

EASTERN PARTNERSHIP CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM

STATUTE

December 2019

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ARTICLE 1. GENERAL PROVISIONS

- 1) The organisation is known as the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum, hereinafter referred to as EaP CSF. Informally, the EaP CSF is also known as the Forum.
- 2) The EaP CSF is a network of civil society organisations (CSO) with non profit-making, non-partisan and non-religious purpose.
- 3) The EaP CSF works in the Eastern Partnership countries of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, as well as the EU.
- 4) The legal representative of the EaP CSF is the Secretariat of the Steering Committee of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum (in French: le Secrétariat du Comité de Pilotage du Forum de la Société Civile du Partenariat Oriental) (hereinafter referred to as the Secretariat), registered as a legal entity under the Belgian law with the headquarters based in Brussels, Belgium. The Secretariat is governed by the Civil Code of Belgium, Title III of Belgian Law of June, 1921 on non-profit associations, international non-profit associations and foundations (Articles 46 – 57) and any other laws of the Kingdom of Belgium that are applicable.
- 5) The EaP CSF itself is not a legally registered organisation, hence its Statute does not have legal status. However, its Members, structures and decision-making bodies are expected to respect and be bound to the rules and procedures contained in the Statute, which is one of the key internal documents of the EaP CSF.
- 6) The current Statute provides a comprehensive description of the rules and procedures of the EaP CSF over and beyond those contained in the Articles of Association of the Secretariat of the Steering Committee of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum.

ARTICLE 2. MISSION, VALUES AND FUNCTIONS

2.1. Mission

- 1) EaP CSF's mission is to ensure effective participation of the civil society of the Eastern Partnership and the EU in the process of planning, monitoring and implementing the Eastern Partnership policy in constructive dialogue

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with the EU and EaP decision-makers, in the direction of the democratic transformation and European integration of EaP.

- 2) At the national level, the EaP CSF and its National Platforms aim to strengthen the diversity and plurality of the public discourse and policy making in the Eastern Partnership countries by holding governments accountable and promoting fundamental freedoms, participatory democracy and human rights. One of the key responsibilities of the EaP CSF National Platforms is monitoring the commitments of the EaP governments' vis-à-vis the EU. The Working Groups provide the platform for the exchange between the CSOs of 6 EaP countries and the EU, conduct regional projects, and provide input to the EaP Platforms and panels.

2.2. Values and Code of Ethical Conduct

EaP CSF Members and decision-making bodies are guided by the values and principles described in the EaP CSF Code of Ethical Conduct approved by the General Assembly in December 2018.

2.3. Functions

The EaP CSF achieves its objectives through:

- Mobilising civil society in the Eastern Partnership countries and providing space for cooperation across the borders;
- Implementing flagship projects that monitor and facilitate democratic transition in the Eastern Partnership region;
- Providing direct input and submission of written opinions and recommendations in the early stages of policy making both in the Eastern Partnership countries and the EU;
- Conducting advocacy campaigns at critical junctures;
- Monitoring the implementation of commitments and agreements made between the EU and the Partner countries within the framework of the Eastern Partnership;
- Any other actions in line with the Forum's strategy and goals.



ARTICLE 3. EaP CSF TWO-YEAR CYCLE

- 1) The EaP CSF activity is organised in biannual cycles, with each new cycle beginning in March of every even calendar year.
- 2) General Assemblies are convened every year and usually take place at the end of each calendar year.
- 3) The mandate of Delegates lasts for two years, beginning with the official publication of Delegate selection results.
- 4) The mandate of the Steering Committee members starts with the elections of each of those members organised at the respective level (in EaP countries - for National Facilitators; during Working Group meetings - for WG Coordinators) during the first half of the first year of the cycle and lasts until the elections of the following cycle are organised.
- 5) The selection of the Delegates for the next two-year cycle begins at the end of the second year of the current two-year cycle with a call for applications launched by the EaP CSF Secretariat.

ARTICLE 4. DELEGATES, MEMBERS AND OTHER EaP CSF PARTICIPANTS

4.1. Delegates of the Forum

The delegates are CSOs from EaP countries and the EU whose representatives are selected for a two-year cycle from current Members of the Forum and non-members based on their expression of interest in response to the EaP CSF-initiated call, following the established selection criteria and geographic, thematic and gender quotas.

4.1.1. Delegates' selection process

- 1) The delegate selection process starts at the end of each odd calendar year, with the launch of a call for delegates.

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- 2) In line with the internal reform adopted in 2018, the selection of EaP Delegates can be managed by each National Platform based on the votes of current EaP CSF WG Coordinators, EU Delegations in the respective EaP country and the National Platform itself, after the external assessment have confirmed that the NP operates in a transparent, democratic and accountable manner. If it is not the case, the EaP CSF Steering Committee makes the final selection of the delegates based on the National Platform, WG Coordinators and EU Delegation votes.
- 3) Each National Platform has to respect and fulfill the requirements of the Code of Ethical Conduct and have an up-to-date status in line with the current regulations of the Forum.
- 4) In line with article 10 of the Statute, the selection of EU delegates is managed by EU Facilitators. The list EU CSOs who expressed their interest to become a delegate will be voted by the EaP CSF EU Members who accept to participate in the process and respective WG Coordinators.
- 5) The final list of EaP and EU delegates of EaP CSF is approved by the European Commission (EC).
- 6) Following the approval, the delegates of each 2-year cycle start their activity at the beginning of every even calendar year, usually no later than the end of March.
- 7) The number of Delegates in a given cycle is indicatively set as 160: 20 from each National Platform (total 120), and a maximum of 40 EU Delegates. The total numbers can be reconsidered by the General Assembly. In urgent cases, the numbers can be reconsidered by the Steering Committee and approved by the General Assembly at its nearest meeting.
- 8) All Forum's structures are responsible for ensuring gender balance in the list of Delegates, as far as this is feasible.

