

Annual Activities Report 2019

Introduction

This year we have celebrated the 10th anniversary of the Eastern Partnership policy and of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum.

Over ten years, the EaP has yielded a number of successes. All partner countries have progressed in many areas, although on different trajectories that have not been always linear. The policy framework that was established - schedule, roadmap and regular meetings that systematise the work of the EU bureaucracy - led to a beneficial socialisation of elites across the region, as well as the civil society. The role of civil society organisations within the formulation, implementation and assessment of the multilateral policy has grown significantly. Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) stand behind most of the success stories of the EaP. The regional network of CSOs has grown stronger. Civil society organisations have been active in advocating with stakeholders that the long-term engagement of non-governmental actors beyond the governments benefits policy implementation and leads to more sustainable results. Overall, the EaP can claim individual successes but has critical weaknesses that should be addressed and taken into account for the future. Success in trade and mobility has to be evaluated against the backdrop of patchy rule of law reforms, insufficient respect of human rights, widespread corruption and weak environmental protection and climate change mitigation.

The Forum has achieved a lot in the past decade. EaP CSF members have been pushing forward reforms and advocating on a number of issues, both in the EaP countries and at the EU level. The Forum is recognised by the European Commission as its main civil society interlocutor in structured dialogue with partner countries and in the framework of the Eastern Partnership. The Forum and its National Platforms take active part in the sectoral dialogues in the EaP countries and participate in most formats within the current EaP architecture. The EaP CSF is a stakeholder of the EaP and is regularly consulted by the EU institutions. Annually, our members participate in more than 50 official meetings of the EaP architecture, consultations and EaP CSF events, at which we channel, on average, 800+ recommendations to different stakeholders. Over the last 10 years, the Forum's membership grew to 1000+ organisations. Since the start of the EaP CSF Working Group Re-granting scheme 2015, we have implemented 73 projects. In 2019 we have launched the support programme for National Platforms that provides organisational support and allows them to develop quality input for the sectoral trilateral meetings and carry out projects in their countries. And this is just a part of what we do.

Activities around the 10th anniversary of the EaP

Most activities of the EaP CSF in 2019 were conducted around the 10th anniversary of the Eastern Partnership. Throughout the year the EaP CSF conducted a series of events and a communication campaign #10YearsTogether. We conducted four public events in Brussels that brought together around 250 participants and delivered more than 200 recommendations to more than 30 stakeholders.

From March to June 2019 we partnered with EU member states to organise a series of the EaP CSF anniversary events in Brussels. The events were conducted in cooperation with Czech and Finnish Permanent Representations to the EU and with broad participation of stakeholders from EU institutions. The anniversary series had a goal of assessing where we stand in 4 main thematic areas of the EaP, which broadly correspond to the specialisations of the EaP CSF Working Groups. We tried a new interactive format for the events, with EaP CSF members debating with stakeholders and experts standing around small tables, allowing a direct dialogue between Civil Society and EU stakeholders. It worked very well, and we had very lively debates! The format was appreciated by both: EaP CSF participants as well as stakeholders themselves.



#10YearsTogether



We started the anniversary series in March with the public event assessing the current state of play in the EaP region in the area of [Education, Culture, Youth and Mobility](#). Special focus was on education and youth entrepreneurship, and the study [“Youth Entrepreneurship in EaP Countries: the Way Forward”](#) developed within the EaP CSF WG Re-granting project served as the starting point of

the debate. Together with stakeholders, experts and civil society representatives we discussed how to facilitate the innovative business ideas of young people to become a

success, and how to improve the conditions for entrepreneurial activities across the region. A report from the event is available [here](#).

The public event focusing on [Environment, Climate Change and Energy Security](#) followed in April. We took stock of the state of implementation of environmental legislation in EaP countries and connected challenges, leading to pollution and environmental problems, among others caused by the unregulated construction of hydroelectric power plants and civil society recommendations on this particular matter. More than [50 recommendations](#) were delivered by the civil society to the EU and EaP official stakeholders during the Working Group 3 meeting and the public event.



