

Structured consultation on the Eastern Partnership beyond 2020

CIVIL SOCIETY PERSPECTIVE

Country Report: Georgia

This report offers the perspectives of Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum member organisations from Georgia on the future of the Eastern Partnership following its tenth anniversary year. It is one of a series of six country reports, with other editions covering Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Moldova, and Ukraine.

The findings presented here are the result of a comprehensive process of internal consultation, conducted in October 2019 in order to inform the EaP CSF's response to DG NEAR's structured consultation on the Eastern Partnership beyond 2020.

The official DG NEAR consultation addressed the fields of 'Economic and Human Capital Development', 'Good Governance, Rule of Law, Security Cooperation', 'Development of Bilateral and Multilateral Partnership with the EU and among EaP Countries', 'Improving Strategic Communication and Visibility', and 'Other Areas'. For the purposes of its own internal consultation, the EaP CSF chose to organise these fields into the following themes:

1. Economic and Human Capital Development
2. Good Governance, Rule of Law, Security Cooperation
3. EU-EaP and Intra-EaP Cooperation: Ensuring Inclusiveness and Differentiation
4. Boosting EU Visibility in the EaP Region
5. Strengthening the Role of Civil Society

Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum Structured Consultation on Eastern Partnership

The civil society perspective: Country Report Georgia

SUMMARY

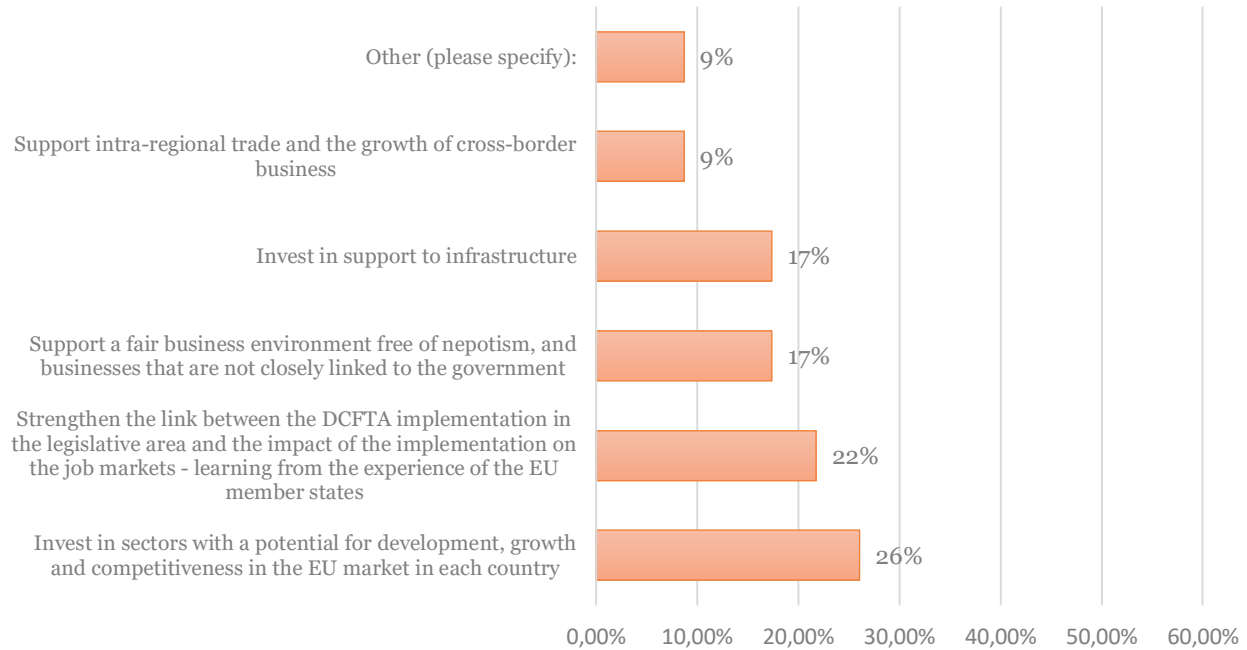
The EaP CSF prepared its response to DG NEAR's structured consultation on the future of the Eastern Partnership by launching a comprehensive process of internal consultation of its membership base. The internal consultation was based on three pillars: six in-country focus groups, four online focus groups and one online questionnaire combining qualitative and quantitative elements. Over 200 civil society organisations participated in at least one pillar of the consultation. The results presented below offer a **detailed overview of the input received from Georgia**. A total of 38 Georgian civil society organisations participated in the consultation process (one or more pillars): 27 organisations took part in the online survey, seven took part in the in-country focus group and four in the online focus groups. The report also reflects the document '*Position of the EaP CSF Georgian National Platform on the future of the Eastern Partnership in the context of the EU's structured consultation*'.