4.1.2. Delegates' rights

- 1) All delegates have the right to participate in the activities of the Forum, including but not limited to statutory meetings (two Working Group



meetings and two Annual Assemblies per cycle), regranting activities, EaP Platform and Panel meetings, and other activities of the EaP CSF.

- 2) All delegates have the right to vote and be elected in the Forum's decision-making bodies.
- 3) They can express their vote in person or electronically, through the available voting channel(s) put in place for the respective electoral process.
- 4) Delegates are included into the broader category of Members. Members cannot be elected to the decision-making bodies of the Forum and have the right to vote in the EaP CSF statutory meetings.

4.1.3. Termination of the delegate status

- 1) Voluntary termination of the delegate status

The delegate status is voluntarily and temporarily suspended or terminated at the moment of:

- The reception of a written resignation letter signed by the resignee and addressed to the NP to which the delegate belongs to and to the EaP CSF Secretariat. The resignee explains in the letter if the terminations is temporary and what period it covers.

- 2) Forced termination of the delegate status

The delegate status is temporarily suspended or terminated at the moment of:

- Temporary or indefinite expulsion from the EaP CSF or the National Platform, in line with a decision made by the Compliance Committee, Steering Committee, General Assembly, and National Platform in line with its regulations.
- Dissolution of EaP CSF.

- 3) Reasons for a Delegate expulsion include:

- Serious violation of this Statute or the Code of Ethical Conduct or other internal regulation of the EaP CSF.
- Serious threat of damage or actual damage to the EaP CSF and its reputation.



4.2. Members

The Members of the Forum are bona fide civil society organisations which are members of one of the six Eastern Partnership Civil Society National Platforms (NP), former or current delegates to the Forum or EU bona fide organisations that have been accepted as members of the EaP CSF. All CSOs that have ever been in the delegate status are considered members after the expiration of their delegate status.

4.2.1. Eligibility for Member status

- 1) EaP CSF is open to all bona fide CSOs with the status of a legal entity in the EaP countries and CSOs from EU member states.
- 2) Member organisations must be non-partisan, and free of government, business and religious influence. They must not have been established by governments, political parties or religious groups, nor may they be 100% financed by governments, political parties or religious groups. Their governing bodies must not have a majority of members from governments, political parties or religious groups.
- 3) Member organisations share the EaP CSF mission and values, and agree to abide by the EaP CSF Statute, Articles of the Association, Code of Ethical Conduct, and internal policies, procedures, and written agreements made by the General Assembly, Steering Committee, Compliance Committee, and other decision-making bodies.
- 4) Member organisations are committed to work actively to achieve the EaP CSF mission and objectives.

4.2.2. Membership application

- 1) Any organisation which has ever attended any of the EaP CSF General Assemblies in a Delegate status is considered a Member of the Forum.
- 2) Any EaP CSO can also apply to become a member of a National Platform and thus become a permanent member of the EaP CSF. The application is sent to the respective National Platform (NP) governing bodies following the



rules outlined by the respective NP. The rules should be in line with the principles of openness and transparency.

- 3) EU CSOs submit their application for membership to the EaP CSF Secretariat, providing two letters of support from two existing Permanent Members or Delegates from two different countries. The applications are received and reviewed on a rolling basis, but at a minimum of every two months.

4.2.3. Rights of Members

- 1) All Members may attend the General Assembly and other EaP CSF events including Working Group (WG) meetings at their own cost and provided there is sufficient space. They have no voting rights at the events which is the sole prerogative of Delegates.
- 2) Members can represent the EaP CSF at inter-governmental EaP Platforms and Panels with the same rights as Delegates provided they have been selected to represent the Forum.
- 3) Members can participate in the EaP CSF regranting scheme and other activities of the EaP CSF.

4.2.4. Termination of Membership status

- 1) The EaP CSF Membership terminates at the moment of:
 - Delivery to the relevant National Platform and the EaP CSF Secretariat of a written resignation letter in the case of EaP Members, and delivery to the EaP CSF Secretariat of a written resignation message in the case of EU members;
 - Expulsion from the EaP CSF or the National Platform, in line with a decision made by the Compliance Committee, Steering Committee, General Assembly, and National Platform in line with its regulation;
 - Dissolution of the EaP CSF;
 - Dissolution of the organisation of the member.
- 2) Reasons for a Member's expulsion include:



- Serious violation of this Statute or the Code of Ethical Conduct or other internal regulation of the EaP CSF.
 - Serious threat of damage or actual damage to the EaP CSF and its reputation.
- 3) In line with Article 12, the Compliance Committee, Steering Committee and the General Assembly have the power to decide about the expulsion of a Member. Any Member, National Platform, Working Group or the EaP CSF Secretariat can submit to any of these three bodies a proposal for expelling a Member. The Steering Committee may also initiate a proposal for expelling a Member. In case of conflicting decisions, the General Assembly as the highest decision-making body of the Forum has the ultimate power to make a final decision.
- 4) The Member whose membership is subject to a proposal for expulsion must be informed about it no later than 10 days prior to the deliberation of the proposed expulsion. The Member has the right to defend its position, present evidence and request explanations for the proposed expulsion. The decision-making body informs the Member, relevant National Platform and the EaP CSF Secretariat about the decision in writing.

4.2.5. Register of Members

- 1) The National Platform secretariats (or in the absence of a secretariat, the organisation responsible for NP administration; or, in the absence of such an organisation, the governing body) are responsible for keeping up-to-date registers of Members in their respective countries, and for making these available to the EaP CSF Secretariat.
- 2) The EaP CSF Secretariat is responsible for keeping a comprehensive up-to-date register of all Forum Members, including Delegates and for making these available on the Forum's website in compliance with GDPR.

