

## **EaP CSF Working Group 3 Meeting 2024** **Environment, climate change and energy security**

**Venue: NH Danube City Hotel**

*Tuesday, 19 November 2024*

On November 19, 2024, EaP CSF Working Group 3 (WG3) delegates held their second meeting of the year.

The meeting was moderated by the Working Group 3 EaP Coordinator, **Nataliya Andrushevych**, Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum.

### **Key Objectives**

- Report to delegates on EaP CSF activities since the last Working Group 3 meeting;
- Ensure delegates are up to date about the ongoing process of the elaboration of the WG3 policy paper;
- Facilitate the exchange of views and recommendations with EU stakeholders in view of the vote of the EaP CSF Civil Society Summit resolution.

The discussions were structured around the following **agenda points**:

- Introduction and icebreaking activity
- WG3 reporting & feedback
- Updates on WG3 policy paper
- Updates from COP29
- Finalisation of the EaP CSF Summit Resolution
- WG3 country updates

### **REPORTING AND FEEDBACK**

The WG3 parallel session was opened by the WG3 EaP coordinator, **Nataliya Andrushevych** with the introduction and icebreaking session – each delegate had a chance to present their name, country, organisation and facts about the EaP.

Then Nataliya Andrushevych introduced delegates the WG3 activities stemming from the WG3 2024-2025 Work Plan.

### **WG3 POLICY PAPER**

The WG3 coordinator provided updates and the timeline for the policy paper titled *“Environmental security in the EaP countries: state of play, challenges and opportunities”*.

The elaboration of the paper by Anna Golubovska-Onisimova is based on an inclusive process. A dedicated survey for the paper would be open until 29 November December and 12 interviews are currently scheduled. The paper is aimed at being finalised in February 2025 ahead of the 7<sup>th</sup> EaP Summit.



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## **UPDATES FROM UN Climate Change Conference (UNFCCC COP 29)**

WG3 delegates, Nugzar Kokhraidze and Anton Antonenko, shared their impressions and insights from attending COP29 in Baku. This was followed by a discussion on how WG3 should contribute to and participate in the next COP.

## **FINALISATION OF THE RESOLUTION**

With the support of the WG3 coordinator, the WG3 delegates reviewed and revised sections of the draft resolution that solely relate to the thematic area of expertise, namely, environment, energy, climate change. The WG3 coordinator gathered input and later shared it with the EaP CSF Secretariat focal point. Following its adoption, the resolution is now available [here](#).

## **COUNTRY UPDATES (in alphabetical order)**

### **Armenia**

**Civil Society:** There is a noticeable positive trend of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) expanding beyond Yerevan and establishing a presence across various regions. Local communities and NGOs are now organising press conferences in Yerevan to bring to attention regional issues. Additionally, they are actively lobbying mining companies and working on legislative changes on behalf of NGOs. **Challenges:** Despite the efforts of civil society, there still are numerous problems and legislative gaps, particularly in the implementation and enforcement of existing laws.

### **Azerbaijan**

**Civil Society:** Ecological NGOs in Azerbaijan are always ready to support the reform process. They have participated in the translation of EU ecological legislation for adaptation in Azerbaijan. However, the absence of a genuine reform process remains a significant issue. Also, independent NGOs face government pressure, and many NGOs working for the government have emerged.

**Environment:** Attention must be given to biodiversity protection, especially forests.

**Climate Change:** Efforts should focus on providing real ecological education to prevent mass manipulation and increasing awareness about past and current climate change.

**Energy security:** Support is needed for pipeline and electric energy transmission projects, particularly those involving renewable energy sources, such as the Black Sea cable and wind and solar power plants. Due to the complex political relations between the government and the EU, adhering to EU environmental principles is becoming increasingly difficult.

### **Belarus**

**Civil society:** The situation is concerning. Many civil society activists are detained, imprisoned, or in exile.

**Environment:** Belarusian environmental NGOs are collaborating on a project called 'Green Belarus 2050', outlining their ideal future. Civil society remains highly active, focusing on current strategies, best practices, and roadmaps for effective implementation. Unfortunately, renewable energy development in Belarus is not progressing.

## **Georgia**

**Civil Society:** The situation remains confusing following the adoption of the 'Foreign Agent Law'. Many civil society organisations have yet to be registered, and others are uncertain about their next steps.

**Environment:** CSOs are undergoing discussion on drafting a letter to the government to establish rules and guidelines in case of a natural disaster. Forest law and other organisations have already made a statement on this matter. According to the latest report from the European Commission, Georgia is at an "early stage" in terms of energy and environmental development. While the country made significant progress, recent setbacks have sabotaged further advancement.

## **Moldova**

**Civil society:** The Civil Society in Moldova actively monitors and assists by providing legal and policy recommendations to ministries, government bodies, and public policy in implementing sustainability and climate change initiatives. It has been invited to join the Working Group for the EU integration process.

However, they face significant challenges, including limited organisation at the local level and restricted funding opportunities. These limitations impact their ability to address local community needs and support local authorities in implementing environmental actions.

Additionally, many people lack the education to recognise their role in these efforts. Despite these challenges, civil society has developed considerable expertise in environmental protection and can offer valuable advice on policy and implementation.

**Environment:** The government has approved a new environmental strategy for 2024-2030. As part of this strategy, a national reforestation programme has been developed to increase forest land cover. The Ministry of Energy is developing a climate and energy plan to ensure energy security. This plan aims to establish connections with neighbouring countries, Romania and Ukraine, and integrate Moldova into the European energy network.

**Recommendations for the Eastern Partnership (EaP) policy for 2025:** the focus should be on prioritising inclusive and well-funded initiatives, strengthening regional collaboration, empowering civil society, and promoting youth engagement in environmental protection.

## **Ukraine**

**War impact on energy infrastructure, nature and climate change:** More than 6,000 environmental crimes have been documented, the liberated territories cannot be restored until they are demined, and the Black and Azov Seas are also suffering from the consequences of the war.

Delegates welcomed the relevant EU companies to assist Ukraine in the development of decentralized electricity and heat generation facilities instead of those destroyed by the Russians. Also, the delegates welcomed the EU's and Energy Community's efforts to strengthen energy resilience through the UESF (Ukraine Energy Support Fond).

**EU accession:** The main achievements are climate law, industrial pollution, progress in the field of waste management and water resources)

The problems: state environmental control, access to environmental information and participation in decision-making, nature protection.

Steps to be taken by **civil society**:

- To be a watchdog (recovery process, European integration)
- Present and promote best practices of green recovery and rebuilding
- Advocacy campaigns
- Building coalitions and cooperation between stakeholders
- Supporting public green discourse
- Supporting the European Green Deal, and cooperation with relevant organisations around Europe
- To continue mainstreaming environment and climate change issues within Neighbourhood policies and instruments
- To promote security issues for further development of the region - in energy, environment, climate