1. ECONOMIC AND HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT

The results of the online survey of Georgian organisations suggest that the most urgent and effective measure through which the EU should support **sustainable economic development** in the EaP region is to **invest in sectors with potential for development, growth and competitiveness in the EU single market in each EaP country (26%)**. Some 22% of respondents choose **strengthening the link between DCFTA implementation in the legislative area and the impact of the implementation on job markets - learning from the experience of the EU member states** as most effective measure.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In your opinion, what would be the most urgent and effective measure that the EU should promote to support sustainable economic development in the EaP region? (you can choose only one)



Recommendations

Supporting sectors with a potential for development, growth and competitiveness in the EU single market

- Enhance sectoral approaches to investment in traditional and high-demand industries: agriculture, wine production, tourism, digitalisation and innovation, creative entrepreneurship.
- Provide institutional capacity-building assistance for the adoption of principles of smart specialisation, through the expertise of the Joint Research Centre.
- Provide technical and financial support to help to facilitate laboratory inspection of goods, introduce adequate regulation and help identify priority goods that Georgia should produce.
- Deepen cooperation in the fields of sustainable development, IT, digital business, bio-chemistry, mathematics, physics, and technical sciences to create opportunities for young people and promote competitive projects in Georgia.
- Support the green economy as a priority: promote businesses introducing alternative or renewable sources of energy, including solar, wind, micro-hydro, and bio power; support innovation and the transfer of expertise to the area.
- Support the sustainability of tourism sector infrastructure, introducing new technologies that allow for a safer environment and greener spaces.
- Establish collaboration between the tourism and the light manufacturing industry, encouraging young people and women to take part in the production of souvenirs and other such products.

- Increase funding opportunities for Small and Medium Enterprises, such as the SME facility and COSME, and for programmes that assist start-ups with initial capital; support the development of SMEs in the agricultural sector, especially in rural areas and the regions.
- Promote more analytical work in the field of logistical and transport development, setting up a concrete strategic plan for road safety, to be included within the EU's broader economic development goals for Georgia.

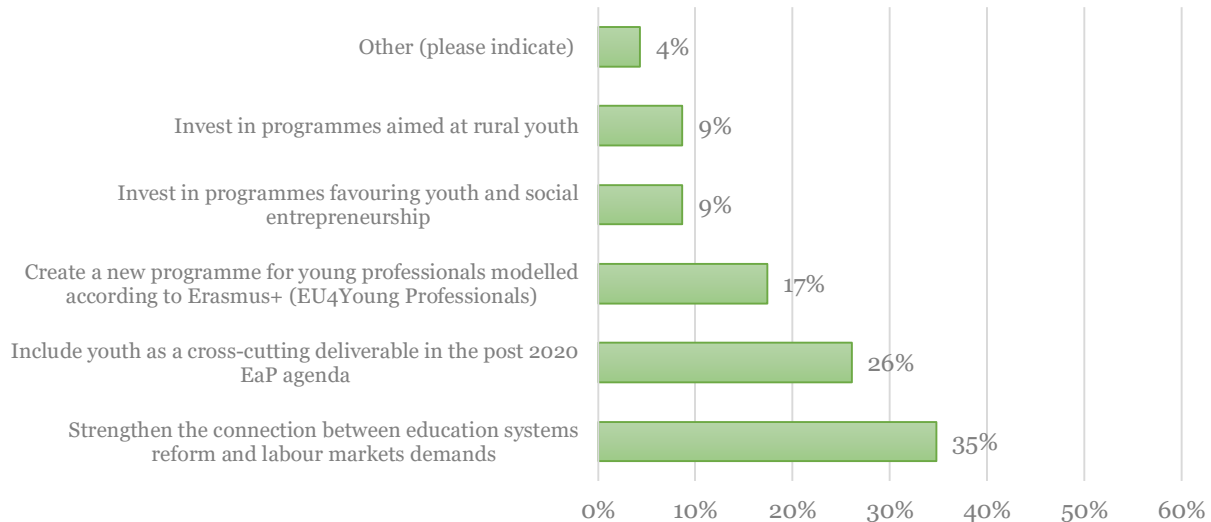
AA/DCFTA implementation

- Strengthen the EU's monitoring of the development and execution of national policies implementing EU projects in specific areas. The following pre-conditions to EU assistance should be applied: national policy should be elaborated in the form of a "high-level document", discussed and checked, as is the case within the framework of the Venice Commission; the government should have long-term investment plans in the areas supported by EU projects, to avoid the chance of passing off EU projects as the government's own activity; the government should also undertake formal obligations for collaboration with the EU in each of the areas; local CSOs and the academic community should be better involved in this process, to make it more sustainable and to share the financial burden.
- Focus on economic development programmes to support DCFTA activities, prioritising the development of the private sector and CSOs, instead of mostly concentrating financial support on government agencies.
- Prioritise technical support for and investment in energy efficiency.
- Strengthen agricultural cooperatives both economically and institutionally through the development of long-term targeted and differentiated strategies. The European Neighbourhood Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development (ENPARD I) played a major role in both the initiation of such cooperation among farmers and the formation of agricultural cooperatives. Within the framework of ENPARD I, supported by the Ministry of Agriculture and the Agricultural Cooperative Development Agency, non-governmental organisations carried out awareness-raising and grant-making activities among the local population. After the completion of ENPARD I, however, the existing momentum of cooperative formation and development was not sustained.

Over one third (35%) of respondents to the online survey of Georgian organisations suggest the most urgent and effective measure the EU should support in order to **empower young people** further and address the economic challenges they face, is to strengthen the **connection between education system reform and labour market demand**. **Including youth as a cross-cutting deliverable in the post 2020 EaP agenda** should be the second priority (26%).

HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT

In your opinion, what would be the most urgent and effective measure that the EU should promote to further empower youth and address the economic challenges they are facing? (you can choose only one)



Recommendations

Education

- Raise awareness about the importance of human capital development as an economic asset and promote the development of ad hoc strategies at the national level to that effect.
- Contribute to the development and enhancement of local higher educational institutions, including both state and private universities; facilitate the exchange of knowledge and experience, encouraging peer learning, transfer of expertise, institutional capacity development and networking between CSOs from the EU and Georgia.
- Extend EU educational programmes such as Erasmus+, allowing funding for innovation and employment, youth exchanges, lifelong learning, Vocational Education and Training (VET), non-formal education and entrepreneurship. Experience abroad should be an incentive to look for a job in the home country as qualified personnel, in line with the principles of circular migration.
- Support EaP-wide entrepreneurial coaching, mapping national particularities and building these into country-specific projects.
- Overcome barriers to technological development by increasing funding and enhancing young people's skills in this area.
- Create more opportunities for young people and promote their participation in cultural events to foster youth integration; support their involvement in civil society issues and agenda.
- Promote professional development and advanced training not only for young specialists but also for adult professionals, supporting the intergenerational exchange of knowledge on innovation and new technologies.

Labour market

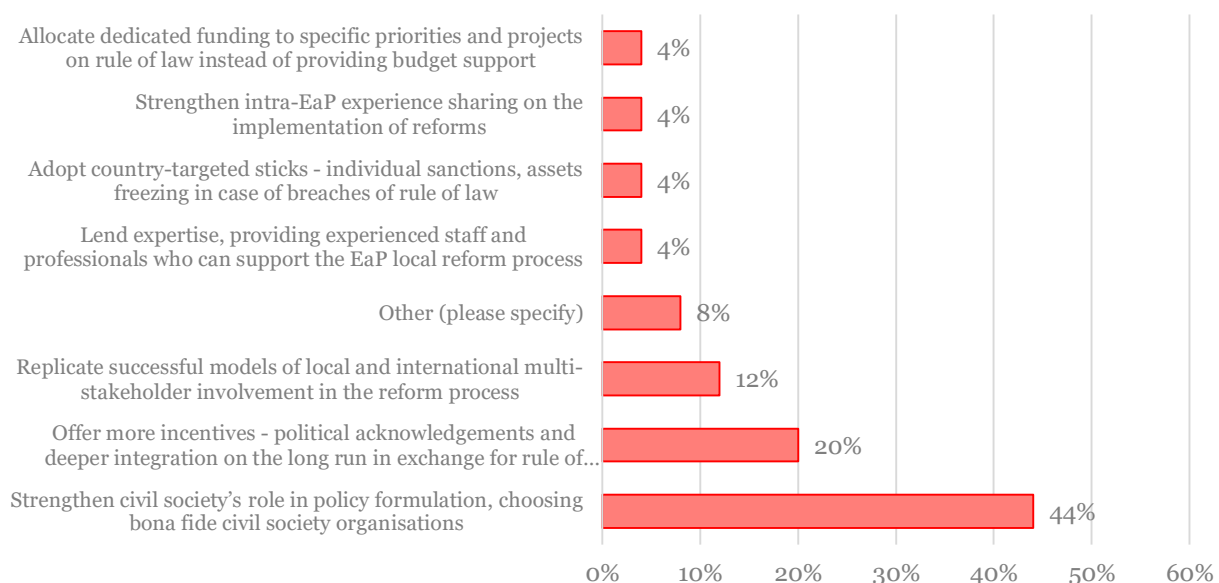
- Support skills development and skills matching for EaP labour market needs, developed to improve people's employability.
- Support and finance more programmes for young people's employment and business skills development, for example by introducing career guidance courses.
- Encourage EaP governments to harmonise their respective legal frameworks regarding circular labour migration, including associated procedures and obligations; strengthen cooperation between the EaP countries to make use of legal labour migration, supporting pilot schemes for bilateral cooperation models in this field.
- Include populations of *de facto* states in programmes beyond those specifically aimed at conflict resolution. The inclusion of young people from these territories should also be addressed, for example by discussing and sharing best practices on how youth populations from *de facto* states can be included in more EU programmes. Develop a regional programme for girls and women who live in areas affected by conflict.

2. GOOD GOVERNANCE, RULE OF LAW, SECURITY COOPERATION

In order to support good governance and rule of law reforms in the EaP countries, a **significant number of respondents in Georgia (44%) suggest that the EU should strengthen civil society's role in policy formulation, choosing *bona fide* civil society organisations**. According to the survey, the EU should namely support the active involvement of civil society as a third equal partner in designing and monitoring rule of law reforms. The second-most supported measure (20%) is to **offer more incentives – political acknowledgements and deeper integration in the long run – in exchange for rule of law reforms**.

RULE OF LAW & GOOD GOVERNANCE

In your opinion, what would be the most urgent and effective measure that the EU could promote to support good governance and rule of law reform in the EaP? (you can choose only one)



Recommendations

Rule of law

- Create a sound mechanism for monitoring developments in specific policy areas related to democracy, the rule of law and good governance, which are still underdeveloped or do not satisfy European standards. Despite a number of difficulties, democratic standards have improved thanks to strict monitoring activities carried out by the EU.
- Support the strengthening of civil society's role in policy formulation, encouraging local governments to involve non-partisan CSOs more intensively in bilateral and multilateral formats.
- Maintain funding for monitoring and assessment practices to fight corruption, money laundering and discrimination; support a campaign to raise awareness of these issues.
- Enhance the accountability mechanism for governmental reforms, involving CSOs at both the monitoring and the implementation levels.
- Enhance the control system on the spending of EU funds by recipient CSOs, to ensure that projects effectively benefit their target groups.
- Ensure more transparency in the selection process for judges, as currently the criteria are opaque and subjective. CSOs should have a role in the selection of candidates for the Supreme Court and the Council of Justice.
- Judges, investigators, prosecutors, prison staff, public defenders and lawyers should be trained to increase their capacity to protect the rights of individuals. Programmes in the penitentiary system that support the rehabilitation and re-socialisation of prisoners – before and after their release from prison – should also be supported, as should the increased participation of judicial bodies in EU twinning projects.
- Increase support for individual human rights defenders and CSOs and support their participation in the implementation and assessments of reforms.
- Support decentralisation reforms and the education and training of municipal authorities, especially after local elections processes.
- Strengthen civic councils at the local level, as these are currently too weak due to their dependence on funding by national governments.
- Strengthen cooperation with EU law enforcement agencies, such as Europol or Frontex, and other agencies dealing with migrants and refugees, food safety, environment, education and science. EaP countries should have wider access to EU programmes and agencies.

