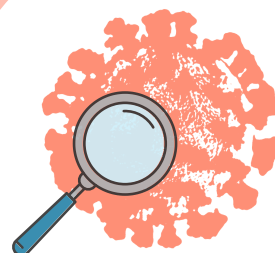


Supporting the viability and sustainability of EaP civil society during the COVID-19 crisis

EAP CSF COVID-19 BRIEFING PAPER

#PrepareEaP4Health



September 2020



Methodological Note

This paper has been elaborated in the framework of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum #PrepareEaP4Health campaign and aims to illustrate the context in which civil society is addressing the challenges brought about by the COVID-19 public health crisis. It is based on the author's desk research, and collective input from EaP CSF member organisations, provided through an online consultation conducted between 25 March and 3 April 2020. A total of 84 responses from all six EaP countries and EU member states took part in the survey: 25 from Armenia, 13 from Azerbaijan, 5 from Belarus, 10 from Georgia, 6 from Moldova, 17 from Ukraine, and 8 from EU member states. The survey was designed to identify the major needs and concerns of civil society. Additional information and perspectives were sourced via semi-structured interviews with 18 civil society organisations from across the EaP region, conducted by members of the EaP CSF Secretariat.

Additional information and perspectives were sourced via semi-structured interviews with 18 civil society organisations from across the EaP region, conducted by members of the EaP CSF Secretariat. These organisations included grassroots organisations, membership-based organisations, and think tanks - all members of the EaP CSF. The organisations and their representatives interviewed were:

- Samir Aliyev - Centre for Support for Economic Initiatives, Azerbaijan
- Nato Bachiashvili - International Centre for Geopolitical Studies, Georgia
- Nino Bregadze - Caucasus Environmental NGO Network (CASMED), Georgia
- Nino Elizbarashvili - Georgian Association "Women in Business", Georgia
- Irakli Giorbelidze - World Vision, Georgia
- Stanislava Husakova - NGO Assembly of Belarus, Belarus
- Olga Karatch - International Centre for Civil Initiatives "Our House", Belarus
- Lusine Khachatryan - Society Without Violence, Armenia
- Ani Mnatsakanyan - International Centre for Human Development, Armenia
- Natalia Postolachi - Centre for Social and Medical Home Assistance, Moldova
- Mihai Roscovan - Business Consulting Institute, Moldova
- Sabina Rustamova - Azerbaijan Social Work Public Union, Azerbaijan
- Iulian Rusu - Institute for European Policies and Reforms (IPRE), Moldova
- Diana Sarumova - European Business Association Armenia, Armenia
- Natalia Shevchuk - National Youth Council of Ukraine, Ukraine
- Marfa Skoryk - Kyiv Institute of Gender Studies, Ukraine
- Olga Smolianko - Law Trend, Belarus
- Konstantin Zhgenti - Association of Business Consulting Organisations, Georgia

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#PrepareEaP4Health

EaP CSF COVID-19 Briefing Paper Series ***Supporting the viability and sustainability of EaP civil society***

Tania Marocchi, Francesca Nista, Vera Rihackova Pachta

SUMMARY

Transparency and good governance, crisis management capacities, social services, and the ability of democratic institutions to perform their functions have been tested on an unprecedented scale by the COVID-19 pandemic. Civil society organisations (CSOs) have been at the forefront of the virus mitigation effort in the Eastern Partnership (EaP) region, successfully delivering on their tasks while juggling various difficulties. CSOs have been tending to the needs of vulnerable groups, supplying missing personal protection equipment (PPE), supporting health professionals, substituting public services, supporting the economic recovery, raising awareness about the virus and countering COVID-19 related misinformation, and monitoring respect for fundamental rights and democratic freedoms. These new, challenging circumstances have affected CSOs' operations and capacities in multiple ways, determining a sharp increase in the demand for their services, changing the needs of the vulnerable groups they assist, and demanding they adapt their modus operandi. Governments, the EU and donors should amend their practices to support CSOs in these changed circumstances and to ensure the viability and sustainability of the civil society sector in the medium to long term. To this end, this paper proposes numerous recommendations on how to

support civil society in these testing times, by establishing, running and adjusting new emergency funding schemes, and by supporting capacity building in key areas.

