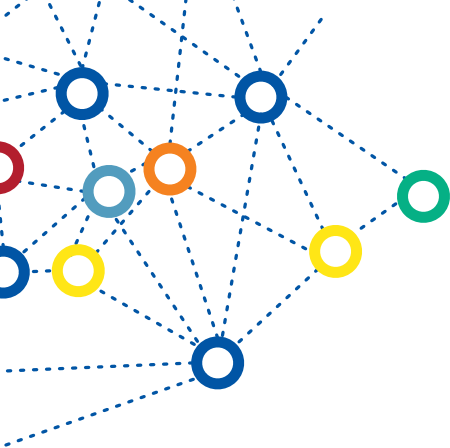




EASTERN PARTNERSHIP

Civil Society Forum

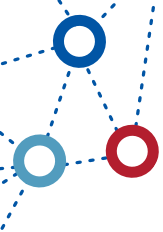
EaP CSF 2018 IN A SNAPSHOT



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Letter from the Co-chairs

Dear members and friends of the EaP CSF,

Much has **changed** in 2018 in the Eastern Partnership region. Five Eastern Partnership countries — **Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia and Ukraine** — and some **European Union member states**, are celebrating the **100th anniversary** of their independence this year. The symbolism of the 100th anniversary of national independence for five EaP countries led then by progressive, reformist governments prompts **self-reflection and a re-evaluation** of the future for both the Eastern Partnership and the European Union.

This year, the **Velvet Revolution** in April in Armenia was a turning point for the country. After the resignation of the previous Prime Minister and his government, the newly elected Armenian government faces a numerous challenges: fighting corruption, ensuring constitutional and institutional change, securing free and democratic elections, dealing with political prisoners, as well as numerous environmental problems. This wholly unexpected change in Armenia brings **hope** that the **reform process** will not only lead to a **better future for the Armenians** but also provides a model and example of peaceful change and reform for other members of the Eastern Partnership. At the same time, the changes in Armenia raise several questions on how **sustainable** the new governance model is.

This applies to all six EaP countries since the past few years have shown that the lack of **sustainable democratic institutions** is the main **cause of stagnation** in our countries. The preliminary results of our soon to be published **Eastern Partnership Index**, reveal **modest developments** in the protection of human rights, but backtracking in the important areas of media and judicial independence, public

administration and in the fight against corruption. Overall, the pace of reforms remains **slow** and their **sustainability is fragile**. While **Ukraine** opts for closer cooperation with the EU and strives to use new approaches to deal with political and economic issues, **Moldova** has reversed on its European path.

The authorities in **Azerbaijan** unfortunately remain convinced that repressive policies against civil rights, the continued detention of political prisoners and tight controls on the right of free assembly and civil society organisations enable them to maintain control in the country. They are mistaken as only legitimate, freely elected governments, can secure long term growth and stability, safeguarded by legitimate institutions.

In **Belarus**, change is glacially slow as the country's ruler seeks a way to win support from the EU which would enable the country to ease its debt burden without freeing the energy of its citizens through liberal political and economic reforms. Despite the pluralistic and competitive nature of the Presidential elections in **Georgia**, where for the first time in the history of independent state a second round of presidential elections has been appointed, the electoral process is characterized by a high level of polarisation, which vividly showed the need for greater efforts for the democratic transformations in the country.

It is also obvious that the reforms track, especially in the associated countries having EU membership ambition should be more dynamic and sustained, being accompanied by further strengthening of democratic institutions under conditions of mounting support per “more for more” principle that gives additional incentives to enhance the reform efforts. Meanwhile we are changing...

Change has also come to the Forum itself. After 9 years in existence, more and more is expected of the Forum itself. The EU institutions see the EaP CSF as a **trusted partner** that has a broad range of expertise that covering four **EaP Platforms and Panels** and operating in a **democratic and transparent manner** on all levels. Therefore, the Steering Committee has authored a broad ranging reform which was adopted as of November 1, 2018, thanks to a vote by the Tallinn delegates of the EaP CSF. This reform will allow the expertise of the Forum members to be used more efficiently and to ensure more effective participation in the EaP for all.

The EaP CSF **observes developments in the Eastern Partnership countries and supports the drive by civil society to push for reforms** in line with the 20 Deliverables for 2020, the guiding document for the EaP adopted at the previous EaP Summit.