Security

- Share best practices in disaster risk management, including forest fires, floods, wild-fires and droughts.
- Change the language and the approach towards frozen conflicts in the EaP region. These conflicts should be considered as a threat to the security of both the EaP countries themselves and the EU, and should be addressed as external aggressions by a third country, i.e. Russia. The inadequate terminology increases scepticism towards the EU among the population of EaP countries.
- Maintain a principled approach towards Russia, especially with regards to intensified human rights violations (including the kidnapping of civilians and the construction of

artificial borderlines) committed by occupying forces along the dividing line between the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia and the rest of Georgia.

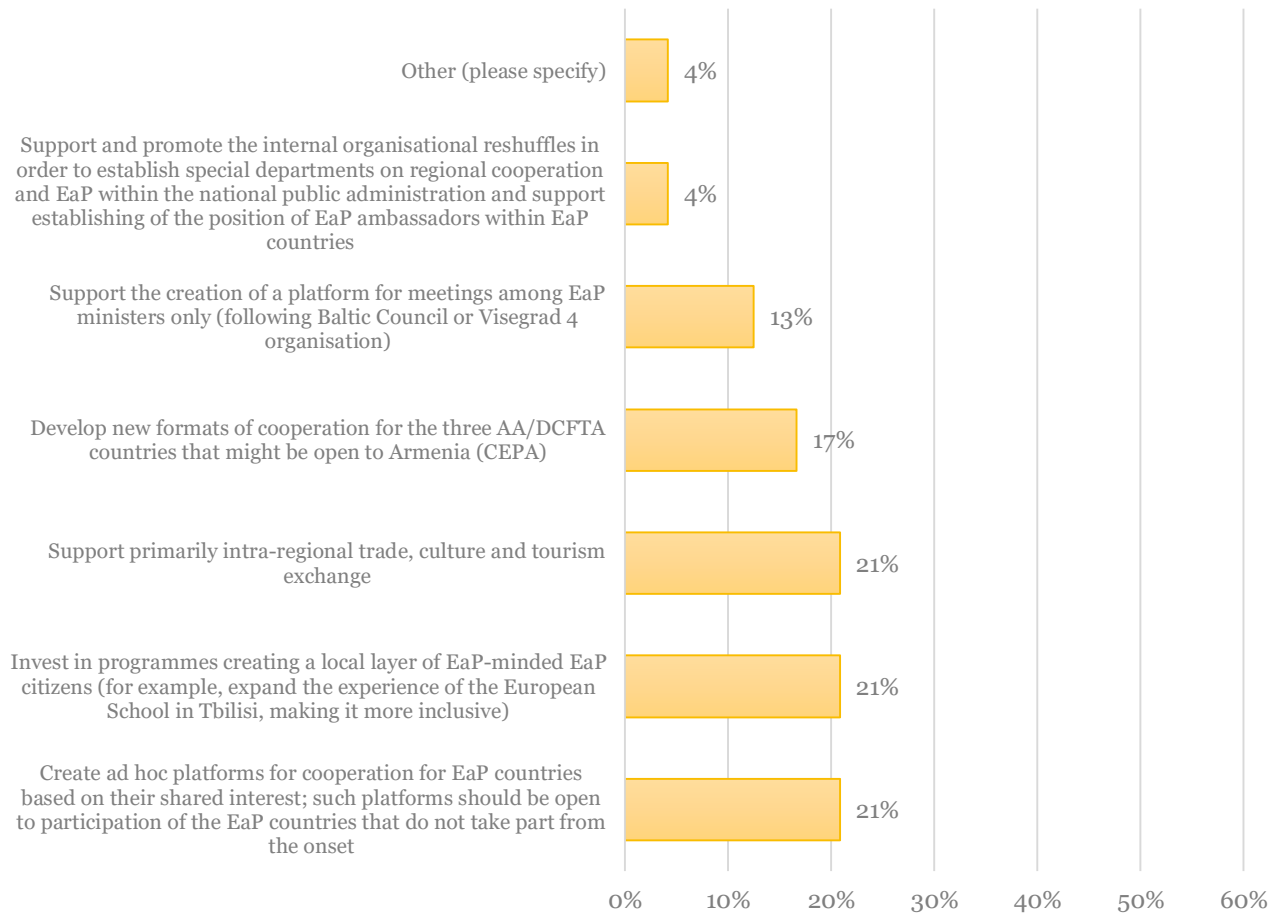
- Continue to support programmes for confidence-building within and across communities divided by conflict, together with conflict resolution efforts and upholding agreements reached through EU mediation.
- Expand cooperation between EaP countries and Europol, including in the fight against organised crime. Avenues for participation in security cooperation mechanisms such as PESCO and the European Defence Agency should be explored, as should increasing support for programmes designed to enhance security sector oversight and accountability. Cooperation should also be fostered in the area of cyber resilience for critical infrastructure. Boosting mobilisation and cohesion in and among EU and EaP countries should be seen as a means of preventing Russia from increasing its influence.