Taking stocks of the EaP policy achievements, the [third event](#) of the EaP CSF Brussels Public Event Series marking 10 years anniversary of Eastern Partnership attracted more than 100 participants at the Permanent Representation of the Czech Republic. Among the key speakers at the event were Armenian Minister of Foreign Affairs Zohrab Mnatsakanyan and Czech Minister of Foreign Affairs Tomáš Petříček. Democracy, human rights, good governance and stability were in

focus of the debates. Our newly published [policy paper](#) “*Advancing Eastern Partnership: 23 Civil Society Ideas for the Policy Beyond 2020*” offered further food for thought on civil society engagement, tools for policy implementation and financial support. In the paper that we shared with many audiences in Brussels and EU member states we propose a menu of concrete ideas on how the EaP policy can be improved. A report from the event is available [here](#).

In June we finished our anniversary series of public events with the discussion on “[Trade, Digital Economy and Harmonisation of Digital Markets](#)”. The event was hosted by the Finnish Permanent Representation in Brussels and served as an opportunity to discuss together with stakeholders from the European Commission (DG Connect) and World Bank the challenges and the common trends in the EaP region in terms of HDM. A report from the event is available [here](#).



The EaP CSF members took part in *official celebrations and a number of events focusing on the 10th anniversary of the EaP policy*. A group of the EaP CSF members participated in the [High-level Conference](#) organised by the EU institutions in May in Brussels. We also had an

opportunity to channel our position at one of the panels of the event by the then Steering Committee member Hennadiy Maksak and during the EaP [Foreign Affairs Ministerial](#) by the Steering Committee member Zaur Akbar. In April, Ina Coseru, Co-Chair of the Steering Committee addressed the EaP [Senior Official Meeting \(SOM\)](#) taking account of current EaP policy dialogue and discussing direction for further cooperation, after year 2020.

New leadership of the Forum and its meetings

The spring has seen the leadership of the EaP CSF change. After elections at the National Platform and Working Group level, the Steering Committee has renewed its composition. We thank the previous members of the Steering Committee: Bobinski Krzysztof, Dittel Laura, Guliyev Ziya, Harutyunyan Haykuhi, Kalatozishvili Aleksandra, Macovei



Petru, Maksak Hennadiy, Navasartov Boris, Neverauskaite Goda, Nutu Ana Otilia, Tughushi Lasha. The [current members of the SC](#) who will perform their duties until next spring are: Coseru Ina (Co-Chair), Strive Sofia (Co-Chair), Kvantaliani Mikalai, Akbarov Zaur, Chyzhova Olga, Hakobyan Lousineh, Hovhannisyan Mikayel, Jafarov Rasul, Koriavets Maksym, Kuprashvili Natia, Manole Ion, Marian Tatiana, Vdovenko Yurii.

In 2019 the Steering Committee met in [January](#), [April](#), [July](#) and [September](#) (see minutes of the meetings accordingly to the month). The meetings included exchanges with EU stakeholders and covered many topics including: EaP CSF priorities for 2019, actions dedicated to the 10th anniversary of EaP including the policy paper, advocacy strategy, agenda of the Annual Assembly, new statute of the EaP CSF, rules of procedures for the newly established Compliance Committee, regranting to Working Groups and National Platforms and many others.

Consultations with members

2019 was rich on consultations with members. On top of regular solicitation for input to the EaP Platforms and panels, the EaP CSF organised 2 broad consultation processes.



The first consultation brought together 73 experts and members from both EaP and EU countries, whose discussions and recommendations were articulated in the [policy paper](#) “*Advancing Eastern Partnership: 23 Civil Society Ideas for the Policy Beyond 2020*”, launched in May 2019 as civil society’s contribution to the celebration of the 10th anniversary of the Eastern Partnership.

Structured consultation on the Eastern Partnership beyond 2020

CIVIL SOCIETY PERSPECTIVE

October 31, 2019
EaP CSF



The Forum launched a [second internal consultation](#) process to prepare its response to the DG NEAR’s structured consultation on the future of the Eastern Partnership. More than 200 of our member organisations shared their thoughts on the future of the Eastern Partnership policy after 2020, allowing the formulation of a number of civil society recommendations on the consultation four pillars: boosting economic and human capital development; good governance, rule of law and security; regional cooperation; and EU visibility. The full version of recommendations provided by the Civil Society is available [here](#).

EaP Index

In February we launch the new publication of [the Eastern Partnership Index](#) that charts 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 the observance and protection of democracy and human rights, sustainable development, and integration with the European Union. The work on the publication covering 2018 is on-going.