As a Forum, we have participated in various meetings of the EaP starting from **Ministerial meetings to EaP Platforms and panels to EURONEST and CORLEAP meetings and various EC-initiated consultations**. We have

been vocal on the matters of the concern of our members in the EaP countries and the EU. This year the EaP CSF has been vocal in expressing our concern about the future of EU financial assistance (2021-2027) to Eastern Partnership countries. It **advocated** for taking financial support to the EU neighbourhood out of a general development aid fund and to return to a separate European Neighbourhood Fund based on the existing regulations.

We believe that the **Eastern Partnership policy must be strengthened** to tackle the challenges posed by state capture, corruption and disinformation. To achieve this, **we need a more ambitious approach and a strong partnership between EU institutions and civil society**. The upcoming 10th anniversary of the Eastern Partnership initiative will provide many opportunities to discuss results and achievements, as well as challenges ahead. Halfway in reaching the milestone year 2020 – “20 deliverables for 2020”, **civil society perceives the Eastern Partnership policy and the underlying principles of rule of law, democracy and human rights** as relevant as ever not only in our region but in the Europe as a whole.



Krzysztof Bobinski
Co-chair of the Steering
Committee



Aleksandra Kalatozishvili
Co-chair of the Steering
Committee



EaP CSF in Numbers Overview 2018

Advocacy and policy advice



> **100** issues raised with EU officials, including through the **EaP CSF Members Consultation on the Revised System of Multilateral Platforms and Panels**



> **75** EaP CSF participants took part in almost

> **60** official Eastern Partnership Senior Officials Meetings, platforms, panels and seminars



> **20** of position papers developed for the **EaP Platforms and Panels**



3 EaP Ministerial meetings where the EaP CSF representatives addressed the EU and EaP Ministers



Monitoring of selected deliverables of **20** Deliverables for 2020



Provided input to **9** European Parliament's reports and EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly



Conducted **10** advocacy campaigns



Became a member of the CoE INFO Conference and participated in a series of CoE-organised consultations

Re-granting



13 Projects



270.000 Total Budget



> **50** CSOs involved

Events



> **6** public events, involving EU stakeholders



> **400** participants in total



> **250** attendees at the 10th EaP CSF Annual Assembly

Communications



≈ **13.000** followers on Facebook



> **90** mentions in the media



> **2000** followers on Twitter

EaP CSF in Action

EaP CSF contributes to a more enriched and more people-oriented EaP agenda



At the beginning of 2018, the EaP CSF developed a number of proposals on the implementation of the EaP reformed architecture in order to allow for meaningful participation of the civil society. Five EaP CSF Steering Committee members: Ina Coseru, Haykuhi Harutyunyan, Aleksandra Kalatozishvili, Mikalai Kvantaliani and Hennadiy Maksak participated in the launch event on the new EaP architecture on March 12, providing a vision of the civil society functioning within the new architecture and on the ways of how its expertise will be delivered. To channel the civil society vision on the renewed EaP architecture within the larger group of Brussels-based civil society stakeholders, the EaP CSF held an “Expert Workshop on the three 2020 cross-cutting deliverables”, focusing on civil society, gender and non-discrimina-

tion, strategic communication and media independence.

As of 28 August, EaP CSF has been granted “Participatory Status” within the Council of Europe and Conference of INGOs – International Non-Governmental Organisations



The EaP CSF suggested amendments to the EaP Platforms’ rules of procedure via the written input submitted to the EEAS and DG NEAR at the beginning of the 2018. The Forum is now being invited to Senior Officials Meetings (SOMs) that crown the structure of the EaP Platforms and Panels and serve as a political steer of the system. The EaP CSF representatives Haykuhi Harutyunyan and Goda Neverauskaite participated in SOMs meetings in Spring and Autumn, focusing on 2020 Deliverables, NDICI Regulation as well as governance issues in the region. The EaP CSF followed up by providing comments to the EaP Platforms and Panels’ Work plans that guide the work of the Platforms and Panels in 2018-2019 and actively participating in more than 60 events of the EaP policy initiative.

"The 11-page document with suggestions of 57 EaP CSF members was distributed among relevant stakeholders. Many of the suggestions were taken on board during the finalisation of the Work Programmes for the EaP Platforms."

