

In Search for COVID-19 Silver Lining: opportunities and policy solutions to be harnessed in the EaP region

Launch Event of the [EaP CSF Policy Papers Series on the effects of COVID-19](#)

14-15 April 2021

Online Zoom webinar

- Agenda -

One year into the COVID-19 pandemic, how did Eastern Partnership countries experience its disruptive effect pervasive across various aspects of life and policy?

Given the overlap between the end of the implementation of the 20 Deliverables for 2020 and the historical COVID-19 crisis, the EaP CSF policy papers series on the effects of COVID-19 offers a well-researched perspective over several thematic areas ranging from media freedom and digital literacy to labour migration and waste management. Covering essential questions that may have had a different answer - unless irreversibly disrupted by the current pandemic's staggering effects - our analysis provides EU and EaP stakeholders, strategists, civil society and media with thematic and regional insights and policy recommendations.

The Launch Event consisting of 3 panels will bring together authors, experts and stakeholders both on stage and in the audience aiming at highlighting the silver linings that the pandemic presents - opportunities and policy solutions - that should and could be harnessed in the Eastern Partnership during and beyond the pandemic.

14 April 2021

Panel 1: What are the silver linings of the COVID-19 pandemic in the EaP region?

The panel will feature the EaP CSF **framework policy paper - COVID-19 as potential for change in the EaP countries**, which sums up main regional and thematic trends from seven papers and provides an overarching regional and country-focused policy recommendations and solutions that can still be incorporated into the EaP roadmap for the period of 2021-2025. The discussion will be illustrated with case studies, examples, and good practices from the region as well as from additional policy areas.

Which trends in responding to the major crisis can be identified across the EaP countries? How to maximize the synergy effect of future policy solutions based on the experience from this crisis? In which areas can the COVID-19 impact effectively boost the modernization and reforms in the EaP countries?

Register for Panel 1 [here](#).

14.00 - 15.30 CET (90 min)

What are the silver linings of the COVID-19 pandemic in the EaP region?

Opening remarks

Natalia Yerashevich, Director of the EaP CSF Secretariat

Moderated discussion (60 min)

Moderator **Věra Řiháčková Pachtá**, Advocacy Manager, EaP CSF Secretariat

Speakers **Ruslan Zheckov**, Co-author of the EaP CSF Framework Policy Paper “*COVID-19 as Potential for Change in the EaP Countries*”, Senior consultant in green and circular economy, GreenEdge Consulting

Lawrence Meredith, Director for Neighbourhood East and Institution Building in the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR), European Commission

Pavel Havlíček, Research Fellow at the Research Centre, Association for International Affairs, Czech Republic

Veronika Movchan, Academic Director, Head of the Center for Economic Studies, IER, Ukraine

Q&A (20 min)

15 April 2021

Panel 2: Impact of COVID-19 on Green Deal implementation in the EaP - waste and water management during a pandemic

The second panel will look at the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic for the implementation of the ambitious Green Deal agenda in the EaP countries. It will explore in more detail the peculiarities of the **water and waste management sectors**.

What experiences have to be taken into account as the pandemic is not over for designing the implementation of the Green Deal in the EaP countries? Which opportunities this crisis brought about for boosting the implementation of reforms in the specific area of waste and water management and how these lessons learned can spur the transition to circular economy and new opportunities for economic development in the EaP countries?

Register for Panel 2 [here](#).

10.00 - 11.15 CET (75 min)

Impact of COVID-19 on Green Deal implementation in the EaP - waste and water management during a pandemic

Moderator **Ina Coseru**, Head of the National Environmental Center, Moldova

Speakers **Alex Patonia**, Co-author of the EaP CSF policy paper
“[Waste and water management in the time of COVID-19: A tale of six countries](#)”, visiting research fellow, the Oxford Institute for Energy Studies

Krzysztof Michalak, Senior Programme Manager, Green Growth and Global Relations Division, Environment Directorate, OECD

Michael Rupp, Team Leader DG NEAR, European Commission

Inga Zarafyan, President, EcoLur, Armenia

Q&A (15 min)

Panel 3: Media freedom and digital literacy during and beyond COVID-19 pandemic in the EaP region

The third panel showcases the intertwined findings provided by two policy papers “**Freedom of speech and media plurality in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic**” and “**Digital literacy in times of the COVID-19 in the EaP countries**”. The need for independent scrutiny, access to information and digital literacy of the citizens in order to find, analyse and understand information, has become even more urgent in times of pandemic when governments' action or inaction can save or endanger lives.

How to ensure open debates in the EaP societies on the burning issues including the solution-oriented response to major public health crisis? How to address the systemic deficiencies linked to great extent to the quality of democracy that have manifested themselves with even greater clarity during the pandemic in the domains of freedom of speech, media landscape and digital literacy of the EaP population?

Register for Panel 3 [here](#).

14.00 - 15.15 CET (75 min)

Media freedom and digital literacy during and beyond COVID-19 pandemic in the EaP region

Moderator **Dmytro Khutkyy**, Policy and Advocacy Advisor, European Digital Development Alliance

Speakers **Tinatin Akhvlediani**, Author of the EaP CSF policy paper "[Digital literacy in times of the COVID-19 in the EaP countries](#)", researcher, Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS)

Moritz Höpner, Co-author of the EaP CSF policy paper "[Freedom of speech and media plurality in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic](#)", Research and Development Specialist at the University of Luxembourg

Petras Auštrevičius, Member of the European Parliament, Renew Europe Group

Volha Siakhovich, Legal expert, Belarusian Association of Journalists

Q&A (15 min)