



Annual Activities Report 2018

GEORGIA NATIONAL PLATFORM REPORT

In 2010, the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum Georgian National Platform (GNP) was established in the framework of the European Union-initiated program which currently unites 185 leading NGOs. Strategic objectives of the EaP CSF GNP are to monitor and advocate for the implementation of Georgia's AA obligations on national and EU levels through supporting dialogue between public authorities and private sector and civil society; to communicate the importance of Georgia's European Integration efforts to the wider public and to ensure the EaP NP's effective functioning for the achievement of its mission and objectives.

The main aspects of GNP functioning are related to the promotion and realization of the Eastern Partnership goals. The establishment of the Georgian National Platform has contributed to the institutionalization of structural dialogue and civil society becoming an important instrument of the dialogue with the government. With the aim of supporting the EU integration process, the Georgian National Platform was actively involved in ongoing processes in the country in 2018.

Within the reporting period (January-November 2018) Working Groups (WGs) and subgroups conducted 20 meetings and the Coordination Council gathered 8 times with participation of the EaP CSF Co-chair and National Facilitator for Georgia. The WG meetings were attended mostly by GNP member CSOs, regional representatives, also their online involvement in the GNP activities was generally very high.

The EU-Georgia Civil Society Platform (CSP) held four meetings in 2018. The Platform is one of the bodies set up within the framework of the Association Agreement between the European Union and Georgia. All events were attended by the representatives of governmental authorities, leading officials and policy-makers.

ACTIVITIES OF THE PLATFORM IN 2018

Cooperation between the Committee on European Integration and the Georgian National Platform in the law-making

On 19 February 2018 the meeting of GNP coordination council with the Chair of the European Integration Committee took place at the Parliament of Georgia. The aim of the meeting was to deepen cooperation, develop common vision and define future plans. The Chair of the Platform noted, that members of the GNP and the Coordination Council are satisfied by existing cooperation between the Platform and the Committee and in the future, for efficiency purposes, proposed to use statistics about the recommendations that are put forward by the Platform members with regards to legislative changes and are taken into consideration by the Committee. During the meeting, Ms. Khulordava focused on Platform member recommendations on legislative changes. "Your ideas, recommendations help us greatly in preparing our findings, I am therefore happy this institute of cooperation is in place" – said Tamar Khulordava.

In March, the European Integration Committee conducted a meeting where it presented its annual report and action plan. The members of the Georgian National Platform had an opportunity to participate in this meeting. A number of important recommendations and comments of GNP were accepted and included in the Action Plan for 2017-2020 of the EU Integration Committee. ***Information on the cooperation between the Committee on European Integration and the Georgian National Platform carried out in the law-making process from January 2017 through April 25, 2018 can be found in Annex 1.***

On July 23, the Working Group of the Georgian Parliament Legal Affairs Committee discussed the legislative amendments put forward by Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum Georgian National Platform (EaP CSF GNP). This came a month after EaP CSF GNP called the Parliament of Georgia to reform the Office of Prosecutor General. The original proposal was drafted jointly by several organisations, in the interest of making the Prosecutor General Election procedure more democratic. Many in the EaP CSF GNP believe that a serious reform of the Office is needed to democratise the institution, restore public trust and make it fit for its duties. The Draft Law also foresees changes to the Prosecution Council and election of its members. It seeks to depoliticise the Council and end any future pressures from the government, or indeed any one party on their selection. In light of growing opposition, these changes are fundamental and should be implemented before the election of the next Prosecutor General. Apart from the Legal Affairs Committee and EaP CSF GNP, the discussions were attended by Giorgi Gogadze, Deputy Chief Prosecutor, Zviad Koridze, Pardon Commission Chairperson, as well as the members of Scientific Advisory Council and invited experts.



The EaP CSF GNP also met with Andrejs Mamikins MEP (LV-S&D), European Parliament Foreign Affairs Committee Rapporteur to discuss the implementation of European Union Association Agreement (EUAA) by Georgia, as well as judiciary and human rights reforms, among other topics.

National Action Plan 2018

At the end of the 2014 Government of Georgia has launched consultations with the civil society on the Association Agreement National Action Plan that is running on a continuous basis. On 5th of March, 2018 Georgian National Platform member organizations received the draft document of the National Action Plan for further comments and recommendations. In total 7 member organizations provided their recommendations, which were presented to the GoG. The recommendations can be found in Annex 2.