Advocacy on Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI)

On the course of 2019, EaP CSF has been building links to raise its concerns and advocate on proposed **Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI)** from which the EaP policy will be funded under the new EU Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), reaching out to stakeholders in Brussels and beyond. Forum maintained in its position documents that the current European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) should remain as a self-standing funding tool due to special relations of the EU with the neighbouring countries, namely EaP partners. EaP CSF has shared some concerns with [CONCORD](#) and [HRDN](#), two Brussels-based policy networks – as well as joining in criticisms, coming from some EU member states, related to governance and the proposed instrument's flexibility and advocated actively for preserving and improving the current civil society funding modalities under ENI. The EU directive establishing NDICI is currently negotiated in the trialog format between the European Commission, European Parliament and the EU Council. The final decision on financial allocations for and within the instrument is upcoming and is closely linked to the wrap-up of deliberations on the EU MFF 2021-2027.

Working Group activities

The activities are focused around annual Working Group meetings that included meetings with relevant stakeholders and developing input to the upcoming EaP panel meetings, participation in more than 50 events within the official EaP architecture and implementation of WG reganting projects.



On May 14-15, the EaP CSF Working Group 1 held its annual meeting in Brussels. The EaP CSF Working Group 1, “Democracy,

Human Rights, Good Governance and Stability”, deals with the main issues on the agenda of EaP Thematic Platform 1 on Democracy, Good Governance and Stability. Around 50 members of WG1 who took part in this meeting developed [recommendations](#) with regards to rule of law, good governance and public administration reforms, security & CSDP, enabling environment for civil society, media & strategic communication, and gender equality.



On June 5-6, the EaP CSF Working Group 2&5 held its annual meeting in Brussels. The EaP CSF Working Group 2 is working on

Economic integration and convergence with EU policies and EaP CSF Working Group 5 deals with Social and Labour Policies and Social Dialogue. The groups worked on recommendations tackling structural reforms, HDM and Social Dialogue. More than 30 recommendations were delivered by the civil society to the EU and EaP official stakeholders during the [Working Group meetings 2 and 5](#) and the related public event.

EaP Platform and Panel meetings attended by members of WG2 and WG5:

- Fourth Panel on Harmonisation of Digital Markets (4th HDM Panel), 07 February 19, Brussels, Belgium;
- Third Eastern Partnership Ministerial Meeting on the Digital Economy, 28 February 19, Bucharest, Romania;
- EaP Platform 2 Meeting: Economic Development and Market Opportunities, 10 April 19, Brussels, Belgium;
- EAP Panel on "Structural Reforms, Financial sector architecture, Agriculture and SMEs", Organic Agriculture, 25-26 April 2019, Tartu, Estonia;
- Trade Panel on the Reform of Systems of Technical Regulations and of Related Infrastructure, 23-24 May 2019, Brussels, Belgium;

- Eastern Partnership Expert Panel on Trade-Related Regulatory Cooperation, 18-19 June 2019, Brussels, Belgium
- Conference on Youth and Employability, 28 November 19, Kiev, Ukraine;



On April 10-11, Working Group 3 “Environment, climate change and energy security” held its annual meeting in Brussels. The Working Group 3 deals with the main issues on the agenda of EaP

Thematic Platform 3. It is also involved in the Panel on Environment and Climate Change under Platform 2. Around 20 members of Working Group 3 took part in this annual meeting of WG3. Some of [the recommendations introduced by the Working Group](#) during this year’s meeting include the introduction of more educational workshops on environmental issues for government officials in order to increase their environmental awareness, and the increase of civic investigations in cases of violation of environmental legislation. The recommendations on environment were articulated in the policy paper “[Environmental Reform and Climate Change Adaptation in the Eastern Partnership – Civil Society Analysis and Recommendations](#)”, published in June 2019 and disseminated to relevant stakeholders in the EU institutions and beyond.

EaP Platform and Panel meetings attended by members of Working Group 3:

- LNG network kick-off meeting, 20 February 2019, Warsaw
- Platform 3, 13 March 2019, Brussels
- Transport Panel, 10 April 2019, Brussels
- Workshop of Eastern Partnership Energy Regulatory Bodies, 21-22 May 2019, