Founding Chairman of the European Stability Initiative (ESI), Austria (TBC)  
Matthew Caruana Galizia, reporter, son of the killed investigative Maltese journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia
- 11:00-11:20 **Presentation of the EaP CSF Pavel Sheremet Journalism and Civil Society Activists' Awards**
- For the third time Pavel Sheremet Award will be granted this year during the Annual Assembly of the EaP CSF in order to recognize courage in journalism and outstanding achievement in the cause of media freedom in the Eastern Partnership region. The award will be presented by:*
- Matthew Caruana Galizia, reporter, son of the killed investigative Maltese journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia and Boris Navasardian, EaP CSF SC member
- Civil society organizations in the Eastern Partnership countries, being key drivers of reform and vocal defenders of democratic values, face numerous difficulties and an unfavourable working environment when delivering on their agenda. The outstanding and often courageous work of individuals and organisations from the Eastern Partnership region contributing to the political, economic and social development of their countries and defending the core democratic values will be recognised by the EaP CSF Civil Society Award 2018. The award will be presented by:*
- Ziya Guliyev and Nikolai Kvantaliani, EaP CSF SC members



11:20-12:50 **High-level panel – Time of change in the EaP: are we coping?**

*The year 2018 has brought about many new developments in the EaP region meanwhile the EU EaP policy has been subject to evaluation and re-launch. The “Velvet Revolution” in Armenia opened avenues to the implementation of effective reforms that will put the country firmly on the path to democracy with an impact on the wider region. Georgia and Ukraine remain on reform path; the effectiveness of this process will be tested namely in the upcoming elections in Ukraine. Moldova has been backsliding in the rule of law area with serious consequences for the country’s prospect and human capital. In Azerbaijan and Belarus, the situation remains more or less unchanged.*

*Are we – civil society, EU and EaP stakeholders coping with the change? How effective has been the reform of the EaP architecture? What fresh ideas are on the table for the upgraded formats of cooperation and what can be offered as a new carrot to the best performing countries in the region? The session will include reference to EaP Index results, to raise awareness among the audience and speakers about this EaP CSF product.*

Speakers:

Iurie Leanca, Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Moldova for European Integration (TBC)

Zohrab Mnatsakanyan, Foreign Minister, Armenia (TBC)

Oleg Kravchenko, Deputy Foreign Minister, Belarus (TBC)

Ivanna Klympush-Tsintsadze, Deputy Prime Minister of Ukraine for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration (TBC)

Darius Skusevicius, Deputy Foreign Minister, Lithuania (TBC)

Adriana Stanescu, Director General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Romania (TBC)

Lawrence Meredith, DG NEAR, European Commission (TBC)

Lasha Tughushi, EaP CSF SC member

Moderator: Jeff Lovitt, Chair, New Diplomacy, Czech Republic

12:50-13:00 Order of the day

13:00-14:00 Lunch

14:00-16:00 **Parallel Working Group meetings**

WG1 “Democracy, Human Rights, Good Governance and Stability” meeting

WG2 “Economic Integration and Convergence with EU Policies” and WG5 “Social and Labour Policies and Social Dialogue” meeting

WG3 “Environment, climate change and energy security” meeting

WG4 “Contacts between People” meeting

*The session will start with a presentation on the modalities of operation of WGs. The session will include a structured-networking part meant to make sure that delegates get to know each other well and lay grounds for good cooperation all throughout the cycle. During the first part of the meeting, the member will exchange with the stakeholders coordinating the activities of the EaP Platforms and panels.*



16:00-16:30 Coffee break

16:30-18:00 **Continuation of parallel WG meetings**

18:00-19:00 **Reflexion on the centenary of independence of the EaP countries**

*The session will remind of the establishment of governments in 1918 in five out of six current EaP countries and of the aspirations of those governments and what legacies they have handed down to the independent countries of the EaP now.*

Speakers:

Natia Kuprashvili, Chair of Georgian National Platform, presents a short movie (3 minutes) about the centenary of three republics, which declared their independence in 1918

Beka Kobakhidze, Georgian Studies Fellow at Oxford School of Global and Area Studies

Moderator: Leyla Aliyeva, Internationales Forschungszentrum Kulturwissenschaften (IFK) Fellow, Vienna Institute

19:00-20:30 Networking reception

20:30-22:00 **Discussion with Nikol Pashinyan, Prime Minister of Armenia (TBC)**

20:30-22:00 **Parallel night owl sessions**

### Day 3

#### 12 December, Wednesday

9:00-10:45 **Plenary session:** discussion of the EaP CSF adopted reform and discussion followed by the voting on the new EaP CSF Code of Conduct, and election of the arbitration body.

*Delegates attending the AA2018 are the first ones participating in the reformed Forum. The session will be therefore used to present the main points of the reform and how it influences the work of the Forum. The reform envisages adoption of a Code of Conduct, which will be presented and voted on during this session. Lastly, under the reformed Forum a new structure will become an integral part of the Forum. The session will be used to elect members of this new structure.*

*Presentation of the EaP CSF awards for the best re-granting projects, implemented in 2018. Voting for the best projects.*

10:45-11:00 **Presentation of the centenary resolution by SC Co-Chair Krzysztof Bobinski**

11:00-11:15 Coffee break



11:15-12:30 **Panel discussion focusing on new approaches to the EaP countries to keep the reforms on track, with a special focus on good governance and anti-corruption**

*The panel will look at the spill-over potential of the recent developments in the EaP region. The problems in the area of rule of law and corruption are persistent in most of the EaP countries. After Ukraine and Georgia, civic activism has led to significant change in Armenia. How can we support citizens in holding their governments accountable and demanding a real change of policy practice? What new approaches can be designed to prevent backsliding? How can the whole region benefit from the lessons learned in Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine?*

Speakers:

Radek Darski, Eastern Partnership Division, EEAS

Gabriella Cseh, Head of Public Policy for Central and Eastern Europe, Facebook (TBC)

Moderator: Ketevan Khutsishvili, Open Society Foundation Georgia

12:30-13:00 **Closing remarks**

Speakers:

Alexander Stubb, Former Prime Minister of Finland (TBC)

13:00-14:00 Farewell lunch