INTRODUCTION

Civil society organisations have played a crucial role in mitigating the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on EaP countries' healthcare sector, society, economy and democracy. CSOs have been complementing the state and often playing a key role in **managing the medical and public health aspect of the emergency**, on both the advocacy and the practical support fronts. CSOs mobilised quickly and launched a number of initiatives, with businesses, citizens, and international organisations often coming onboard enthusiastically. Such activities ranged from providing personal protection and other equipment, accommodation, transport and food for health workers, to raising funds and advocating for adequate levels of protection and remuneration for medical workers treating COVID-19 patients.

Civil society organisations have also been active across the board since the very onset of the pandemic in **supporting vulnerable groups**, rallying swiftly and coordinating the work of volunteers to provide services and raise funds for various purposes. While in some EaP countries services to the most

vulnerable were set up in cooperation with local authorities, in others, most notably in Belarus, CSOs, individual citizens and businesses took prompt, independent and concerted initiatives which lessened the consequences of the government's denialism on vulnerable populations. CSOs working with women and LGBT+ people have been strengthening their shelter capacity and have set up additional phone lines offering legal counselling and psychological support to victims of domestic violence and discrimination.

CSOs' field work also gives them essential insight into existing challenges, as well as into authorities' responses, shortcomings and abuses. Such insight often inspired CSOs' policy and advocacy work on behalf of their fellow citizens and people in need. In all EaP countries, for example, civil society organisations working with women observed a jump in domestic violence during the lockdowns, and recorded instances of police ignoring women's requests for help. In parallel, they advocated for the adoption of preventive measures to mitigate the negative effects of confinement on the victims of domestic violence, demanding extra protection services.

Trade unions and professional associations have been closely watching and advising on **economic support measures** adopted by governments, calling for the protection of workers' and professionals' rights, and for targeted support for economic sectors affected by the economic disruption. In some EaP countries, CSOs have provided suggestions on lockdown exit strategies as well as mid- and long-term post-COVID-19 recovery plans designed by governments and international donors. The incorporation of gender perspectives and digitalisation strategies into the design of these plans has

been one of the key priorities.

Perhaps most importantly, CSOs have assumed a key role in ensuring **respect for, and the continuity of, fundamental rights and democratic freedoms**. Indeed, they have consistently held governments to account, preventing the adoption of unnecessarily restrictive measures, demanding access to truthful information, transparent governance and the respect of the rights and needs of the most vulnerable groups. Moreover, through their *pro bono* services, civil society organisations are ensuring that citizens' rights are upheld.

Civil society organisations have proved their value to society during the peak of the crisis, and they will also play an essential role in mitigating the effects of the pandemic in the medium to long term in a just and transparent way. At the same time, CSOs have encountered a number of challenges, the COVID-19 crisis having had an impact on their operational procedures, financial sustainability and work focuses. The lessons learned about internal risk mitigation strategies, coping mechanisms, and the flexibility and viability of the civil society sector are important for designing the post-crisis approach of donors and CSOs alike. To ensure the continuous delivery of civil society services but also the viability of the sector during the prolonged period of limitations and uncertainty caused by the persistence of COVID-19, as well as beyond the pandemic, the entire civil society environment must be supported, with measures tailored to CSOs' immediate and long-term needs.

Financial capacity and sustainability of the CSO sector

The COVID-19 crisis has aggravated several

long-standing deficiencies of the civil society sector in the area of financial capacity and financial sustainability. In all EaP countries, CSOs are mostly dependent on calls for proposals and grants provided by donors. In countries with very restrictive CSO legislation and an environment that is not conducive to the activities of genuine civil society groups, such as in Azerbaijan and Belarus, the inability to register grants from foreign donors has persisted. This was further aggravated by the slower performance of the authorities for those organisations that could register grants. In Belarus, closed borders often prevented CSOs from reaching their accounts abroad for cash withdrawals, with no back up plan on how to operate in place. In Azerbaijan, several CSOs were hit by the banking crisis; with closures of several banks, CSOs' limited domestic resources, usually gathered to support various actions namely in the field of human rights protection, have been repurposed for the support of health workers or the most vulnerable parts of the population.