4.3. Friends of the Forum

- 1) Friends of the Forum are distinguished individuals who are neither Delegates, nor Members, but who have an interest in contributing to EaP activities and have special expertise relevant to the Forum's activities. They



may be invited by the Steering Committee with the technical support of the EaP CSF Secretariat.

- 2) Friends of the Forum may contribute to events such as the General Assembly, Working Group meetings, Intergovernmental Panels and activities between meetings on an as-needed basis.
- 3) They do not have the right to vote.
- 4) Friends of the Forum participate in EaP CSF activities on a pro bono basis, although reasonable expenses for participation (travel and accommodation) may be covered.

4.4. Observers

- 1) Observers are relevant external stakeholders from EU, EaP and third countries, and may be representatives of donor organisations, governmental institutions and other stakeholder entities as well as CSOs interested in becoming involved in the Forum.
- 2) The Steering Committee, with the technical support of the Secretariat, may invite a maximum of 10 observers to attend the General Assembly and/or Working Group meetings.

ARTICLE 5. GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

- 1) The General Assembly is the EaP CSF's highest decision-making body (see Article 6).
- 2) The Steering Committee is the EaP CSF's governing body and reports to the General Assembly. (See Article 7)
- 3) The Brussels-based Secretariat reports to both the Steering Committee and the General Assembly. (See Article 8)
- 4) The governing bodies of the six Eastern Partnership National Platforms report to their members in their respective countries. (See Article 9)



- 5) Each of the six National Platform secretariats reports to their respective governing bodies and the National Platform assemblies. (See Article 9)
- 6) The Working Groups Coordinators report to their respective Working Group members. (See Article 11)
- 7) The Compliance Committee reports to the General Assembly. (See Article 12)

ARTICLE 6. THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- 1) The General Assembly is the highest decision-making body in the EaP CSF.
- 2) It meets on an annual basis, usually at the end of each calendar year.
- 3) When feasible, during the years coinciding with the EaP Summit, the Assembly is combined with the EU Presidency's civil society event.
- 4) The General Assembly serves as a space for thematic policy dialogue with stakeholders, the adoption of resolutions, the development of work plans and Forum's input in EaP events such as EaP Platforms and panels, annual reporting and discussions of the internal matters.
- 5) The Assembly does not occupy itself with the elections of the Forum's key bodies, apart from the Compliance Committee which is elected during the first year of the cycle.
- 6) Participants include but are not limited to the elected Delegates, the Secretariat, and Observers and Friends of the Forum invited by the Steering Committee.
- 7) Only Delegates have the right to vote and be elected to the Forum's decision-making bodies.
- 8) The quorum of General Assembly meetings is achieved by the attendance of two-thirds of the Delegates. In the event of failure to achieve a quorum at a General Assembly meeting, the meeting may continue but decision-making



shall be postponed to a subsequent meeting or conducted online in accordance with online voting procedures.

- 9) The General Assembly has the right to dismiss the Steering Committee or its individual members after one year of their two-year mandates in case of dissatisfaction with performance.
- 10) The Steering Committee, with the technical support of the Secretariat, determines the schedule and develops the agenda for the General Assembly. It may include suggestions of the Delegates to the draft agenda.
- 11) An Extraordinary General Assembly may be convened to deal with an important and urgent issue if requested and agreed on by 50 per cent of the Delegates representing at least four out of the six NPs and the EU, or initiated by the Steering Committee. The request for an extraordinary meeting must be submitted to both the Steering Committee and the Secretariat.
- 12) Each funded Delegate pays a symbolic fee to attend each General Assembly. This minimal fee serves to increase the ownership of the EaP CSF by its members and to allow the Forum to build minimal reserves. The fee can be amended by the decision of the Steering Committee or the GA.

ARTICLE 7. THE STEERING COMMITTEE

The Steering Committee is the second highest decision-making body of the EaP CSF. It reports to the General Assembly and is supported in its work by the EaP CSF Secretariat.

7.1. Composition and terms

- 1) The Steering Committee is composed of up to 13 members:
 - Six National Facilitators (in some cases this position can be merged with NP Coordinator's position and be named NP Coordinator) elected from the delegates by the delegates within their respective National Platforms;
 - Five Working Group Coordinators elected from the delegates by their respective Working Groups;
 - Two EU Facilitators elected from the EU Working Group Coordinators.

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- 2) The Steering Committee appoints two Co-Chairs, one representing the EaP region and one from the EU.
- 3) Each member of the Steering Committee serves a two-year term starting with the time of election, but not earlier than March. He or she may serve no more than two terms, consecutive or not, starting from the 2018-19 cycle. The counting of mandates concerns both the individual as well as the organisation he or she represents.
- 4) Members of the Steering Committee do not receive financial remuneration for their services. However, they are entitled to reimbursement for travel, accommodation and other expenses incurred in relation to performing Steering Committee activities, as long as these expenses are reasonable.

7.2 Election of Steering Committee members

7.2.1. Election of WG Coordinators represented in the Steering Committee

- A Working Group Coordinator is a Delegate elected by fellow Delegates of a given Working Group for the period of one biennial cycle.
- During the first meeting of the biennial cycle, each Working Group elects two coordinators, one representing EU organisations and one representing EaP organisations.
- If none of the candidates for the role of WG coordinator obtains the majority of the votes, the elections for the EU and/ or EaP WG Coordinator/s will be repeated during the same WG meeting or will be scheduled online within the next four weeks, following a new call for candidates for the role of WG coordinator(s).
- Based on consensus, the two elected coordinators decide who is representing the WG in the Steering Committee. If there is no consensus between the two elected WG Coordinators, the one with the highest number of votes will be nominated to represent the WG in the Steering Committee.
- The necessary quorum to elect the two WG coordinators is two thirds of the total number of delegates in the respective WG.
- Elections held in the absence of the quorum are considered null and void.