Together with Foreign Ministers and Ministers responsible for Harmonisation of Digital Markets, the EaP CSF representative Mikalai Kvantaliani took part in Informal Ministerial in Minsk in June 2018. The Forum was also present at two Ministerials in Luxembourg in October — one on Foreign Affairs (with Hennadiy Maksak) and another one on Environment (with Ina Coseru and Anna Golubovska-Onisimova).

The EaP CSF Steering Committee Co-Chairs, Krzysztof Bobinski and Aleksandra Kalatozishvili addressed the 7th Ordinary Session of the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly in June and Steering Committee member Hennadiy Maksak represented the Forum at the Conference of the Regional and Local Authorities for the Eastern Partnership (CORLEAP) 8th Annual Meeting in Kyiv in September. Moreover, EaP CSF was represented and delivered its interventions at meetings of Civil Society Platforms formed under Association Agreements.

EaP CSF increases its engagement in dialogue on sector governance issues covered by 20 deliverables for 2020

The Forum has been represented at almost 60 Platforms and Panels events, be it

meetings, workshops or seminars organised under specific Panels. Due to a renewed focus given to the Forum's participation and contribution to the official EaP architecture meetings, our members have prepared written input for almost all of those events, produced under expert guidance. Moreover, our qualitative participation at Platforms and Panels is more and more often recognised by official stakeholders. This is most visible in a more regular inclusion of our contribution in the agenda, which often includes a speaking slot and a chance to deliver presentations. In addition, our representatives continue to regularly intervene from the floor at each meeting they attend.



On an annual basis, the Forum carries out the review of the implementation of 20 deliverables for 2020. In 2018, a number of re-granting projects, as well as other activities produced a number of assessments of the key deliverables. Several National Platforms evaluated the implementation of their countries' commitments in the frames of the 20 deliverables for 2020 document.

With the goal of linking the Forum's work more closely to EaP Platforms and Panels and 20 deliverables for 2020, this year we paid more attention to the timing and structure of the annual thematic Working Group meetings. The meetings are now happening before the relevant Platform or Panel meeting,

in order to develop the recommendations for the upcoming events. We have also worked on the format of the sessions, introducing a modern, innovative approach, which focuses more on active engagement and exchanges, both within the Groups themselves and with external stakeholders. We have achieved considerable success within our Working Groups:

**WG1: democracy, human rights,
good governance and Stability**

The Working Group 1 (WG1) on democracy, human rights, good governance and stability focused on the following topics: enabling civil society environment, Open Government Partnership, security, media and propaganda, justice, rule of law and corruption, as well as gender. The group has passed a number of messages to the Platforms and Panels meetings. The recommendation to have clearer indicators to assess the progress achieved on 20 Deliverables for 2020 in EaP countries was voiced at several occasions. Among many concerns voiced by the Forum's members at different meetings, Lilia Carasciuc (Platform 1 Rule of law panel) has notably shared the civil society's opinion about the urgent need to start an international investigation into the problems of money laundering and corruption in the EaP countries. Hennadiy Maksak

voiced the EaP CSF recommendations on security in the EaP region at the CSDP panel. At the initiative of WG1 Coordinator, Krzysztof Bobinski, a number of campaigns have been conducted including the brisk and successful campaign to involve civil society in the choice by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) of a new human rights spokesman, a campaign against the abduction in Georgia and subsequent sentencing of Afgan Mukhtarli and a campaign to stop Fikret Huseynli's extradition, among others.

**WG2: Economic Integration and
convergence with EU policies and
WG5: Social and labour policies
and social dialogue worked
together on a number of common
topics:**



In June, the Informal Ministerial – EaP 10th Informal Partnership Dialogue in Minsk gave an opportunity to discuss a number of recommendations on HDM – Harmonisation of Digital Market. In light of CEPA, and the civil society's role in monitoring of its implementation, members from AA countries – Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, shared their best practices of implementing the association agenda with the Armenian delegation. While focusing on business climate and SMEs – small and medium-sized enterprises, members developed recommendations addressed



to EU stakeholders on how to further support their EaP counterparts in bringing SME legislation closer. They shared their experience on key issues, such as promoting women in business and innovation, and asked for more technical cooperation to build capacity on transparency when managing EU grants.