Even those civil society organisations with a developed fundraising strategy and multifaceted funding have been hit by diminished or a complete lack of income from sources other than donors, including from the EaP governments, local authorities and local businesses who are all struck by decreasing economic performance and the need to cut their budgets. In some EaP countries, the authorities have already signalled that austerity measures and the inability to fund specialised social services provided by CSOs will last beyond this budget year, painting grim prospects for the sustainability of the CSO sector beyond the acute phase of the pandemic.

With the contraction of government and local donors' funding, CSOs have had to rely more on their savings and other streams of income,

but alternative possibilities are quite limited. With the exception of Belarus, where CSO-led crowdfunding campaigns have been very successful, fundraising via crowdfunding has proven difficult. In Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, the insufficiencies of the legal framework or its non-existence place limits on the use of this fundraising tool by CSOs. Moreover, in Azerbaijan, the law effectively prohibits crowdfunding due to the strict regulation of charitable donations - no anonymous donations are possible, while cash donations are limited to 200 AZN (99 EUR) and have to be registered with the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Justice. Other possible sources of income, like organising exhibitions, for-profit training and summer schools, are impacted by the social distancing measures in place due to COVID-19, as well as uncertain and complicated travel.

Some CSOs which have their own streams of income have seen them reduced: several membership-based organisations saw a fall in the stream of funding ensured by membership fees as the demand for their paid services dropped or they were unable to guarantee the offer of activities due to social distancing rules. As a result, many CSOs are coping with financial challenges by cutting back on their fixed expenses, namely salaries and rent, keeping their staff on minimum wages or laying them off, and looking for alternative arrangements for their premises.

The short-term consequence of this process is that CSOs' management and operational capacity – and therefore effectiveness – has been diminished: having had to reduce their staff, many CSOs are relying on the extra performance and dedication of the remaining salaried and volunteer staff to carry out some tasks in their spare time. Some grassroots organisations which have experienced an

inflow of offers for volunteer work in relation to COVID-19 mitigation often lack resources to train, equip and manage the new volunteers and cannot tap into this new potential workforce. Renouncing their offices, some CSOs lost conveniently located and cheaply rented premises where their beneficiaries could gather. This process has been more dramatic in the regions, where the civil society sector is weak and underdeveloped. While in recent years more resources have been allocated to CSOs in the regions, support has been more focused on project implementation rather than on developing organisations' long-term sustainability. Since for many staff members operating in the regions, jobs with civil society organisations are among very few employment opportunities available locally and the only source of income. In the long run, many CSOs signalled their fear that this will lead to a loss of qualified staff, as talented CSO employees who lose their jobs because of the pandemic will leave the sector – or the country – altogether. Particularly in Moldova, CSOs expect the pandemic to exacerbate the 'brain drain' phenomenon, as many experts have left the country and more are expected to do so, with negative consequences for the strength of a CSO sector which is already struggling to acquire and retain specialised staff.

With the pandemic-induced economic downturn likely to lead simultaneously to a reduction in funding – both government and CSOs' own – and an additional increase in the size and the needs of the vulnerable groups CSOs tend to, the sector should be adequately supported to avoid its further weakening. Donors have been generally flexible in their approach to CSOs during the crisis: for example, for most ongoing projects, donors have been accommodating and extended the implementation period as well as easing reporting procedures. At the

same time, the no-cost extension of current grants means the same amount of money has to be spread more thinly across a longer period of time, with the total fixed costs (including staff costs and rent) increasing. There is also concern over the workload during the upcoming months of autumn where many postponed project activities will have to be implemented.

Several CSOs mentioned that the multi-year projects already awarded to them have had their budgets cut by up to 30% by donors, and that many upcoming calls have been reoriented towards COVID-19 mitigation, economic recovery and assistance to vulnerable groups. This approach yet again brings about the prioritisation of the donor-driven agenda, with many CSOs having to reorientate their activities as a result. As the new calls have been modified to cater to the needs of COVID-19 mitigation and support to vulnerable groups, civil society is alarmed that some crucial long-term priorities (gender education, environmental advocacy, etc.) are falling off the donors' radar, and there are concerns that the achievements of pre-COVID advocacy work could be lost due to a lack of resources for ongoing activities and follow-up. The long-term perspective should not be neglected while planning current support, as the weakening of CSOs working on crucial long-term priorities could bring about a loss of talent that will affect their effectiveness well beyond the pandemic, to say nothing of the greater cost of this loss of civil society engagement in crucial areas to society as a whole.