7.2.2. Election of EU Facilitators represented in the Steering Committee

- Two WG Coordinators from the EU side become EU Facilitators in accordance with the following order: in 2018-2019 cycle, the EU Facilitators are automatically appointed from the elected EU WG Coordinators of WG1 and WG2; in 2020-2021 cycle - from the EU WG Coordinators of WG3 and WG4; for 2022-2023 cycle – from WG5 and WG1 and so on. In the absence of a willing candidate for EU Coordinator in WG1 or 2 to sit in the SC as EU Facilitator, the representation is shifted to the EU Coordinator of the next Working Group (WG3 in this case).
- EU Facilitators represent organisations established and active in the EU. Although they may conduct activities in the EaP countries, they are not permanent residents of any of the six EaP countries.

7.2.3. Elections of National Facilitators represented in the Steering Committee

- A National Facilitator is a delegate elected by EaP CSF delegates from his/ her respective country. All delegates have the right to run for the position of National Facilitator in their NP. The whole NP membership can elect the National Facilitator if they have the internal regulation that stipulates this and upon the written agreement of the Steering Committee of the EaP CSF.
- Promptly after the selection of delegates, each NP holds internal elections where its delegates elect a National Facilitator who will represent their interests in the Steering Committee of the Forum.
- Each NP organises internal elections for National Facilitator in line with the minimum standards described in the Statutes, election regulations of the Forum and the internal procedures of respective NP.
- All National Facilitators become Steering Committee Members. Their mandate starts the moment they are elected by the delegates in each EaP-based NP.

7.3. Steering Committee responsibilities

The Steering Committee is responsible for:

- Representing the Forum at the highest levels both in the EaP countries and the EU;
- Promoting the mission, objectives and activities of the EaP CSF;



- Identifying and appointing the Director of the Brussels-based Secretariat, and if necessary dismissing the Director;
- Developing concepts for further EaP CSF development and priorities for its activities;
- Promoting the values, goals, and activities of the EaP CSF;
- Advocating on behalf of the Forum for the matters of importance to the Forum;
- Developing procedures and guidelines for the operation of the Forum;
- Sharing information with EaP CSF representatives and with the broader stakeholder community;
- Providing financial oversight, including approval of the annual budget and financial report, approval of the appointment of an external auditor, and ratification of the annual balance sheet and external auditor's statement;
- Ruling on other issues that are not within the responsibility of the Director of the Secretariat.

7.3. Co-Chair responsibilities

The Co-Chairs are responsible for:

- Convening and chairing Steering Committee meetings, directing debates, ensuring observance of the rules, facilitating decision-making in disputable cases, and putting questions to vote;
- Maintaining communication between the Steering Committee and the Secretariat's Director;
- Ensuring that all the members of the Steering Committee perform their responsibilities as outlined in this Article and in Articles 8 – 10;
- Ensuring that the conflict of interest prohibition principle is respected in the decision-making of the Steering Committee;
- Ensuring that the performance of the Steering Committee is assessed by its members before each General Assembly;
- Initiating the termination of the mandate of a Steering Committee mandate in the case of unsatisfactory performance.
- Evaluating the performance of the Secretariat's Director on a biennial basis.

The specific responsibilities of Working Group Coordinators, National Facilitators and EU Coordinators are laid out in detail in Articles 9-11 below.



7.4. Steering Committee Meetings

- 1) The Steering Committee usually convenes up to four two-day meetings a year between the Annual Assemblies, as well as a meeting before the General Assembly. Meetings are scheduled depending on the availability of its members and the Forum's priorities. The date and place of each meeting is decided at each previous meeting. At least one Steering Committee meeting a year is conducted in Brussels to facilitate the meeting of decision-makers at the EU level.
- 2) The Steering Committee meetings discuss progress related to EaP CSF activities, key issues submitted by the Secretariat and EaP CSF members, plan follow-up activities and issue instructions for carrying out these activities.
- 3) The Steering Committee reaches a quorum when at least two-thirds of its members are present. Members who for any reason are not able to attend in person may vote online to prevent the occurrence of a tied vote.
- 4) Decisions related to loans, credits or acquisitions/selling of real estate on behalf of the EaP CSF require a unanimous vote.
- 5) The Director of the Secretariat participates in all Steering Committee meetings, but does not vote. Other Secretariat staff members and Experts may attend parts of the meetings in a supporting or consultative capacity, but do not vote.
- 6) Any Steering Committee member may request an extraordinary meeting to deal with issues whose resolution cannot be delayed. Steering Committee can convene an online meeting.

7.5. Resignation and removal of Steering Committee members

- 1) If a Steering Committee member is for any reason no longer able to perform his/her duties, he/she shall inform both the Steering Committee and the Secretariat in writing.
- 2) A Steering Committee member may be removed with cause, such as a conflict of interest or other unethical behavior, failure to attend SC



meetings, or behavior that is so obstructive that the SC is prevented from functioning effectively. The member may be removed at any meeting of the Steering Committee and at which the quorum is present, by two-thirds of the votes cast at such a meeting, or online. The General Assembly may also dismiss a Steering Committee member (see Article 6).

- 3) In case of resignation or removal of a National Facilitator, the relevant National Platform shall conduct elections of the new National Facilitator.
- 4) In case of resignation or removal of a Working Group Coordinator, the relevant Working Groups shall elect a new Working Group Coordinator in online or in-person elections.
- 5) In case of resignation or removal of an EU Facilitator, the Working Group from which the Facilitator belonged elects a new one in online or in-person elections (see Article 7.5.4.).

7.6. Conflicts of interest

- 1) All members of the Steering Committee shall abide by the Forum's Code of Ethical Conduct, approved by the General Assembly in December 2018, in all their activities related to their performance as SC members.
- 2) A conflict of interest takes place when a Steering Committee member:
 - is involved in decisions concerning remuneration for his/her fulfilment of an extraordinary task beyond regular membership obligations;
 - is involved in activities which compete with the interests or directed against the interests of the EaP CSF.
- 3) It is also considered a conflict of interest when a "person related to a Steering Committee member" may directly benefit from usage of the EaP CSF funds and/or assets as a result of a decision of the EaP CSF bodies. A "person related to a Steering Committee Member" is an immediate family member, or a person economically dependent on, or jointly owning assets with a member.
- 4) If any person on the Steering Committee performs or intends to perform services or activities that may be perceived as a conflict of interest, that



person shall disclose the nature and possible effects of that conflict of interest to the Steering Committee.

- 5) A person with a conflict of interest shall not participate in the discussion or decision of any matter involving the EaP CSF to which he or she has a conflict of interest.
- 6) Violation of the Conflict of Interest Prohibition Principle gives grounds for the termination of membership in the Steering Committee.
- 7) The Steering Committee must inform the next General Assembly about findings proving violation of the Conflict of Interest Prohibition Principle.
- 8) Any business transaction between EaP CSF and the members of the Steering Committee shall be prohibited unless the Steering Committee determines after reasonable investigation that the transaction is in the best interest of, and fair and reasonable to the EaP CSF, and that the EaP CSF could not have obtained a more advantageous arrangement with reasonable effort under the circumstances.

ARTICLE 8. EaP CSF SECRETARIAT

- 1) The EaP CSF Secretariat, officially known as the Secretariat of the Steering Committee of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum (in French “Le Secrétariat du Comité de Pilotage du Forum de la Société Civile du Partenariat Oriental”), hereinafter referred to as the EaP CSF Secretariat or the Secretariat, is registered as an international non-profit organisation with the Commercial Court in Brussels, Belgium.
- 2) As a legal entity, the Secretariat is governed by its Articles of Association. These are fully in line with the current Statute. In case of discrepancies, the Articles of Association prevail.
- 3) The Secretariat serves the fulfilment of EaP CSF’s mission and objectives, and implements the decisions of the EaP CSF’s governing body, the Steering Committee, which appoints the Secretariat’s Director.



- 4) The Director is the legal representative of the Secretariat and its statutory office. He/she is appointed by the Steering Committee and reports directly to the Steering Committee and the General Assembly.
- 5) The Secretariat supports the Director's work, organises EaP CSF activities and manages EaP CSF finances in accordance with the Steering Committee's instructions.

ARTICLE 9. NATIONAL PLATFORMS

9.1. General provisions

- 1) The six National Platforms based in the EaP countries are responsible for the active involvement of each partner country's civil society in the reform process, and serve as stakeholders in policy dialogue within their respective countries.
- 2) Membership of a National Platform is open to all eligible civil society organisations, as defined in Article 4 of this Statute.
- 3) Each National Platform has a governing body elected by its Members. Governing body members should be preferably elected for a term of two years in line with the biennial cycle of the whole Forum.
- 4) The National Platform governing bodies may be supported by the secretariats or organisations assigned to serve as their secretariats by the NP members. The secretariats report directly to the NP's governing body.
- 5) Within each National Platform, Working Groups should mirror the Working Groups of the Forum. Extra Working Groups may be organised by the NPs in accordance with their priorities. The NP Working Groups among other activities provide input to the annual meetings of the EaP CSF Working groups and help shape the EaP CSF contribution to the EaP Platforms and panels.
- 6) The NP members (including delegates) are taking part in the same Working Group both at the level of the NP and at the level of the EaP CSF.



9.2. National Platform internal rules and regulations

National Platforms are required to regularly update their internal rules and regulations (variously known as by-laws, statutes, regulations and organisational principles) to reflect changing internal requirements and realities, and to reflect the internal reforms of the EaP CSF. Rules and regulations should include but not limited to:

- The mission of the National Platform;
- Membership regulation;
- Organisational structure, governance and management principles;
- Responsibilities, tasks, meeting frequency and quorums for the governing body;
- Responsibilities and tasks of the National Facilitator and/or NP Coordinator;
- Composition, responsibilities, tasks and meeting frequency of the Working Groups;
- Responsibilities and tasks of the National Platform secretariat;
- Responsibilities of the Code of Ethical Conduct Advisor;
- Election procedures of the governing body, Working Groups and National Facilitator and/or NP Coordinator;
- Selection of Delegates;
- Conflict of interest policy which is in line with the Forum's Code of Ethical Conduct;
- Information, dissemination and publicity;
- Other provisions including amendments to the regulations and termination of activity.

The minimal common core regulations of the NP activities covering the most essential matters allows for space for country specific regulations. These provisions should not contradict the regulations of the EaP CSF.

9.3. National Facilitator responsibilities

1) The National Facilitator's main task is to coordinate the activities of the members of the respective country delegates within the framework of the Forum and to represent them in the Steering Committee. The duties of National Facilitator can also be performed by the NP Coordinator who coordinates the NP. In case both positions are merged and the NP Coordinator will be



represented in the EaP CSF Steering Committee, s/he should be elected in line with the EaP CSF regulation in particular Article 7.2.3.

2) The National Facilitator's responsibilities include:

- Channeling developments in the respective National Platform to the Steering Committee and back, including the provision of relevant information, statements, and events;
- Identifying priorities and opportunities for country-specific advocacy;
- Overseeing the election of Delegates to the General Assembly (See Article 8.3);
- Being available for regular communication with National Platform members;
- Reporting at least annually to the NP's General Assembly;
- Submitting the annual report on NP activities before each General Assembly of the Forum;
- Participating in at least three 2-day Steering Committee meetings per year;
- Initiating and drafting Steering Committee statements with regard to the relevant development in the respective country and voting on statements initiated by other members of the Steering Committee;
- Providing information for ad hoc requests from EU institutions through the EaP CSF Secretariat;
- Contributing to regular correspondence within the Steering Committee throughout the 2-year term and participating in online decision-making processes;
- Identifying prospective CSOs that could be of benefit to the National Platform and the wider Forum and engaging them in the work of the Forum;
- Providing regular information on NP activities to the Secretariat for publication on the Forum website, in the newsletter, and through other sources.

