

EaP CSF Working Group 1 (WG1)

Annual Report

This report presents the key activities, achievements, and thematic contributions of the EaP CSF Working Group 1 (WG1) under the 2025 Work Plan.

During the yearly reporting period, WG1 delegates participated in several internal and external meetings, contributed to consultations and the elaboration of one comprehensive policy paper.

A major milestone of the year was the completion and launch of the WG1 flagship policy paper *“Advancing democratisation in the Eastern Partnership countries: the role of civil society in national reforms, and European integration”*. The paper was drafted by WG1 consultant, Anastasia Pociumban.

The policy paper examines how civil society can support national reforms and European integration across the Eastern Partnership region. It outlines the key obstacles that hinder meaningful participation—such as shrinking civic space, increasing repression, limited institutionalised dialogue, and reduced external funding—while emphasising civil society’s continued role as a trusted partner driving democratic reforms, accountability, and public engagement. The paper also reviews current practices and offers recommendations to strengthen civil society’s contribution to democratic transformation and rule of law reforms throughout the region. A launch event was organised on 14 May in Brussels. The discussants were:

- **Anastasia Pociumban**, Research Fellow at German Council on Foreign Relations, Author of the paper *“Advancing democratisation in the Eastern Partnership countries: the role of civil society in national reforms, and European integration”*
- **Radica Nusdorfer**, Team Leader for Good Governance and Inclusive Society, Directorate-General for Enlargement and Eastern Neighbourhood (DG ENEST), European Commission
- **Paloma Hall Caballero**, Team Leader, Eastern Partnership and Regional Cooperation, Directorate for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, European External Action Service
- **Maria Piechowska**, Ukraine Analyst, The Polish Institute of International Affairs

The main takeaways from the event and the paper presentation can be found [here](#).

Annual WG1 Meetings

In line with its Annual Plan, WG1 held two annual meetings, one online (17 June 2025) and one in-person, on the margins on the EaP CSF Civil Society Summit (2 December 2025).

The meeting on 17 June featured country updates from all 6 EaP countries and a discussion on advocacy priorities.

The meeting on 2 December was dedicated to gathering insights and recommendations on the funding needs of CSOs from the EaP region. The input was presented during the donor panel discussion organised on the same day.

Participation in Regional Platforms and Dialogues

WG1 members and delegates participated in the following meetings:

- **Workshop on Rule of Law in the Eastern Partnership**, Warsaw, 12-13 May 2025, Hasmik Harutyunyan, Armenia
- **Structured Dialogue for Civil Society and Local Authorities on Gender Action Plan III 2025**, online, 16-18 September 2025, Shahla Ismayil, Azerbaijan
- **Eastern Partnership Working Group for Gender Equality**, Chisinau 29-30 September 2025, Ekaterina Kouznetsova, Belarus, Liliana Palihovici, Moldova