Recommendations at the Transport panel developed by the newly created Transport Sub-Group under the WG3 generate interest of stakeholders:



Throughout the year, the EaP CSF Working Group 3 (WG3) 'Environment, climate change and energy security worked to push civil society's recommendations on environment, energy and transport. Members worked together to establish a Transport sub-group which developed recommendations delivered at the 15th EaP Transport Panel in Brussels that were very well received by the stakeholders attending the meeting, and generating interest from the World Bank and European Commission.

The EaP CSF contributed to the 2nd Eastern Partnership Ministerial Meeting on Environment and Climate Change – lead by Commissioners Karmenu Vella (Environment, Fisheries and Maritime Affairs) and Miguel Arias Canete (Climate Action and Energy), and by Elisabeth Koestinger, the Austri-

an Federal Minister for Sustainability and Tourism. Addressing the ministers present, Ina Coseru and Anna Golubovska-Onisimova shared the recommendations from the recent WG3 Annual Meeting in Brussels, focusing on environmental governance.

WG3 in Moldova developed a declaration at the beginning of 2018 which was shared with the EU Delegation in Moldova and the Embassy of Ukraine in Moldova. It was presented by civil society on the 14th of March 2018, within a protest of civil society "No more dams on Dniester River" which was organised in front of the Embassy of Ukraine in Moldova.

After that it was voiced as a message on behalf of the EaP CSF at the EaP Platform 3 meeting on Connectivity, energy efficiency, environment and climate change on the 29th of May 2018 in Brussels, as a message for the Government of Ukraine, EU representatives and financial institutions present in the room (EIB, EBRD, the World Bank).

The messages were again voiced at the EaP Panel on Environment and Climate Change held in Kyiv on the 12-13 June 2018. It was important to underline the message of no more dams on Dniester river taking into account that the host of the Panel meeting was Ukraine. As a result of the meeting, the Moldovan and Ukrainian NGOs decided to organise a separate meeting and develop a Statement of WG3 of EaP CSF which would be sent to the Government of Ukraine, EU institutions, Ukrainian Embassy in Moldova and financial institutions. The Statement requires that no more dams will be built on Dniester river, the main source of drinking water for more than a half of the population of Moldova. Also relations should be strengthened between Moldova and Ukraine in order to jointly monitor the operation of



Novodnistrovsk hydropower plant built in Ukraine on Dniester river, which decreased substantially the water volume in the river during the last 20 years. A Moldo-Ukrainian Commission was set up to improve the situation and a draft agreement on the operation of Novodnistrovsk hydropower plant was developed. The statement requests the Moldovan side to sign the agreement, when the study on Environmental Impact Assessment of Novodnistrovsk hydropower plant will be developed by Moldova with the help of the Swedish Government and which will contain information on the necessary water volume which is needed by Moldova to supply the population with drinking water. This data will be available in summer 2019 and will help both sides to agree on the volume of the water to be released downstream Novodnistrovsk hydropower plant during the normal regime of precipitations, during floods and during droughts.

The statement was also presented to the EU officials in Brussels by the bilateral EU-Moldova civil society platform which monitors the implementation of Association Agreement on behalf of the civil society in Moldova.

A separate meeting with the participation of Moldovan and Ukrainian NGOs, members of WG3 of EaP CSF was held in Kyiv on the

3rd of July 2018. As a result of it there is a statement voted by both working groups and sent to relevant stakeholders.

Eastern Partnership Youth Conference — successful event uniting the priorities of three Working Groups

The second Eastern Partnership Youth Conference 2018: “Youth for Entrepreneurship”, held under the auspices of the Austrian Presidency of the Council of European Union, was a milestone event for the Working Group 4. The conference brought together 130 young activists and entrepreneurs from the Eastern Partnership countries, Russia, Turkey and the EU. Together with trainers, entrepreneurs and stakeholders from all over Europe, young entrepreneurs discussed and developed key competences that can help them to boost competitiveness and growth in their regions.