3. EU-EAP AND INTRA-EAP COOPERATION: ENSURING INCLUSIVENESS AND DIFFERENTIATION

When it comes to supporting intra-EaP cooperation, three measures are preferred by an equal percentage of respondents (21%). These measures are: (i) **creating *ad hoc* platforms for cooperation for EaP countries based on their shared interests**; such platforms should also be open to the future participation of EaP countries that do not take part from the onset; (ii) **investing in programmes creating a local layer of EaP-minded EaP citizens** (for example, by expanding the experience of the European School in Tbilisi, making it more inclusive); (iii) **supporting primarily intra-regional trade, culture and tourism exchanges**.

INTRA-EAP COOPERATION

In your opinion, what would be the most urgent and effective measure the EU should adopt to support Intra-EaP cooperation? (you can choose only one)



Recommendations

Boosting intra-EaP cooperation

- Develop an EU macro-regional strategy for the EaP to allow countries located in the same region to jointly tackle common challenges and find better solutions using their collective potential.
- Create a new "EaP cross-border cooperation programme", similar to the Black Sea Basin CBC programme, within the new Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI).
- Provide assistance to EaP countries to support the creation of "transnational consortiums", consisting mostly of medium-sized enterprises (according to the European classification) in the field of energy, maritime affairs and the blue economy, and transport.
- Encourage business-to-business consultations and cooperation between business structures and entrepreneurs from the EaP region, supporting more joint exhibitions and fairs.

Boosting regionalisation

- Enhance deeper regional sectoral cooperation, especially in the areas of transport, agriculture, food industry, light industry, tourism, culture, banking sector, education, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and energy.
- Support transport, electricity and broadband connectivity between Georgia and the EU and among EaP countries; link the South Caucasus countries to the EU electricity grid.
- Provide additional support to a cooperation mechanism among EaP countries in the field of security, fighting against hybrid threats and the spread of disinformation in the EU, ensuring a long-term perspective.

Supporting cooperation among AA/DCFTA countries

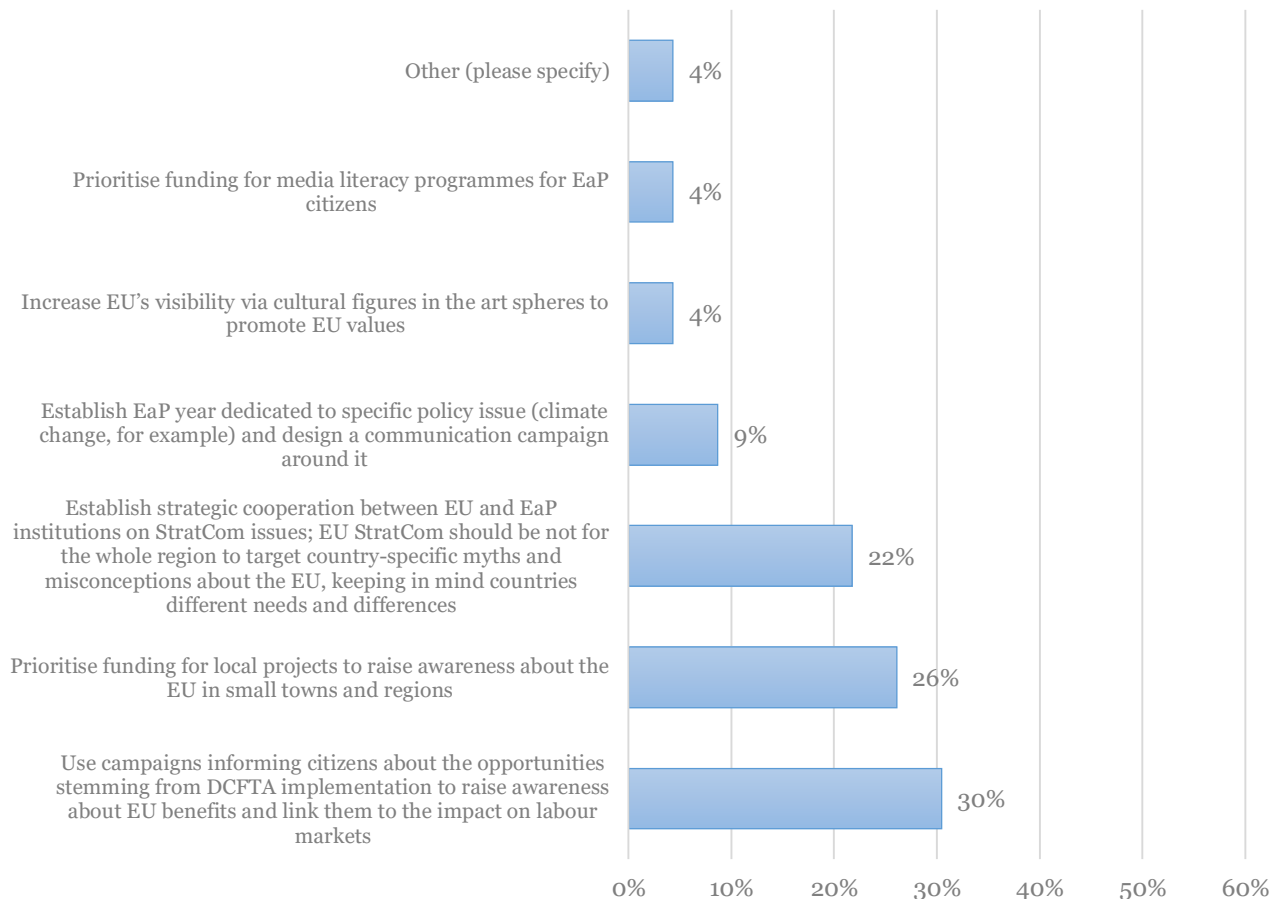
- Support partnership between the three AA/DCFTA countries through the creation of a regional forum of cooperation, similar to the V4 or EFTA. Such a partnership would have the aim of integrating the AA countries into the EU, deepening trade relations, improving democratic development and judicial relations, and bettering communication between the regional states. This should complement the existing multilateral framework, not weaken or replace it.
- Establish a separate platform for AA/DCFTA countries and the EU, like the already proposed EaP+, foreseeing high-level dialogue between the heads of government of the three countries and the EU institutions, with the purpose of coordinating economic and political reforms set out in the agreements.
- Facilitate cross-border and intra-regional trade by helping to establish a free trade area among countries implementing DCFTAs. This will help EaP producers to increase their competitiveness and access to the EU market.
- Foster business-to-business interactions between EU member states and EaP countries, establishing a dedicated support mechanism for Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova – for example, a trust fund pooling resources from public and private donors for investments in projects aiming to improve socioeconomic conditions and infrastructure in the three countries.
- Support cross-border trade with conflict zones, in particular by opening up agricultural support programmes to the residents of those areas. Examples of this could include mobilising financial resources to facilitate trade across the dividing lines within Georgia's Step to a Better Future initiative and its Special Independent Fund, and extending the Transnistrian example of accessing the DCFTA to other EaP countries affected by conflict.
- Focus more on conflict resolution issues through trilateral cooperation between AA/DCFTA countries, organising sub-working groups to work on security-cooperation initiatives.

