

POSITION PAPER

Prepared for: Panel on Education, Youth and Culture, 5 July 2018

Youth Employability and Entrepreneurship

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The members welcomed such programmes as the EU-Eastern Partnership Culture and Creativity Programme since they strengthen and expand contacts between people, mutual learning and the exchange of knowledge and experience within the Eastern Partnership.

- They recommended that the EU should support the development of youth entrepreneurship through existing programs and support tools, including the following measures:
 - Prolonging the EU-Eastern Partnership Culture and Creativity Programme while introducing the focus on entrepreneurship for business development in the field of creative economy;
 - Creating similar mechanisms focused on the development of entrepreneurship in the framework of other support programs, for instance through creating Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs analogue specifically for the Eastern Partnership countries or introducing country/regional quotas.
 - Simplifying the procedures for assistance under the existing programs (especially assistance with finding partners, reducing the share of organisations' own contribution).
 - Raising awareness of the local civil society about such programs and the results of their work, carrying out continuous assessment of the effectiveness of their work.
- The EU should support programmes on education and support in the field of youth entrepreneurship (technical and financial support, exchange of experience), including the creation of conditions for the development of national and international projects with the participation of and between the Eastern Partnership countries in this field. Programmes on digital skills and media literacy should be developed and promoted.
- The EU should emphasise the importance of recognising the results of non-formal education within the system of higher and professional education in the EHEA countries. The EU Member States should insist on the inclusion of civil society in the implementation of the Belarus Strategic Plan and the abolition of the practice of compulsory work placement as a condition for recognising the results of the Strategic Plan implementation.

Culture

Prepared by: EaP CSF Working Group 4 members Tatiana Poshevalova (Center for Social Innovations) and Zaur Akbarov (Youth Club Public Union)

- In the Work Programme of the Platform 4 and the Panel on Education, Culture and Youth there is very little room for culture related issues, and the targets and priorities are formulated in a very general way. Culture and creativity issues should not be addressed only within the youth topic. Culture and in particular cultural heritage sector are very diverse and promising for the development of the dialogue between different sectors, good governance, interdisciplinary cooperation and the inclusion of innovations. In this sense, it goes far beyond the framework of youth policy. The members welcome the idea of expert meetings on creative hubs and cultural heritage, as well as music industry, and would like to be informed about their dates and agendas (goals) in time to prepare coordinated policy proposals from the EaP countries.
- In order to better apply crosscutting issues (for instance, the human rights based approach) to the culture field, the members propose to use the civil society's alternative monitoring of the Convention for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005) in the EaP countries.

Context

In 2018 and 2019, the work of the Platform 4 and Panel on Education, Culture and Youth will focus on youth policy. Culture is mentioned in two measures:

- Strengthening youth civic engagement and intercultural dialogue, including in the area of cultural heritage on the occasion of the European Year of Cultural Heritage
- Promoting the development of cultural and creative sectors

To achieve the above, the following activities are planned:

2018: - 2 expert meetings on creative hubs and cultural heritage;

2019: - 2 expert meetings on support for music industry; - Events and workshops on culture and creative sectors, quality of apprenticeships and work based learning education, Make-it-Match Network delivering active support to youth (organised by partners, EAC, EMPL, ETF).

The new European Agenda for Culture

- Civil society should have an opportunity to influence the framework and content of cooperation between the EU and the EaP region, as well as the priorities and tools of the third stage of the EU-EaP Culture and Creativity programme, or any other programmes that are foreseen in this field.
- It is proposed to organise the Eastern Partnership Culture Forum as a flagship project and a tool to prepare the EaP countries' key cultural actors and civil society to participate in initiatives on cooperation between the EU Member States and the EaP countries, and to influence the framework of such cooperation. The Forum would reflect on the role of culture in addressing the main regional challenges, in fostering innovation, entrepreneurship, as well as in building social cohesion and new identities.

- There is a need to assist the EaP cultural actors in joining or communicating with the European cooperation platforms in cinema, media, cultural heritage, and other cultural and creative industries, including those established under the previous Culture and Creativity programme. The EaP CSF and its Working Group 4 should be consulted on its third edition at an early stage. The members suggested to preserve the participation of the EaP CSF in the Steering Committee of the Culture and Creativity programme in the future.
- To fully prepare cultural actors in the region to participate in the Creative Europe programmes and other major international programmes, it is necessary to provide and maintain small and medium size grants programmes in the culture field for the EaP region.
- The possibility for the development of the East-South cooperation (between the Eastern and Southern Neighbourhood and the Western Balkans) should be considered.