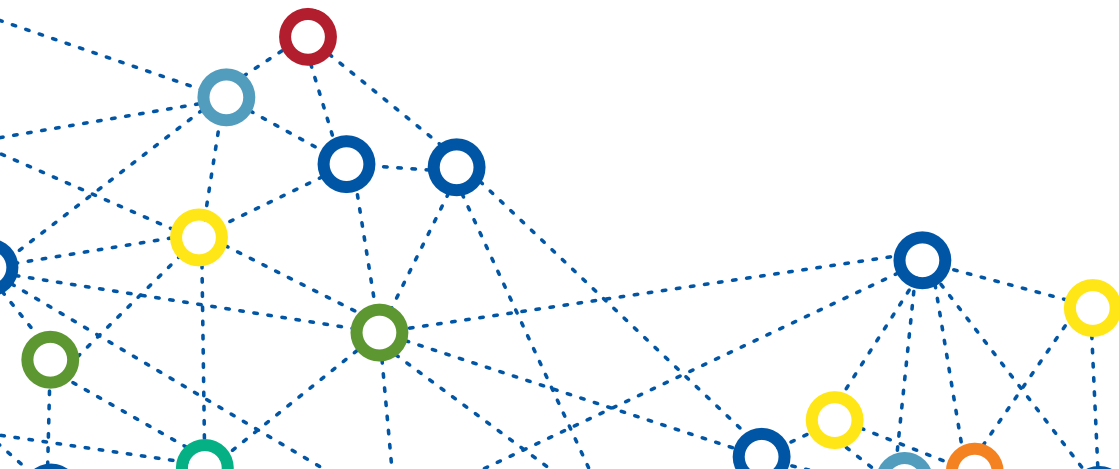
Conceived and directed by the EaP CSF, in particular Working Group 4 Contacts between People, the conference was included into the EaP official schedule as a biannually organised event, and it stands out as a positive example of efficient cooperation with the civil society within the multilateral dimension of the Eastern Partnership policy. 15 project

ideas were developed during the Eastern Partnership Youth Conference 2018. Two of them were awarded as best business ideas of the conference. One research paper, "Youth Entrepreneurship in Eastern Partnership Countries: The Way Forward", which came out as part of EaP CSF Working Group 4 Re-granting Project, highlighted that youth unemployment is a key driver, forcing young people to leave their countries and seek work abroad.

We are changing Forum's structures and internal processes to be more effective and to reply to the challenges of the modern society

The EaP CSF internal reform, affecting several important internal processes, has been successfully adopted and came into force on 1 November 2018. The new measures will allow to build, maintain and use the expertise of the Forum members for the prolonged period of 2 years, which will result in more effective participation in all formats of the EaP. The 2-year cycle will also help with the strategic

planning and the implementation, allowing for more consistent steps to achieve the goals by the second year of the 2-year cycle without the disruptive change of members for every Annual Assembly. The reformed delegate selection mechanism will empower the National Platforms and allow using their first-hand knowledge of the track-record of the applicants and ensure the inclusion of the members with expertise in all thematic directions. Moreover, the adoption of the Code of Ethical Conduct of the EaP CSF and establishment of the body that will deal with complaints at all levels of the Forum will provide new mechanisms for ensuring the value-based operation of the EaP CSF.



Re-granting Scheme 2018



The EaP CSF Re-granting scheme supports the projects of the EaP CSF members with a regional dimension that contribute to achieving its mission and facilitate the work of its five thematic Working Groups. The projects delivered substantial policy input, capacity building and trainings, as well as activities and campaigns focusing on the grassroots level connecting the civil society with the interest and needs of wider public in the EaP countries. The project results contributed to the policy implementation under the EaP multilateral roof, to the process of reforms in the EaP countries and to EaP CSF advocacy in Brussels, EU and EaP capitals.

In this year's Re-granting we supported 13 projects, covering relevant topics of all four Working Groups of the Forum. Within the Re-granting Scheme the second Eastern Partnership Think Tank Forum 2018 took place in Bucharest, Romania, gathering more than 75 participants, 25 top-notch experts and producing four country policy papers. A policy brief on Facilitation of Regional Professional Education in Agriculture and Rural development in EaP countries is one of the highlight deliverables of the Working Group 2 re-granting projects. As one of the outcomes of the environmental challenges, a brochure on barriers and good practices in local water management is on the way to be finalised. The project on Environmental Assessment watch reviewed with its partners around 13 legal acts on national level and prepared 3 country reports, comparing the EaP with the EU experience. More than 100 CSOs in Armenia were introduced to the Creative Europe Programme through public presentations and e-Mail communication. 14 CSO are by now engaged in the development of applications for the Creative European Programme, another project implemented within the Re-granting scheme. With our projects we correspond to the needs of the Civil societies in the EaP region, build capacity and ensure sustainability of our work in the Region.

During the 10th Annual Assembly, the new delegates will evaluate all Re-granting projects and vote for the three best Re-granting projects of this year.

