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**EASTERN PARTNERSHIP
CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM**

Environmental Security in the Eastern Partnership Countries: State of Play, Challenges and Opportunities

2 June 2025

The policy paper launch event addressed the main environment and security challenges in the Eastern Partnership (EaP) region and the extent to which they impact environmental security in the region, particularly in the context of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. The event facilitated dialogue between civil society, EU and international stakeholders in the field of environment, climate and energy.

Ms Nataliya Andrusevych, EaP Coordinator of EaP Civil Society Forum Working Group 3 and Chair of the Governing Board of "Society and Environment", opened the discussion by highlighting the growing nexus between climate and security. Ms. Andrusevych emphasised that environmental issues such as pollution, dependence on fossil fuels and biodiversity loss are shared across the EaP region, while environmental governance remains weak due to under-resourced institutions and poor legislative implementation. Ms Andrusevych pointed to particularly acute issues in Belarus, where nearly 90 environmental NGOs have been closed, and civil society faces severe repression. In Ukraine and Moldova, civil society complains about the lack of dialogue between the authorities and the public. She called for stronger EU engagement and a revision of the EaP policy which would include a stronger security component. Four key recommendations were advanced: strengthening political will for green transformation; enhancing EU support in legislation and implementation of the environmental policy; improving stakeholder dialogue; and creating a regional platform for sharing best practices.

Ms Sari Kouvo, Climate, Peace and Security Adviser at the European External Action Service, reiterated EU's commitment in addressing the impact of climate change and environmental degradation on peace, security and defence, best exemplified by the Joint Communication on the Climate-Security Nexus. The document stands on four pillars, namely the importance of evidence-based policymaking, integrating climate and security concerns into all aspects of EU external policy, building capacity

through knowledge sharing, and fostering partnerships with governments and civil society. Ms Kouvo referenced recent key EU policy initiatives, such as the adoption of the EU Preparedness Union Strategy and the Water Resilience Strategy, underscoring their relevance for ensuring long-term stability and security in the EaP region.

Ms Angela Bularga, Programme Officer at DG Enlargement and Eastern Neighbourhood, European Commission, provided an overview of ongoing EU-funded environmental initiatives in the region, such as the €20 million allocated through the EU4Green Recovery East (EU4GRE). Projects implemented by partners focus on promoting circular economy, managing water resources and approximation of EU environmental law. Efforts include producing evidence-based policy making, addressing transboundary issues on climate and security and identifying actions for local communities to become more resilient to climate change. Ms Bularga also spotlighted the EU for Improving Environmental Monitoring in the Black Sea (EU4EMBLAS), which runs through 2025, and the May 2025 Joint Communication on The European Union's strategic approach to the Black Sea region that links security, growth and environmental resilience.

Mr Matthew Griffiths, Senior Programme Manager at the OECD, highlighted the evolution of water policy discourse in the EaP, from water quality and access to services in remote areas to addressing water's role in climate adaptation and biodiversity. He noted that civil society, particularly in Ukraine and Moldova, had been instrumental in shaping policy and denouncing bad environmental practices. Recent joint efforts between the OECD and the EU focus on integrating water, energy and agriculture issues in national policy dialogues. Mr Griffiths discussed challenges around sustainable water financing in the EaP region, particularly tariff reforms, and mentioned OECD work to link tariffs with policy priorities. Finally, he pointed to the growing momentum around nature-based solutions, stressing the need to combine governmental initiatives with local and civil society expertise.

Mr Ruslan Havryliuk, National Facilitator of the Ukrainian National Platform at the EaP Civil Society Forum and Head of the National Ecological Centre of Ukraine, delivered the concluding remarks by emphasising the critical urgency of addressing environmental and climate security amidst Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, and stressed that civil society is a key driver of change in the region and therefore must be more actively engaged in policy reform and dialogue to ensure a green and just transition.

The event underscored the importance of achieving environmental and climate resilience in the EaP region. Stronger partnership between civil society, governments and international actors is essential in addressing environmental security threats and driving a just green transition across the EaP region.

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The information and views set out in this report are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official opinion of the European Commission.



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