Peace Building and Contacts between Seniors

Prepared by: EaP CSF Working Group 4 members Nato Bachashvili (International Centre for Geopolitical Studies), Dilara Afandiyeva (The Association for the Protection of Women's Rights after D.Aliyeva), Pavel Havlicek (Association for International Affairs), Almaz Hasanova (Caucasus Media Investigations Center), Yaroslav Minkin (Youth organization STAN), Andrei Gaiu (Association Youth for the right to live), Antonina Volkova (Regional public union Vesta), Iulia Kharashvili (IDP Women Association Consent)

The members suggested some practical measures relevant to situations in all the EaP countries and believe that since peacebuilding is a cross-cutting issue, it should be necessarily present under the 2020 Deliverables and within the EaP CSF Working Group 4. The members agreed that in all six EaP countries conflict affected population still exists with some of the protracted conflicts progressing in a slow but negative way. A large number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) require urgent increase of support from the civil society.

The members insisted that peacebuilding is an inherent part of contacts between people. People to people diplomacy is highly important and constitutes an integral part of conflict resolution. The group also pointed out that conflict resolution activities supported by WG1 deal mostly with security issues and the geopolitical dimension, whereas WG4 is mostly focused on the civil society dimension.

The civil society identified the following actions and opportunities for the Working Group:

1. Conduct a research on the effects of protracted displacements on the development of the EaP countries: they suggest to conduct a study on internal migration (IDPs, refugees, asylum seekers) and response to these challenges in the EaP region, to identify implicit regional problems and how they affect the development and democratisation processes in the region. Such a study would help with organising a more targeted assistance, preventing migration from these countries and identifying common challenges between long-term protracted internal displacement and refugee crises in Europe. Within research activities on mobility and migration, it is necessary to develop a set of new indicators on prevention and early warning of reviving conflicts that would further help to prevent new flows of refugees and displaced persons. The EaP CSF members should use programmes on mobility of seniors, women and youth to improve communication between the populations in the protracted conflict zones in the region and to promote the EaP messages.

2. Provide messages in the following fields that could indirectly fall within the Research and Innovation Panel:
 - Identifying the common perceptions of local populations across the divides towards the same non-conflict related topics (music, family relations, tourism, etc.);
 - Identifying neutral topics for cooperation within divided societies (e.g. creation of a single database of Georgian and Abkhazian de facto MIAs (Missing in Action) persons under Stalin's regime).
3. CSOs should provide trainings on improving skills for effective dialogue and mediation (for instance - youth dialogue, intercultural dialogue, exchange of best practices and lessons learnt with the participation of non-state actors, dialogues between mothers of missing persons, etc.), promote peace education, including the education of women and youth in line with the agenda on Women/Youth, Peace and Security (resolutions 1325, 2242, 2250); should conduct advocacy on gender sensitive and conflict sensitive approaches with the regional institutions and organisations (EU, Council of Europe, OSCE).
4. Identify opportunities and existing links between different social and age groups, including through:
 - Revival of "past relations" among seniors (schoolmates, co-workers, neighbours);
 - Restoration of documents for social security purposes (pension, social benefits);
 - Involving youth living and studying abroad into intercultural dialogues and dissemination of peacebuilding messages.

The Action Plan for the rest of 2018 includes commitments by the members on advocacy actions aimed at bringing the WG messages across the region and to international/regional organisations:

- Regional advocacy event on the UN SC Resolution 1325 for organisations from the EaP region (Georgia, September 2018);
- Project "Gender Mainstreaming and Women's Involvement" will help to identify common neutral topics which could be used for peacebuilding activities (Moldova, August-September 2018);
- Survey on the existing resources for different groups (seniors, youth, women) in Azerbaijan;
- Online webinars on the topic "Conflict Affected Population: Best Practices and Challenges for Peacebuilding" (all EaP countries);
- Online conference on peacebuilding practices and innovative initiatives (November).

More Information

The Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum (EaP CSF, www.eap-csf.eu) is a unique multi-layered regional civil society platform aimed at promoting European integration, facilitating reforms and democratic transformations in the six Eastern Partnership countries - Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. Serving as the civil society and people-to-people dimension of the Eastern Partnership, the EaP CSF strives to strengthen civil society in the region, boost pluralism in public discourse and policy making by promoting participatory democracy and fundamental freedoms.