For discussing proposed comments and recommendations two sectoral meetings have been organized at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia and Government Administration with GNP members. The above mentioned experience makes Georgia unique among the AA implementation countries. Such consultations and meetings are a great instrument for bringing CSOs opinions and ideas to the governmental level.

Consultative meeting in Presidential Administration

On 16 August, the presidential administration held a consultative meeting with the Coordination Council members of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum and representatives of the Georgian National Platform for the selection of the Chairperson of the Supreme Court.



During the fifth meeting, the attendees discussed the ongoing processes in the country, existing challenges and discussed the criteria according to which the President of Georgia will nominate a candidate for the Chairperson of the Supreme Court and exchanged views on the selection procedures. It is noteworthy that no specific candidates were discussed during the consultation meeting and overwhelming majority agreed the most important selection criteria should be professionalism and public trust, and that the nominee should be highly professional and have concrete views on matters concerning the judiciary system.



Statements and open letters of the Georgian National Platform

The Georgian National Platform is active in the media and delivering civil society opinions to the public. In 2018 the Platform developed 4 statements and 2 appeals:

- Statement by the member organizations of the Georgian National Platform on the case of Archil Tatumashvili.
- Appeal of Georgian National Platform on the preparations of “the Map on Social-Economic Conflicts” by “Russian Ecological Society”.
- Statement of member organizations of the National Platform of Georgia on Tragedy in Mindeli mineshaft.
- Statement of Elections Sungroup on the implementation of amendments to the election legislation.
- Appeal of the Member Organizations of the Georgian National Platform to the Parliament of Georgia.
- Statement of Members of the National Platform of Georgia on Authorization of International Black Sea University.

All the Statements were disseminated through mailing list reaching more than 100 people at the local as well international level including EU institutions. Besides, they were communicated to Media. It is important to mention that all statements and appeals issued by GNP are posted on the webpage of leading partner news agency “InterPressNews” <http://www.interpressnews.ge/en/>

MEETINGS AND EVENTS IN 2018

Annual General Meeting of Georgia National Platform

On March 6, 2018 the 9th Annual General Meeting of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum Georgian National Platform took place at the Exhibition Centre “Expo Georgia”. The Meeting was attended by 105 representatives from 78 CSOs, members of the NP, and other invited guests.



Tamar Khulordava, the Chair of the European Integration Committee at the Parliament of Georgia, Vakhtang Makharoblishvili, Deputy Foreign Minister, and Carlo Natale, Deputy Head of EU Delegation to Georgia also welcomed the attendees. Ms.Khulordava focused on the Platform’s work on recommendations on legislative amendments and noted that last year nine recommendations were submitted by the GNP member organizations and most of them have been fully or partially taken into consideration.

At the meeting, the Platform Chair and the WG coordinators were elected. Ms. Natia Kuprashvili, the Chair of the Journalism Resource Center (JRC) was unanimously elected as the Chairwoman of the Platform. The meeting approved new amendments to the Georgian

National Platform’s Statute, which determined the GNP’s and EU-Georgia Civil Society

Platform's goals, functions and scope of activities.

3rd Meeting of the EU-Georgia Civil Society Platform

On March 22, 2018 Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies hosted the 3rd Meeting of the EU–Georgia Civil Society Platform.

The EU-Georgia Civil Society Platform was established under the Article 412 of the Georgia-EU Association Agreement. Its aim is to monitor the AA, issue recommendations and pass them over to the Georgia-EU Association Council, other relevant institutions of the governments and parliaments of European Union and Georgia.

The Third meeting of the Platform was opened by the Co-chairs of the EU-Georgia Civil Society Platform: Kakha Gogolashvili, Director of the EU Studies Center at Rondeli Foundation and Andrzej Adamczyk, Member of the European Social and Economic Committee. H.E. Mikheil Janelidze, Vice PM, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia and H.E. Janos Herman, Ambassador of the European Union to Georgia assessed the state of play in the implementation of the EU – Georgia Association Agreement. The meeting was attended by the representatives of the member organizations of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum Georgian National Platform, who also are the members of the Civil Society Platform (CSP). The participants discussed the issues related to the implementation of the Agreement, presented the reports on the current developments of SME and Food safety in Georgia. The attendees adopted a joint declaration, which assesses AA implementation process and the respective recommendations.