4. BOOSTING EU VISIBILITY IN THE EAP REGION

The results of the online survey of Georgian organisations suggest the most urgent and effective measure that the EU should support to enhance the visibility of the EU in the EaP region is **using campaigns to inform citizens about the opportunities stemming from DCFTA implementation to raise awareness about the benefits of EU integration and link them to the impact on labour market** (chosen by 30% of Georgian respondents). This is followed by **prioritising funding for local projects to raise awareness about the EU in small towns and regions** (26%) and **establishing strategic cooperation between the EU and EaP institutions on StratCom issues** (22%).

EU VISIBILITY IN THE EAP

In your opinion, what would be the most urgent and effective measure to enhance the visibility of the EU in the EaP region? (you can choose only one)



Recommendations

Increasing EU visibility

- Use campaigns informing citizens about the opportunities stemming from DCFTA implementation to raise awareness about the benefits of EU integration, and link them to the impact on labour markets. There is currently a lack of communication to this effect, especially within small towns and villages.
- Increase EU presence during events and public campaigns in smaller contexts, placing billboards and thematic posters (for example, the EU supporting local businesses, the Green New Deal, etc.) and organise more public events in regions and small towns in order to promote the achievements of the EU.
- Organise EU-EaP festivals, information days and civil society meetings, which would engage different groups of local people discussing the concrete achievements and tangible results of the AA/DCFTA.

Boosting and tailoring Strategic Communication (StratCom)

- Strengthen EU StratCom East significantly, allocating more financial resources, designating country desks for each of the EaP countries, and providing support to respective state institutions in the area of strategic communication.
- Adapt strategic communication more effectively to each country's situation, structuring it on results and effective time planning. EaP countries have different needs, yet EU StratCom East is not tailored enough and often falls short of addressing country-specific myths and misconceptions about the EU.
- Establish collaboration between EaP countries and the European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats (Hybrid CoE).

Increasing Media Literacy

- Allocate more funding for educational training on EU integration and DCFTA implementation for local journalists, capitalising on existing successful experiences such as those demonstrated by the [Georgian Institute of Politics](http://gip.ge)¹.
- Support independent media and media organisations which disseminate factually correct information, and which are not affected by the Russian misinformation campaigns.
- Increase financial assistance for projects on media literacy targeting high school and university students.

Better visibility through increased people-to-people contacts

- Increase the non-EU quota in the European Commission “Blue Book” training scheme for the EaP countries.

¹ <http://gip.ge/reporting-on-eu-related-issues-by-local-media-outlets-in-georgia-effectiveness-of-government-media-cooperation>

- Organise more study visits for Georgian youth activists and young political leaders to EU institutions. Maintain the “EU Young Ambassadors” and “Eastern Partnership Civil Society fellowships” projects.