As a lesson learned, interviewed CSOs mentioned they will strive to create a financial reserve for future crisis situations, which would ensure for a certain period of time the security of the organisation and,

implicitly, of services provided. For CSOs working directly with beneficiaries, it also means creating a strategic stock of materials and PPE, as the costs of protective equipment increased 8-10 times during the COVID-19 pandemic. To mitigate operational risks, many CSOs plan to work with donors on implementing effective risk management matrixes and procedures. These coping strategies will be essential to ensure the survival and endurance of a healthy CSO sector, whose long-term sustainability should be built with structured planning and strategic efforts.

Changes in modus operandi

With the impossibility of carrying out activities *in situ* due to the restrictions and lockdowns imposed to reduce the spread of COVID-19, CSOs in the EaP countries have switched their operational activities online. From the interviews conducted by the EaP CSF Secretariat with representatives of CSOs in the EaP countries, some strengths and shortcomings of this change in their modus operandi have emerged.

The main change consists of the reorganisation of traditional in-person activities into online formats, such as online meetings, online communication campaigns, online training and courses (e.g. workshops targeting businesses and SMEs organised by business associations) and cancelling some other activities which cannot take place online. In some cases, projects are being developed with a compulsory digital back up plan, while others have been completely rescheduled to be centred on COVID-19 related matters.

However, while for some organisations switching to online mode has proven to be

more convenient in terms of sparing costs for online events and the organisation of activities, for some others, namely smaller grassroots organisations, the inability to carry out in-person activities has resulted in a decrease in productivity. For example, many youth organisations are struggling to keep both volunteers and their target groups involved in their online events. In some remote regions and local areas, this is caused by the lack of access to the stable and reliable internet connection and computers required to join the activities organised by CSOs, while other organisations have pointed to an element of fatigue with regard to online meetings, since they have become so widespread over many contexts in recent months (education, communicating with friends and family, online events, etc.).

Another challenge comes from the rise of staff's stress levels, due to increased workloads and overlapping household and childcare duties. This puts a heavy burden particularly on many women working in the CSO sector who see themselves forced to juggle between work and domestic tasks. With almost no boundaries between work and home, most of those engaged in the civil society sector have been working extra hours on a voluntary basis. In response to this, stress-relief assistance to staff and flexible working hours for people with children at home have been provided. Time-management has also proven to be a new challenge for CSO staff, but this has often been mitigated by organising regular meetings and discussions in a non-hierarchical system of governance. The new online mode of operations has highlighted a lack not only of technical skills but also of management skills, as some organisations have reported difficulties in managing the team remotely, with some employees leaving

their jobs in favour of other positions. Moreover, in terms of staff management, some organisations have cancelled their internship programmes, creating an increased workload for permanent staff members.

In Belarus, CSOs have seen a rise in the number of volunteers joining and supporting their activities, as well as increased website traffic and engagement on social media. This is due to people's growing interest in joining civil society activities in light of the government's inability to tackle the COVID-19 crisis effectively, and its greater recourse to repression in the period ahead of the presidential election. In the aftermath of the rigged presidential election of August 9, there was an unprecedented level of civic activity and mobilisation, both in Minsk and in the regions.

Many civic initiatives and NGOs launched monitoring and advocacy campaigns aimed at raising awareness, and protecting human and political rights. Human rights organisations continued to monitor the pre-electoral process, and to create online trainings and webinars. In the post-election period, tens of thousands of Belarusian citizens were engaged in protests and different solidarity actions with those detained or affected by police violence. This large-scale mobilisation is a clear indication that civil society in Belarus is ready to actively participate in the decision-making process and to protect its right to vote. This mobilisation also gave birth to many new bottom-up civic initiatives and volunteer movements that need both resources and capacity-building in order to carry on their activities.

The education system in the country, already

heavily impacted by COVID-19, has been further undermined by the active participation of many schools and teachers in the falsification of the presidential election results. Many teachers resigned or were laid off, while hundreds of parents lost their trust in public schools and started looking for alternative ways of educating their children, considering homeschooling and distance learning methods or private schools. Many of them, however, lack the resources to maintain these arrangements in the long term.