Europe Day 2018

The Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum Georgian National Platform participated in the event to celebrate the Europe Day held on May 5, 2018 in Rike Park. It was represented by the Coordination Council members who talked with journalists (Journalism Resource Center) about the importance of the Europe Day, activities implemented by the Georgian National Platform and



the issues related to EU integration process. The GNP has prepared and presented various types of publications prepared by the Coalition member organizations, including developed studies, informational materials, brochures, flyers, etc.

The Delivery of the messages was carried out through dissemination of communication products such as leaflets, banners, stickers, balloons and other promotional items. GNP managed to distribute publications (ENG, GEO) produced by the Platform, namely Monitoring Papers elaborated by the experts of GNP member organizations. (http://eap-csf.ge/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=593&Itemid=1472&lang=en-GB)

The presence of the EU visual identity elements such as the EU flag and disclaimer ensured at

any publication in full compliance with the requirements stipulated in the Communication and Visibility Manual for European Union external actions. All information about the event was



supported by photos and video uploaded on the web-site of Georgian National Platform www.eap-csf.ge and via social media.

As part of Europe Week, the GNP produced an informational video

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P--bztL7zJU&fbclid=IwAR1WjEYt_VkJGek0WPny6RHArQXWPwcGckcn-V_I9VDdRvTiBXLp0J0bYoI

Georgian conference: “Georgia’s European way”

On 13-14 June, Coordination Council of EaP CSF Georgian National Platform participated in the 15th International Conference “Georgia’s European Way – Ensuring Regional Stability”.

Other Events:

On August 8, 2018 at the Gori Occupation Museum, **the 10th anniversary of the Russian-Georgian war** was held to show the 2008 war on the exhibition and video footage. The meeting was organized by the Regional Representation of the Georgian National Platform (Gori), the Bridge of Friendship and the International Center for Geopolitical Studies. The event was attended by the National Coordinator of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum, Lasha Tugushi, President of Tea Producers Association, Tengiz Svanidze, Coordinator of the Fourth Working Group "People Contacts", Nukri Kvelashvili and GNP member organizations.

On July 13, the members of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum National Platform of Georgia discussed **assessment and selection mechanisms in the International Center for Education** at the initiative of the Chairwoman of the GNP and Education&Science Subgroup (operating in WG4). The purpose of the meeting was to ensure the involvement of civil society in the implementation of the Center's activities, transparency in education, access to services, citizens engagement and open governance. Natia Kuprashvili, Chairman of the Georgian National Platform spoke about the importance of the programs offered by the International Center for Education, Youth and Appropriate Knowledge Abroad in Their Own Country. The meeting was attended by the following representatives: Stipendium Hungaricum (HU), Fulbright Scholarship (US), Timothy Barrett, Contestants' Rights Defender, Graduates of the Center, members of the Selection Committee and representatives of the Diplomatic Corps accredited in Georgia, EU Representative in Georgia, Institut Français de Géorgie (FR) Media representatives.

REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

Memorandum of cooperation and meetings in the regions

In order to advance cooperation among the local authorities and member organizations of the coalition, GNP regional representations concluded memorandums of cooperation with local self-governments in three regions of Georgia (Shida Kartli, Imereti and Samegrelo). Chairwoman of GNP, National Facilitator for Georgia and Coordination Council members were actively involved in the preparation process and contributed to effective implementation of the activity.

Within the implementation period of the EU-supported project "Enhancing the Role of Georgian National Platform on the EU Integration Path" 10 information meetings have been conducted by four regional representations of Georgian National Platform. The meetings were attended by

more than 187 people.

Regular regional meetings were held to inform attendees about the EaP CSF Georgian National Platform, its aims and activities as well as well as informing them about EU – Georgia Association Agreement and the visa liberalisation process. Participants could then express their interest in joining the GNP. Other topics discussed at regional meetings included the issue of EU Youth Programs, domestic violence and internally displaced persons (IDPs); the role of the local government and the importance of civic participation; regional media activities and etc.