Improving EU media presence in EaP countries

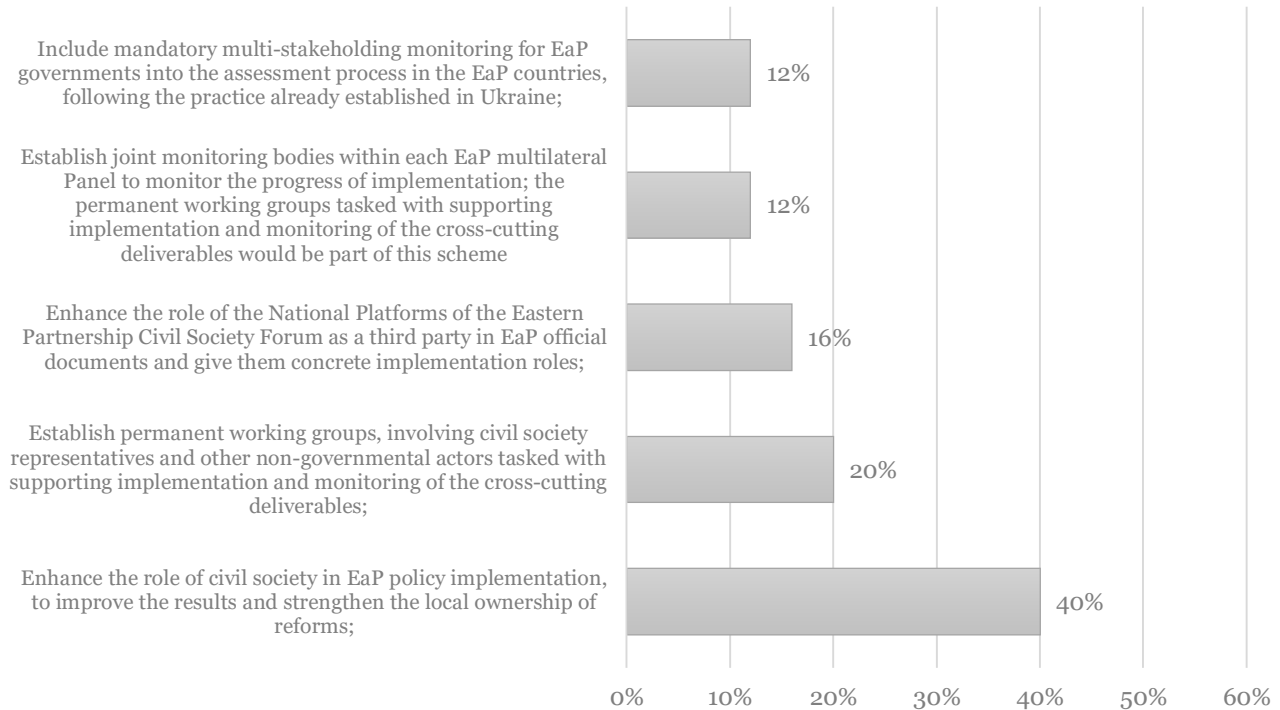
- Support the expansion of free broadcasting of European TV channels such as Euronews in Georgia, including in the local language, to increase the dissemination of European news directly on the ground.
- Fund the translation of educational and scientific news into the Georgian language in order to spread more positive narratives about the EU and its values.
- Finance professional-standard educational programmes about the EU and the EaP to be featured in local media, on different TV channels and radio stations.

5. STRENGTHENING THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY

A plurality of Georgian respondents (40%) choose **enhancing the role of CSOs in policy implementation to improve the results and strengthen the local ownership of the reform** as the most urgent and effective measure to increase civil society’s involvement in the EaP policy. According to 20% of respondents, **establishing permanent working groups, involving civil society representatives and other non-governmental actors tasked with supporting implementation and monitoring of the cross-cutting deliverables** should be a priority, since these groups would transfer needs-based knowledge and expertise effectively and at short notice. Moreover, 16% of respondents agree that **enhancing the role of the National Platforms of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum as a third party in EaP official documents and giving them concrete implementation roles** would be the most urgent and effective measure.

STRENGTHENING THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY

In your opinion, what would be the most urgent and effective measure to increase civil society's involvement in the EaP policy? (you can choose only one)



Recommendations

Strengthen and improve the monitoring role of CSOs

- Strengthen the role of CSOs in the assessment and monitoring of EaP policy implementation by establishing a more constructive dialogue between the government and civil society. Include civil society as a third party in EaP official documents and give it a concrete implementation role.
- Support EaP countries in institutionalising cooperation with the National Platforms of the EaP Civil Society Forum by replicating Georgia's own experience, where the national Parliament and National Platform signed a Memorandum of Understanding in 2015. This memorandum serves as a basis for the involvement of civil society in the implementation of Georgia's Association Agreement with the European Union and should be taken as an example by other EaP countries as well.
- Ensure the broad and inclusive involvement of civil society organisations in official processes, going beyond established circles and vetting the relevance of CSOs' expertise. Set up an inclusive and multi-stakeholder joint monitoring body to keep track of the progress of implementation of the AA/DCFTA in order to strengthen and formalise the role of CSOs and increase scrutiny of the government's actions.
- Enhance the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Facility in order to effectively acquire knowledge through tailor-made e-learning and/or workshops. There is currently a lack of

expertise within CSOs, especially on technical matters such as aviation, maritime affairs, meteorology, and the blue economy. This gap needs to be filled in order to provide qualified monitoring in the corresponding areas of the AA/DCFTA.

- Continue supporting the EaP Index, which is considered a good example of a regional monitoring mechanism developed by a CSO, and elaborate more instruments of this kind to produce independent observations and reporting on the Europeanisation of the region, like fact-finding missions in the fields of human rights and the rule of law.
- Increase communication between EU Delegations and CSOs, encouraging the formation of joint working groups between them.

Professionalisation of civil society

- Provide special funds for the institutional strengthening of CSOs to improve their internal structure, management and staff policies as well as their ability to develop tasks and objectives.
- Support CSO development by funding pre-meetings of experts to further elaborate new policies and ideas for working group meetings.

Funding civil society

- Prioritise smaller grants that would allow a higher number of CSOs to take part in funding calls. This would provide the EaP region with better coverage in terms of civil society projects and initiatives.
- Support the establishment of a state foundation that could finance the civil society sector, as currently CSOs are primarily empowered by external actors, foundations, embassies, and international organisations.