Civil society relations with governments

CSOs generally struggled to maintain the same level of dialogue with national governments during the COVID-19 crisis as before it, namely in the initial period between March and May 2020. In many EaP countries, the opportunities for civil society to engage governments in effective consultation and follow-up processes were already limited prior to the pandemic, yet the COVID-19 crisis has only provided a new pretext for the authorities to avoid such dialogue. Some organisations pointed out new difficulties to monitor the spending of public funds when quarantine measures were in place and limitations to their watchdog activities under the pandemic's circumstances. Informal contacts between civil society and public officials have been severed or limited due to the impossibility to meet in person. At the level of agenda setting, many legislative initiatives were put on hold due to new priorities, and it has been even more difficult than usual for CSOs to approach stakeholders with their own agenda while the authorities were struggling with their response to the pandemic. In Moldova, relations between the civil society

sector and the government became almost bellicose during the state of emergency when the government referred many times to CSOs as “external agents of the West”. At the same time, the adoption process of Law No. 109 “on Non-Commercial Organisations” culminated with civil society support during this period - an important development, given the implications of the law for the future functioning of the civil society sector in the country.¹ The working relations between Moldovan CSOs and line ministries, namely in the area of social services, also remained operational.

In some instances, however, public administrations transitioning to an online mode of work have gradually resumed dialogue with civil society and other stakeholders via online tools: in some EaP countries this has been as a result of the persistence of CSOs, like in Georgia, where civil society felt that the finalisation of the forestry code after five years of work remained worthy of attention, but elsewhere, like in Moldova or Armenia, engagement has also been on the initiative of individual ministries that have wishes to restart the work of their advisory bodies, mostly in areas related to COVID-19 mitigation. In Belarus, paradoxically, the responsiveness of the authorities towards civil society suggestions increased in some areas (for example, concerning the rights of the child, social services, health care) due to the pressures of the COVID-19 crisis and the public’s negative reaction towards the official response. The assistance provided by volunteers to medical institutions and health professionals led to the opening of a dialogue between civil society and the Ministry of Health and to a

deepening engagement with local authorities. The openness of the central authorities, however, has not persisted beyond the start of the presidential election campaign.

Although many CSOs do not expect any fundamental changes to the ways that dialogue between governments and civil society is conducted, some are hopeful that the COVID-19 crisis will bring about new opportunities. One representative of a CSO from Azerbaijan stated that they believe the consultations and advice provided to the government during the COVID-19 crisis may improve relations and pave the way for discussions on changing the current, restrictive CSO legislation. Other CSOs see new opportunities in the growing need and preference of the authorities for transitioning to online tools and mode of work to deliver in policy areas like education or justice, creating scope for more inclusive governance in a number of fields. Civil society also sees an opportunity in offering its online products and services aiming at long-term change especially in some areas like gender mainstreaming and in advocating for better implementation of the rights-based approach when new guidelines and procedures, namely for online justice and education, are prepared.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE EU AND INTERNATIONAL DONORS

COVID-19 has affected the civil society sector across the board, forcing changes to CSOs’ modus operandi and their relations with governments, and impacting on their financial resources. With the pandemic

¹ <https://www.eap-csf.md/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/2020-06-03-Apel-sustinere-Legea-ONC-EN.pdf>.

showing little signs of stopping in the immediate future, the financial sustainability of civil society and its effectiveness in the long term is at stake. To mitigate the effects of COVID-19 on CSOs, the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum recommends that the EU institutions and international donors adopt a number of measures aimed at supporting CSOs in the short term and at improving the financial sustainability of the sector in the long run via new emergency funding schemes and targeted capacity building.

Establish, run and adjust the new emergency funding schemes

1. After the huge solidarity movement which arose from the COVID-19 crisis and post-election developments and protests in Belarus, which has included close cooperation between civil society and the private sector, the absorption capacity of the non-governmental sector is greater than ever before. The EU should therefore **reconsider the purpose and recipients of the EUR 50 million COVID-19 emergency support for Belarus**. The funding should not go to the government, which has been compromised by violent actions against the Belarusian people. Rather, it should be channelled to *bona fide* civil society in order to assist the victims of human rights abuses, build the capacity of CSOs, and support new bottom-up initiatives and volunteer movements. Supporting alternative methods of education and investment in independent media should also be priorities. Such rechanneling of the allocated funding would be a good

investment in the future of the country.