Creation of Subgroups addressing the 2020 Deliverables

In 2018 the GNP established subgroups for achieving thematic priorities for the 2018-2020 period, as well as attracted members with specific expertise covering 20 Deliverables for 2020 and input for the platforms and panels within the revised EaP architecture.

In March 2018, a working subgroup on “rule of law, anti-corruption and judicial reforms” was created in the Georgian National Platform on the basis of the first working group, so that the GNP’s member organizations could implement appropriate activities according to the Eastern Partnership – 20 Deliverables for 2020. “Georgian Young Lawyers Association” manages the working process of the subgroup.

TRAINING FOR GNP MEMBERS ORGANIZATIONS

The two-day training on "Elaboration of Monitoring Documents" and "Legal Screening of Draft Laws" was held in Tbilisi on 7 and 8 November in the framework of the EU supported project. The training was attended by 31 representatives of the Platform member organizations.



ESTABLISHMENT OF GNP MEDIA CENTRE

Media Center of Georgian National Platform opened at the premises of the Information Centre on NATO and EU, there will be an opportunity to conduct press conferences approximately twice a month.



Annex 1

1. On February 8 2018 the Committee on European Integration received comments made by the Coalition for Equality on the Amendments to the Organic Law of Georgia Labor Code of Georgia, Amendments to the Law of Georgia on Public Service, Amendments to the Law of

Georgia on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination, Amendments to the Law of Georgia on Gender Equality submitted as a legislative initiative of the Government of Georgia (07-2 / 157, 15.12.2017).

The Committee has accepted and included in the Conclusion four comments from the document regarding the following:

- a) Adding a list of signs of discrimination: discriminatory harassment, sexual harassment, reasonable accommodation and reference to discrimination.
 - b) expansion of a list of grounds for protection against discrimination;
 - c) Employer's responsibility to introduce regulation on the principle of equal treatment before signing a labor contract to the candidate and take measures to implement this principle.
 - d) Set high standards for the grounds of protection against discrimination.
2. On 20 February 2018 the Strategic Research and Development Center of Georgia, which is the Georgian National Platform member submitted comments to the Committee concerning draft laws on Product Safety and Free Movement Code, Amendments to the Law of Georgia on Enforcement Proceedings, Amendments to the Law of Georgia on State Procurement.

Among the comments the Committee has accepted and included in the Conclusion the comment regarding expansion of powers of the competent authority, which checks the compliance of the products placed on the market with general safety requirements.

Annex 2

In March, 2018, 7 Georgian National Platform member organizations provided their recommendations the draft document of the National Action Plan, which were presented to the GoG.

GNP member CSOs Comment	Information Included in the Draft National Action Plan	Activity #
<p>An additional Activity (monitoring of the responsibilities taken on by Georgia in the field of internationally recognized labor conventions) indicator needs to be implemented: “annual report of the expert committee monitoring the implementation of the ILO conventions and recommendations”, “report of the Social Affairs Committee overseeing Social Charter, UN State Department’s Annual Human Rights Report, other reports prepared by relevant international organizations.</p>	<p>The following have been taken into consideration: reports presented to ILO and to other intl. mechanisms.</p>	23.4
<p>In the description of the following “support of health and safety at the workplace” add: “in the field of labor safety, gradual approximation, not facilitation, of Georgian legislation to EU legislation (including AA Annex XXX prescribed EU Directives) and to international legal instruments;</p>	<p>The following have been taken into consideration: In the field of labor safety, gradual approximation of Georgian legislation to EU legislation (including AA Annex XXX prescribed EU Directives) and to international legal instruments; Elaboration/adoption of labor safety and health protection Law of Georgia.</p>	210.1
<p>“Regarding the Horizon 2020 program, informing stakeholders in Georgia, conducting consultations and administering Georgian language website www.horizon2020.ge” Here, the following selected indicators lack system of points/numbers: “# of information awareness days carried out”, “number of project proposals/winning projects”; “the Georgian language website www.horizon2020.ge is actively functioning”. In order to implement this, it is crucial that National Contact Points Network is developed for Horizon2020. This network is not mentioned in the Plan. GhiviKochoradze can elaborate on this. He promised to draft relevant sentences and I will forward them to you.</p>	<p>National Contact Points Network is developed for Horizon2020 under the guidance from the Ministry, which is renewed and developed constantly as needed. Contact persons are trained in capacity building with the EU support. The main goal of the network members is to inform, consult and provide support services to parties interested in the Horizon2020 program. Hence the focus on this activity in the Action Plan.</p>	204.2
<p>Continue participating in the EU framework program Horizon2020 funded projects Black Sea Horizon-“Enhance cooperation between the EU and the Black Sea Region in the fields of Science, Technology and Innovation” and EaP PLUS – “InternationalNetwork of Cooperation in Science, Technology and Innovation the Eastern Partnership Countries”. This sub-point is trivial, since the projects have been launched, they last three years and clearly, they will carry on. It would be useful to add to what level will Georgian participation be increased in 2017. Also, it’s important to show that Georgia will pay Horizon 2020 membership fee (indicating the actual amount).</p>	<p>EU Commission’s JOINT STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT Eastern Partnership - Focusing on key priorities and deliverables, listsEaP Plus as one of its priorities. The project aims to facilitate the development of STI system in the county; to fund mediating and other contact establishing activities for the organizations participating in the Horizon 2020. Also, to carry out research visits. EU Commission regards this project as one of the instruments to facilitate participation in the Horizon 2020. Other innovative clusters and development of innovation managers system are planned within the same project. Since the project activity is a part of the EU Commission’s EaP Action Plan, hence it is recommended that our Plan reflects that too. Horizon 2020 program funded, winner project number cannot be predicted beforehand. Since the winning projects are identified by their participation in the competitions. Furthermore, two conditions have to be met (1) highly competitive nature of projects applying</p>	204.1