9.4. Election of National Platform governing body

Depending on the specific procedures in a particular National Platform, as described in the National Platform's statute or equivalent document, the members of each National Platform vote for members of their governing bodies. The NP governing body normally includes Coordinators of each of the

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NP Working Groups and the National Facilitator, and may include EaP CSF Working Group Coordinators. The gender balance should be respected as much as possible on formation of the NP governing body.

9.5. Election of National Facilitator

In line with Article 7.2.3, the National Facilitator is elected by the delegates of a respective National Platform in their respective country. Candidates for the position are required to speak English. Knowledge of Russian is not mandatory, but it is an asset.

9.6. National Platforms and EaP CSF Delegate selection

- 1) The EaP CSF delegates are selected based on the EaP CSF delegates selection regulation.
- 2) The National Platforms vote in the delegates selection process alongside EaP CSF Working Group Coordinators and EU Delegations. The National Platforms may decide whether to use an election conference for the voting of Delegates or an online voting system, depending on their regulation and circumstances.
- 3) Following the Internal Reform (October 2018), EaP National Platforms can become responsible for the selection of the EaP delegates if they have satisfied the conditions as stipulated in the Internal Reform.
- 4) If the NPs have not yet satisfied the conditions, the EaP CSF Steering Committee will continue to make the final decision on the delegates list based on the votes of NPs, WG Coordinators and EU Delegation and required quotas. In the long-term, the expectation is that all NPs will operate the same Delegate Selection system and be responsible for the selection of the delegates.

9.7. Code of Ethical Conduct Advisors

- 1) All National Platforms shall respect the EaP Statute and Code of Ethical Conduct, as well as their internal rules and regulations.

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- 2) The National Platform governing bodies are required to appoint a Code of Ethical Conduct Advisor on a 2-year basis.
- 3) The Code of Ethical Conduct Advisor's responsibilities are to:
 - Ensure that all National Platform members are aware of the existence of the Forum's Code of Ethical Conduct, have access to it and understand it.
 - Monitor implementation of the code on an ongoing and informal basis through observation of meetings and other activities, reviews of documentation, interviews with NP board members, and other NP stakeholders on an anonymous basis.
 - Be available for complaints on a confidential basis.
 - Take measures to respond to complaints constructively, where possible. If these cannot be resolved within the NP, then the Advisor and/or complainant may address the EaP CSF Compliance Committee.
 - Organise an annual internal self-assessment using the template included as Annex 1 of the Code of Ethical Conduct.
 - Cooperate with external assessors in facilitating access to a range of NP stakeholders, NP documentation and opportunities for observing procedures.
- 4) The Advisors do not have responsibility for enforcing compliance or applying sanctions. This is the responsibility of the Compliance Committee in consultation with the Steering Committee.

9.8. National Platform funding

- 1) National Platforms may require its member organisations to pay a membership fee.
- 2) Additional revenues may include, but are not limited to:
 - Non-competitive funding distributed through the EaP CSF Secretariat to fund the National Platform's core operations, including its secretariat;
 - Competitive EU funding for National Platform project-based activities and inter-NP projects;
 - Grants from the country's EU Delegation;
 - Grants for project-based activities from governmental development agencies and independent foundations.

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ARTICLE 10. EU DELEGATES SELECTION

- 1) EU delegates are selected in line with the EaP CSF delegate selection regulation.
- 2) An indicative number of forty EU Delegates are selected per two-year cycle.

ARTICLE 11. WORKING GROUPS

11.1. General provisions

- 1) EaP CSF members and delegates are organised in Working Groups both at the National Platform and Forum level, in alignment with the official [Eastern Partnership architecture](#). National Platforms can establish additional Working Groups in line with their priorities.
- 2) The indicative distribution of 160 delegates per WGs is provided to the selection committee at the time of the selection. Attention should be paid to ensure a balanced distribution of delegates between WGs and coverage of most of the thematic areas covered by the EaP architecture. There should be at least one Delegate per EaP country per WG. The delegates should be in the same Working Group at the EaP CSF and the NP level.
- 3) Each Working Group may appoint up to five Sub Working Groups to focus on specific thematic issues. The minimum number of people per subgroup is three.

11.2. EaP CSF Working Group Meetings and activities

- 1) Working Group members meet in person during their two-year terms at the following occasions:
 - At the annual WG meeting of the first year of the cycle, where they elect WG Coordinators and where applicable, EU Facilitators;
 - At the first General Assembly of the two-year term;
 - At the annual Working Group meeting of the second year of the cycle;
 - At the second General Assembly of the two-year term.



- 2) Working Group members are also invited to take part in relevant EaP Expert Panels and Multilateral Platforms to provide expertise. The registration of a delegate in the EaP CSF experts database should be made in accordance with the membership of EaP CSF WG.
- 3) Networking and joint projects continue throughout the two-year term in national and regional settings among members of the Working Group.

11.3. Working Group Coordinators' responsibilities

- 1) Each WG is managed by two WG Coordinators: one from the EaP and one – from the EU. A Working Group Coordinator is a Delegate elected by fellow Delegates of a given Working Group for the period of one biennial cycle. Her/his major task is to co-ordinate the activities of the Working Group and to represent the working group in the EaP CSF Steering Committee. Candidates for Working Group Coordinators should speak English. Russian is an asset.
- 2) The responsibilities of the Working Group Coordinators include:
 - In cooperation with the Secretariat, drafting the agenda of the annual Working Group meeting and identifying relevant themes for presentations/discussions.
 - Advising the Secretariat on the needed capacity-building for the WG
 - Ensuring regular online communication with Working Group representatives throughout the year.
 - Communicating and coordinating with the Coordinators of Working Groups at the national level (via the WG Council).
 - Submitting the report on yearly WG activities before the General Assembly.
 - Representing the WG in the SC and reporting on its activities at SC meetings.
 - Submitting publications on the Forum website, in the newsletter and publishing through other sources.
 - Taking part in four two-day Steering Committee meetings per year, as well as the General Assembly.
 - Initiating and drafting Steering Committee statements based on relevant developments in the thematic area and voting on statements initiated by other members of the Steering Committee.