2. Introduce the possibility to apply for **bridge funding within the EU's EaP COVID-19 Solidarity Programme** to tend to the needs of those CSOs that are not covered by the new funding mechanisms, but are experiencing or will experience disruption in the disbursement of funding and/or possible delays in opening new calls. The EU's own Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) could be among those delayed calls, given that its legislative basis and budget are yet to be finalised. The EU response, and donors in general, should look beyond the pandemic to maintain the CSOs' environment and prevent its degradation. Bridge funding should support CSOs in covering their fixed operational costs if their project implementation period is extended (no-cost extension), spreading the funding too thinly, and in cases where they cannot carry out their usual main activities or where the expected call for proposals is significantly delayed.
3. Establish a **CSO Liquidity Fund** as a complementary instrument. CSOs could use the new Liquidity Fund to cover overheads in the short term, and pay back over time once new funding and income starts to come in.
4. **Foresee specific mechanisms for the disbursement of foreign aid**, as existing channels have been blocked or modified due to the closure of borders and political developments. This is particularly relevant in the case of Belarus and

Azerbaijan. Use the know-how of out-of-country CSOs or diaspora and facilitate simplified travel procedures for the representatives of recipient organisations.

5. Set up a **Risk Framework Mechanism** that would focus on sharing the risks CSOs are exposed to. It is necessary to introduce a risk-sharing approach so that CSOs do not shoulder the burden of financial risk alone, in a way that is also acceptable to donors. Many retail businesses plan for 1-3% theft and destruction losses; in a similar manner, donors should create processes and procedures to facilitate a predetermined acceptable risk threshold. Indeed, donors' zero tolerance for loss risk is unhelpful, particularly for organisations working in the most volatile, high-risk environments.

Enhance funding for capacity building on:

1. **How to successfully involve and work with large numbers of volunteers to respond to the needs of the population in this extreme and dangerous situation.** Many CSOs have already started working with a large number of volunteers to deliver food packages and medicines to the elderly, people with limited mobility, and vulnerable families and need to improve and strengthen their management capacities.
2. **Employing digital platforms**, in particular (a) platforms where citizens can ask for CSO support, (b) platforms dedicated to online and mobile learning and remote working,

tapping into existing experience gathered within EU member states, (c) platforms for effective policy dialogue between governments and citizens and for promoting digital citizenship tools. CSOs are providing much needed educational services, including teacher training, to ensure the continuity of education of children and adults alike, yet many do not have computers or internet connection at home, and therefore require tailored approaches such as the use of mobile technology or other innovations.

3. **Public health issues**, including training for **volunteers** on how to work safely, efficiently and effectively with people in need.
4. How to develop an action plan on a CSO response to virus outbreaks and similar emergencies, including designing and putting in place a **risk mitigation matrix**.
5. **Revising CSOs' business models** and adapting them to new realities.

Adapt existing EU financial support to civil society to the changed circumstances

Reporting

1. **Extend reporting periods** for ongoing projects and, if possible, lighten the reporting requirements which consume a lot of precious time that could be directed to the response to the crisis.
2. **Temporarily allow the submission of supporting documents without the grantee's signature or electronically signed**, under the

condition that they provide the duly signed documents later, when the emergency situation has passed; several CSOs are experiencing problems in providing donors with contracts and accounting documents that need to be signed, when submitting the financial reports.

Financial support

3. **Be flexible to changes to the purpose of project expenses**, including spending on operational costs, like salaries or office rental, to cover the pause in activities caused by COVID-19. There might be a need to change the purpose again in relation to the development of the public health situation in individual EaP countries.
4. **Reduce the rate of co-financing** for projects to the minimum 5% for all projects or waive the co-financing obligation for a designated period of time.
5. **Relax budgetary provisions, allowing the transfer of unused funds to the following year.**
6. **Issue guidelines on flexibility in acknowledging the eligibility of costs** and project expenses incurred for project activities cancelled due to the pandemic, since a **case-by-case approach is not consistent and can harm some CSOs**. CSOs implementing Erasmus+ projects including international mobility were particularly prevalent among those raising this issue.



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About EaP CSF

The Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum (EaP CSF) 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. For more information, please visit the EaP CSF website at www.eap-csf.eu.



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