	<p>to Horizon 2020 – with 11% success rate. (2) We have to ask EU Commission to count the number of projects in which Georgian participants have applied. Since it is only the Commission which has access to applicants, their projects and other data. However, we could request that data at the end of the year and include that in the annual implementation reports.</p> <p>2017 membership fee is 1.4 Million Euros, 50% of which will come back to Georgia. However, as far as I'm aware, these numbers should not become public knowledge, since Armenia and Ukraine pay difference amounts (in case of Ukraine, they may actually be paying EUR 30 Million or more).</p>	
<p>It is unclear what activities are foreseen for 2017 in the following directions: modernizing institutions responsible for agriculture development, including through participation of all relevant sector stakeholders in this process.</p>	<p>The IFAD program intends to modernize agriculture, and facilitate access to markets and increase flexibility; the productivity rates have gone up and the quality of agricultural production has been improved; existing orchards are modernized and their potential is realized to the maximum. Existing production and storage facilities are modernized.</p>	201.1
<p>In order to evaluate the project part pertaining to the Ministry of Agriculture, one needs to indicate not only Article 2.6 of the AA, but also specific directions foreseen by the Agreement, for rural and agricultural development. Namely: improving the competitiveness of agricultural production, by fostering economies of scale via market-oriented agriculture cooperatives, by developing advisory and extension systems to increase production and augment exports; and by easing access to viable credit and financial resources for agriculture; facilitating the gradual adoption of marketing standards for agriculture products to support a higher food safety and the implementation of quality schemes.</p>	<p>2017 Action Plan Articles 200 and 202 list the respective activities of the Agenda mentioned.</p>	200
<p>It is particularly noteworthy, that the report (dated February, 2017) “2016 Report on the implementation of the Association Agreement between the EU and Georgia, and the National Action Plan on the Implementation of the Association Agenda”, is used as the basis for the “preparation of the Final Draft of Forestry Code of Georgia. Furthermore, the respect forestry utilization, forest management and restoration, forest review and monitoring draft laws have been prepared in the same spirit.”</p> <p>It is important that drafting of framework legislation on the forestry is funded by the EU, as part of the Eastern Partnership. Also, FLEG 2 was used prepare “National Wood Consumption Program”, which, according to the same roadmap, should be adopted and published in 2017.</p> <p>Despite the listed preconditions, the presented draft of the document does not even mention the word “Forest”, which threatens to lose trust of both the EU, and the Georgian public and citizens.</p>	<p>Duties associated with the forestry were grouped under DCFTA of the AA. DCFTA 2017 National Action Plan did include environmental activities, including those in the Forestry Sector.</p>	136-139