- Contributing to regular correspondence within the Steering Committee throughout the year and taking part in the decision-making processes that take place online between meetings.
- Identifying experts to represent the Forum at the relevant Panels meetings among those who apply in response to the call for interest.
- Representing the Forum at Platform meetings.
- Identifying priorities and opportunities for theme-specific advocacy and advising the Secretariat on the organisation of advocacy events, providing relevant contacts, and taking part in advocacy events if having relevant expertise.
- Providing information for ad hoc requests from EU institutions through the EaP CSF Secretariat.
- Taking part in the capacity of an observer capacity in the evaluation of the regranting proposals for WG regranting scheme.
- Identifying prospective CSOs whose activities and expertise could benefit the Forum, and engaging them in the work of the Forum.

11.4. Election of Working Group Coordinators

- 1) The elections of the Working Groups Coordinators take place every two years at the annual Working Group meeting of the first year of the 2-year cycle.
- 2) Each Delegate votes for two Working Group Coordinators, one from EaP countries and one from the EU. Only one of them represents the Working Group in the EaP CSF Steering Committee as specified in Article 7.2.
- 3) The Working Group Coordinators from the EU organisations in Working Groups 1 and 2 join the Steering Committee as EU Facilitators in the first year of the first cycle; WG3 and 4 in the first year of the second cycle; WG5 and 1 in the first year of the following cycle. In the absence of a willing candidate for EU Coordinator in WG1 or 2 to sit in the SC as EU Facilitator, the representation is shifted to the EU Coordinator of the next Working Group (WG3 in this case).

11.5. Working Group Councils

- 1) Working Group Councils support the Working Groups in a consultative capacity.

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- 2) Working Group Councils are composed of WG coordinators, elected at the local level, within each NP.
- 3) Each Working Group Coordinator at both the Forum and the NP level automatically becomes a member of the relevant Working Group Council following his/her election. They are encouraged to attend annual Working Group meetings even if they are not delegates.

ARTICLE 12. COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE

12.1. Status

The Compliance Committee (CC) is an independent body of the EaP CSF to which the Forum has delegated consideration of the matters set out in 12.2 below. The Compliance Committee reports to the EaP CSF General Assembly and provides a mechanism to ensure balanced divisions of power, accountability and resolutions for dispute situations in the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum. The Committee is an EaP CSF decision-making body on matters in its authority and its members represent the collective interest of the whole Forum rather than a particular structure of the Forum, be it the Steering Committee, National Platform, Working Group or any other body. The operation of the CC is governed by the Statute and CC Rules of Procedures.

12.2. Compliance Committee functions

- 1) The main functions of the Compliance Committee are to:
 - Serve as the EaP CSF's contact point for addressing complaints and disagreements.
 - Respond to complaints related to EaP CSF norms and procedures, in particular in reference to selection processes, regranting schemes and National Platform operations.
 - Make/confirm decisions on conflict situations.
 - Monitor and neutralise risks and cases of conflict of interest.
 - Monitor the decisions of EaP CSF bodies, including the Steering Committee, Secretariat, National Platforms, Working Groups and Regranting Committee and in accordance with the EaP CSF Statute.



- 2) Decisions made by Compliance Committee are to be accepted by all EaP CSF members, Delegates and EaP CSF bodies. In the case of situations not covered by the regulations, the CC makes the final decision.

12.3. Composition and election procedure

- 1) The Compliance Committee consists of five members: two representing the EU and three representing EaP member organisations.
- 2) CC members are elected during the first year of every cycle at the Annual Assembly of the Forum. The candidates with the highest number of votes received are elected. If there are five or fewer candidates fulfilling the geographical quota, the election is done by acclamation. Gender balance should be respected.
- 3) All individuals who have been Delegates of the Forum for at least two years are eligible for election.
- 4) Members of the CC elect their Chairperson from among themselves by an absolute majority (i.e. by at least three votes) and for the period of its two-year mandate. The Chairperson can be changed and another one elected in his/her stead before the end of the two-year cycle if such a decision is taken by the absolute majority of members of the Committee.
- 5) Individuals can be re-elected to the Compliance Committee after a break of one cycle.
- 6) Elected members of the CC should not be involved in any of other EaP CSF bodies (Steering Committee, Secretariat, NP Boards, WG Councils etc.) and are obliged to step down from any of such position after being elected to the CC.
- 7) The General Assembly is empowered to ask any Compliance Committee member to resign from the Committee if it feels his/her continued involvement is no longer appropriate. Reasons need be given and published on the EaP CSF website. The General Assembly removes the member of the CC by electing a new member in his/her place by a majority of votes.
- 8) If a member of the Committee steps down a by-election is organized online to fill the vacant seat.

12.5. Key principles

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- 1) The CC works in accordance with the Code of Ethical Conduct and the EaP CSF Statute.
- 2) Other fundamental principles which guide the work of CC are:
 - *Transparency* – the Committee’s procedures and guidelines should be available to all interested parties, in English and in Russian if necessary.
 - *Accountability* – the members of the Committee shall be held accountable for their decisions.
 - *Respect for cultural diversity* - the members shall take into account all the possible issues affecting the case, including cultural diversity. Members are encouraged to understand the different particularities of the parties involved in the dispute, meanwhile acknowledging and respecting the principles enshrined in the EaP CSF rules and procedures.
 - *Non-partisanship* – the Committee shall refrain from any explicit statements which may be considered politically motivated.
 - *Impartiality and independence* - Impartiality requires that the CC neither favors one party nor is predisposed as to the question in dispute. Independence requires that there should be no such actual or past dependent relationship between the parties and a member of the Committee which may affect, or appear to affect, the arbitrators’ freedom of judgment.

