

EaP CSF Working Group 5 Meeting 2024

Venue: NH Danube City Hotel, room Sigmund Freud 3

On November 19, 2024, EaP CSF Working Group 5 (WG5) delegates held a parallel session during the EaP CSF Summit at the NH Danube Hotel in Vienna. The meeting was moderated by the WG5 Coordinators, **Elen Manaseryan**, Working Group 5 EaP Coordinator, EaP CSF and **Lana Willebrand**, Working Group 5 EU Coordinator, EaP CSF.

Agenda of the meeting:

- Finalisation of the EaP CSF Summit Resolution
- Updates on the workplan
- WG country updates

I- FINALISATION OF THE RESOLUTION

With the support of WG5 coordinators, WG5 delegates analysed and revised the parts of the draft resolution that solely relate to the thematic area of competence of their WG. WG5 coordinators gathered input and later shared it with the EaP CSF Secretariat focal point.

II- UPDATES ON THE WORKPLAN

The WG5 coordinators updated the group on the status of implementation of the workplan. They also presented the progress made by the consultant on the policy paper.

III- COUNTRY UPDATES

Ukraine

Post-war reconstruction: Currently, Ukraine lacks a comprehensive post-war reconstruction plan. However, under the Ukraine Facility, the 'Rebuild business joint platform' was created to address this. The Platform is based on four basic principles such as innovation, inclusiveness, prevention of corruption and professional support and assistance of the recovery process. On the issue of reconstruction, the UNP published a position paper which we invite members to read on this [link](#).
Job market: Since 2020, there has been a positive trend in unemployment levels. Moreover, the share of women among entrepreneurs has increased.



Funded by
the European Union

Moldova

The Tripartite Economic and Social Council was established in Moldova to discuss issues related to social dialogue and labour policies. However, its decisions are only recommendations and not mandatory.

The Republic of Moldova still has not formalized a collaboration mechanism between the authorities and civil society similar to the European Economic and Social Committee. Despite efforts by public authorities to communicate with civil society, these efforts remain fragmented. Only one-third of all parliamentary projects included input from CSOs.

The main challenge for civil society in the near future is to become more actively involved in the processes of transposing the Acquis Communautaire into national legislation, specifically, supporting the authorities through the expertise they have.

Georgia

The Georgian Trade Union Movement has ratified the International Convention on Trade Unions. The implementation process requires special attention.

Recommendations addressing the most challenging issues related to labour and social rights in Georgia are the following:

- Introduce a universally applicable minimum wage to reflect the actual cost of living in Georgia;
- Promotion and development of social dialogue at all levels;
- Point out that access to social protection is a key element in building a just and democratic society, where economic development is inclusive;
- Reiterate their call for ratification of ILO Conventions 81, 129, 155, and 187;
- Call on the Government to take further steps for ratification of ILO Conventions 102, 156, 183 and 190;
- Underline the need to ensure decent working conditions for platform workers.

Belarus

Civil society representatives face harsh imprisonment conditions and are accused of crimes like extremism, despite merely advocating for their rights and organising strikes when their voices are not heard. Authorities often extend sentences for those initially given shorter terms and former union members frequently face exile due to the high risk of persecution.

In other sectors, such as education, many individuals are dismissed for their political views and those who have been imprisoned struggle to find regular employment upon release. Additionally, the state restricts students from pursuing education abroad and mandates that graduates work in state-assigned positions. While many civil society organisations collaborate with central authorities, there are significant limitations on expressing dissent when authorities make poor decisions.

The only positive aspect is that local authorities have received funds for local investments.

Armenia

Engagement of Civil Society, main challenges (Political and legal)

- Limited participation of Civil Society in the Reform Process due to a lack of communication platforms about social and labour policies
- Financial sustainability

Strengths:

- Established Networks & Advocacy Skills
- Public Trust and Engagement
- Effective in promoting inclusive social policies
- Advocacy for Policy Amendments
- Monitoring & Awareness

The role of EaP Policy for civil society: capacity-building programs, adaptation of European Social Dialogue Models, Support for Labor Standards and EU Integration.
Recommendations for EaP Policy post-2025: green economy initiative in promoting green jobs, Climate Adaptation and Fair Transition.

Azerbaijan

In 2018, Azerbaijan approved the 'Employment Strategy of the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2019-2030' with the primary goal of reducing unemployment rates. However, the strategy has not been effective enough in addressing youth unemployment.

Main problems: there is a significant need to improve the legislation regulating the activities of NGOs, limited participation in the activities of the CSOs, the need to strengthen trust between the public and NGOs, the need for diversification of the local financial opportunities for NGOs, and the need to strengthen the participation of NGOs in decision-making.

Strengths: NGOs have diversified their strategies to meet the community needs, the states provide 3 million dollars annually to support NGOs, NGOs have improved local governance, and digital advocacy has become a powerful tool for youth-led initiatives.