ANNEX – SUMMARY OF METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum’s contribution to DG NEAR’s Structured Consultation is a synthesis of a comprehensive process of internal consultation of the Forum’s membership base. The consultation was based on a methodology especially conceived to distil recommendations that would: (i) have a regional dimension while preserving country specificities; (ii) give a clear sense of prioritisation; (iii) be the result of a debate among civil society experts with complementary expertise on cross-sectoral areas; and (iv) ensure a high number of contributions to ensure the recommendations’ legitimacy, as well as country and expertise balance.

Within the elaborated methodology, three different but complementary mechanisms were used to gather the collective input of EaP CSF member CSOs from the six EaP countries and the EU:

- *six national in-person focus groups*, to debate and formulate recommendations featuring each EaP country’s national perspective on EaP and national priorities;
- *four online focus groups*, to formulate regional, thematic recommendations featuring experts with different profiles, but the same areas of specialism, from the EaP countries and the EU
- *one online survey*, intended as the most inclusive segment of the consultation, adding a quantitative element to the methodology that enabled the prioritisation of policy recommendations.

All three segments were conducted in October 2019 and involved over 200 experts.

The input from the segments was used to put together a synthesis report based on major common patterns that emerged across the focus groups and the online survey. The results of the survey and focus groups were also segmented by country and further distilled into dedicated country reports.

National in–person’ focus groups

The national focus groups were designed to capture in-country perspectives and country-specific recommendations. Six focus groups were conducted in October 2019 – one in each of the EaP states – with a total of 68 participants. Each discussion lasted for about four hours and was aimed at gathering the input of a group of EaP CSF member organisations, with balanced yet diverse expertise, on a set of questions formulated around the structure of DG NEAR’s Structured Consultation – i.e. four clusters of questions built around one scenario each. Each focus group followed the same protocol, built around four scenarios and containing a set of mandatory and optional questions that national FG facilitators could select from. Questions were formulated for national-level discussions to allow the aggregation of a balanced set of recommendations for the EU based on:

- Identifying current policy practices, actions and deliverables that the EU should retain in its post-2020 policy framework and ineffective or counter-productive practices which should be discontinued;
- Identifying new policy practices, actions and deliverables the EU could initiate;

- Testing policy ideas and actions already identified by the EaP CSF in previous rounds of internal consultations, or proposed as part of its existing written output (c.f. “Advancing Eastern Partnership: 23 Civil society ideas for the policy beyond 2020” policy paper);
- Identifying processes and policies that the EaP CSF should advocate further;
- Identifying umbrella recommendations as well as concrete policy actions that the EU could adopt.

Each focus group’s facilitator prepared an analytical report of the discussions and submitted it to the methodology expert who used the six summary reports in the drafting of the synthesis report.

Online focus groups

Online focus groups captured thematic recommendations in a regional discussion, and were open to both EaP and EU civil society experts. Four online focus groups were conducted in October 2019. These addressed the following thematic areas:

- FG1: Economic development
- FG2: Human capital development
- FG3: Good governance, rule of law, and security
- FG4: Civil society engagement

Each focus group hosted 5-10 civil society experts – 24 in total – all of whom are active within the working groups of the EaP CSF with relevant professional background and expertise specific to the thematic area discussed. Each focus group hosted a one-hour discussion on a set of 7-9 questions, which addressed each thematic cluster from a regional perspective. Questions were formulated to allow aggregation of a set of recommendations at regional level for the EU, based on the same logic and criteria as the in-person focus groups elaborated above. Furthermore, questions sought to build upon and complement the key findings from the national focus groups with regional recommendations, as well as to triangulate the conclusions of overlapping discussions.

Four summary reports were produced as a result of the online focus groups, and used in the drafting of the final synthesis report. These included a general set of recommendations as well as one for each question asked in a summary form. When drafting the summary recommendations, the following questions were asked to guide the narrative: *What patterns emerge from the discussions? What are the common themes across the EaP region? What new policy actions could the EU pursue beyond 2020? Can these be generalised for the region based on the focus group discussions?*

Online survey

The online survey was conceived as the most inclusive segment of the consultation, adding a quantitative element to the methodology that enabled the prioritisation of policy recommendations. One general online questionnaire complemented the focus groups. The survey was offered in two languages, English and Russian, and it was made available to all six partner countries of the Eastern Partnership, as well as to EaP CSF member organisations based in EU

member states. A total of 160 representatives of EaP CSF member organisations filled out the online questionnaire from 3rd to 14th October 2019.

The survey asked a mix of 15 open-ended and closed questions (+2 identification questions) grouped into six themes, following the structure of DG NEAR's Structured Consultation questionnaire:

- a. Economic development (Q1, Q2)
- b. Human capital development (Q3, Q4)
- c. Good governance, rule of law, and security (Q5, Q6, Q7)
- d. Intra-EaP cooperation (Q8, Q9)
- e. EU visibility in the EaP region (Q10, Q11)
- f. EU support to civil society (Q12, Q13, Q14)
- g. Other (Q15)

An online survey report was produced which synthesized the 160 responses of the EaP CSF member organisations into summaries of recommendations per question asked. All responses in English and Russian were individually analysed and grouped at the national level first. These were then clustered to identify regional and thematic patterns across the six EaP partner countries. The summaries of recommendations provided for each of the questions thus reflect common patterns identified across the region, and are presented in the form of recommendations for the EU.

More Information

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