12.6. Subsidiarity and Duty of disclosure on incompatibilities with duties

- 1) The CC deals with cases which are impossible to solve at the local level, since they accede the competence of the national compliance bodies.
- 2) Committee members have a duty to disclose all relevant facts which are likely to give raise to any justifiable doubts about Committee members’ independence and impartiality. The member of the committee must discharge this duty of disclosure at the earliest opportunity, usually at the time of his/her nomination and before the confirmation of his/her appointment. The member’s duty of disclosure extends to all information which could be relevant. This duty continues after the appointment of the member and throughout the proceedings.

12.7. Referral mechanisms to the Committee

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- 1) The following actors can submit complaints to the Committee in case of disagreements or non-compliance by individual members or EaP CSF bodies with the provisions of the Code of Ethical Conduct, Statute of the EaP CSF and the Statute of the EaP CSF Secretariat, re-granting regulations and decisions of the EaP CSF General Assembly, Steering Committee, National Platforms, Working Groups and EaP CSF Secretariat:
 - Any individual member or Delegate or a group of members or Delegates of the EaP CSF.
 - Non-members in cases concerning their application to become a member of a National Platform of the EaP CSF or Delegates of the EaP CSF.
 - National Facilitators, National Platform governing bodies and their secretariats.
 - Members of the EaP CSF Steering Committee
 - Members of the EaP CSF Secretariat

- 2) In case the rules of procedures of the National Platforms of the EaP CSF provide for an internal compliance mechanism, an individual member or a group of members of the National Platform can submit to the Committee a complaint in case of disagreements or non-compliance by another member(s), National Facilitator, governing body or secretariat, if the matter is not resolved within a month by the compliance body of the respective National Platform or to appeal the decision of the compliance body of the relevant National Platform.

- 3) Complaints involving the Committee or its members.
 - In case any member of the Compliance Committee or his/her organisation is a subject of a complaint submitted to the Committee, the concerned member will recuse him/herself from the examination of the respective complaint.
 - In case more than two members of the Committee recuse themselves from the examination of the complaint resulting in an absence of quorum, the complaint is transmitted for examination and decision-making to the EaP CSF Steering Committee.
 - In case the Committee is the subject of an issue of non-compliance, the complaints are submitted to the EaP CSF Steering Committee according to Sections 5.5. and 5.6 of this Article.



- 4) The Committee is empowered to initiate a *sua sponte action* in case of alleged issues of non-compliance admitted by members of EaP CSF bodies concerning provisions of the Code of Ethical Conduct, EaP Statute, re-granting process and decisions of the Annual Assembly and other EaP CSF bodies.
- 5) Complaints are submitted confidentially in writing in English or Russian to the Committee via the official email complaints@eap-csf.eu

ARTICLE 13. EaP CSF FINANCES

- 1) The EaP CSF revenues may include:
 - EU funding
 - Grants, donations and contributions of legal entities, including governmental development agencies, non-profit foundations and individual persons
 - Yields derived from EaP CSF assets
 - Public subsidies
 - Other revenues, derived from activities related to the statutory goals of the Forum.
 - Membership fees
- 2) The Secretariat's Director proposes a draft annual budget and work plan to the Steering Committee not later than 2 weeks prior to the relevant Steering Committee meeting where it has to be approved unanimously. In case of the multi-year project funding when the budget is already part of the contractual obligations with the donor, the annual budget is presented for the SC at the beginning of the year for their information. The Steering Committee approves the draft budgets submitted to donors.
- 3) With respect to the use of funds and assets, the Steering Committee establishes a ceiling under which the Director is not obliged to seek approval from the Steering Committee.



- 4) The Steering Committee appoints an external auditor to verify the finances of the Secretariat.
- 5) The annual financial report of the Secretariat is approved by the Steering Committee and made available before the respective General Assembly.

ARTICLE 14. PROCEDURES FOR AMENDING THE STATUTES

- 1) Amendments to the EaP CSF Statute can be proposed at the request of at least two thirds of the Steering Committee members or fifty one percent of delegates from at least three EaP countries and the EU.
- 2) A proposal for amendments shall be communicated to all Delegates and Members at least four weeks before the General Assembly.
- 3) Amendments are adopted by a two-thirds majority of Delegates at the General Assembly with a two-thirds quorum.

ARTICLE 15. EaP CSF DISSOLUTION

- 1) EaP CSF may terminate its activities if this is agreed by at least two-thirds of the Delegates at the General Assembly.
- 2) In the case of termination, the Steering Committee shall appoint a Liquidation Officer whose remuneration is decided by the Steering Committee.
- 3) Assets and the liquidation balance shall be transferred to another non-profit organisation or other non-profit organisations with a similar mission and objectives, as decided by the Steering Committee.

ARTICLE 16. FINAL PROVISIONS

- 1) This Statute is voted by the Delegates and will be considered adopted if approved by a simple majority of Delegates once the two-thirds quorum has been determined. It comes into force on the day of its signing at the 2019 General Assembly, immediately following the vote. It will be signed by the two Co-Chairs of the Steering Committee.

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- 2) The provisions set out in this Statute shall apply to all the EaP CSF Members, Delegates, the Steering Committee, EaP CSF Secretariat, National Platforms and their secretariats, Working Groups and the Compliance Committee, and any other bodies that are part of the Forum.
- 3) Everything not explicitly dealt with in the present Statutes will be governed by the law of 27 June 1921, on Non Profit Associations, on International Non Profit Associations, foundations, European political parties and political foundations as amended or replaced from time to time.