Countries of lead organizations

Countries of partner organizations

Business Climate Social Services Regional Security
Good Governance Rural Development
Social Dialogue Gender Equality Energy Security Culture
Entrepreneurship Corruption Youth Invironment

Selected proposals



13 projects
implemented



Implementation period:
April – November 2018



Average duration
8 months

Budget of selected projects



250.000
Total budget



19.200
Average amount granted per project

Allocations per Working Group



61.000
EUR



48.150
EUR



50.000
EUR



59.909
EUR



30.000
EUR

● WG1 ● WG2 ● WG3 ● WG4 ● WG5

Overall re-granting budget



270.000
Total funds available 2018



288.176
Total funds spent in 2017



810.000
Total funds available in 2015-2017



321.165
Total funds spent in 2016

Re-granting 2018



52 proposals submitted



Multi-country projects



38 eligible proposals



3 best projects to be awarded
at the Annual Assembly

Selected proposals per Working Group



20



7



11



9



5

● WG1 ● WG2 ● WG3
● WG4 ● WG5

Eastern Partnership Index



and compiled by independent experts in the partner countries. Approximation captures the extent to which EaP countries have implemented key EU norms and international standards and is divided into three sections: Deep and Sustainable Democracy, EU Integration and convergence and Sustainable Development.

Every year the EaP CSF produces the Eastern Partnership Index, charting the progress made by the six Eastern Partnership countries towards sustainable democratic development and European integration. The Index measures steps taken on the path towards good governance, including observance and protection of democracy and human rights, sustainable development, and integration with the European Union.



6 countries



2 dimensions



6 sectors

Linkage encompasses the transnational linkages between business, civil society, citizens and governments in EaP countries and EU countries and is composed by the following sections: International security and co-operation, Sectoral cooperation and trade flows, and Citizens in Europe.



**Over 900
indicators**



**Published
yearly**



**Over 70
experts involved**

It is an advocacy and monitoring tool which provides a cross-country and cross-sector picture that is both nuanced and comparative. The six countries are assessed across a common set of questions and indicators

This said, it is meant to generate recommendations to guide countries along the reform process and to signal concerns when progress is flagging or even reversed. For this reason, it is an important monitoring tool, which supports the EaP CSF mission of being civil society's watchdog of reforms and which can be used by any civil society organisation for advocacy and research purposes.

About the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum

The Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum (EaP CSF) is a unique multi-layered regional civil society platform aimed at promoting European integration, facilitating reforms and democratic transformations in the six Eastern Partnership countries — Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. Serving as the civil society and people-to-people dimension of the Eastern Partnership, the EaP CSF strives to strengthen civil society in the region, boost pluralism in public discourse and policy making by promoting participatory democracy and fundamental freedoms. For more information, please visit the EaP CSF website at www.eap-csf.eu

**For further information about the event and EaP CSF,
please contact:**

Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum

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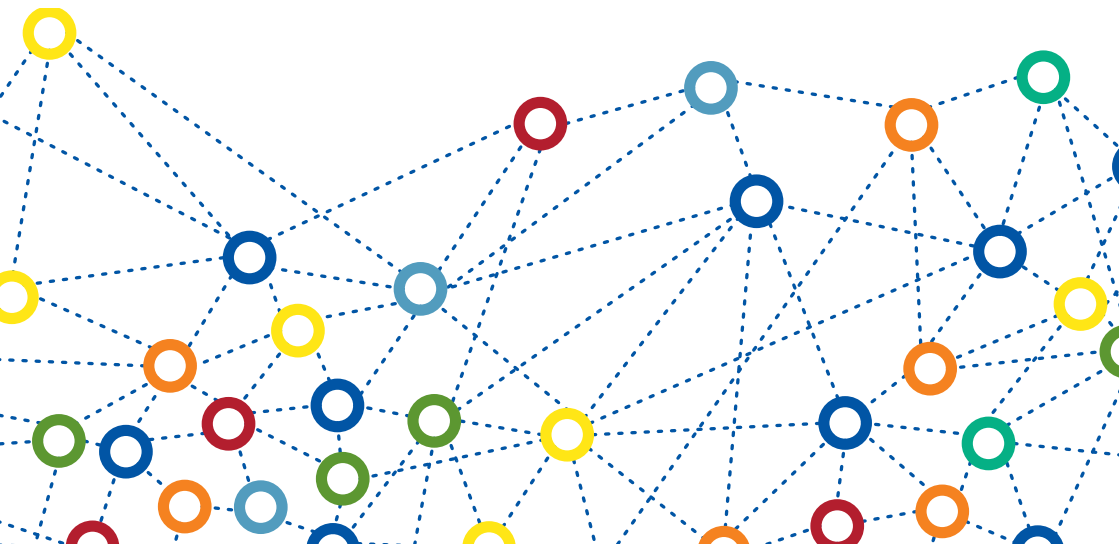
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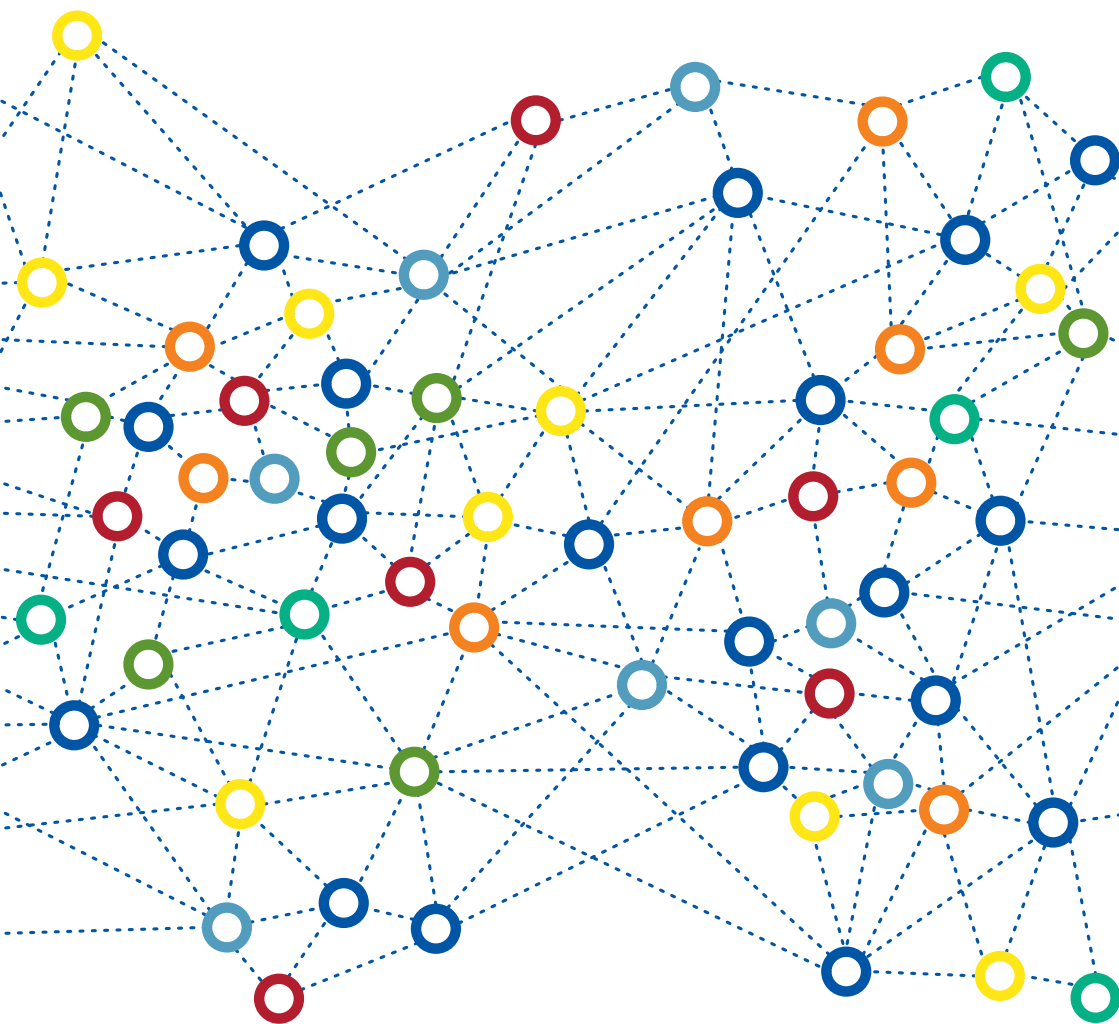
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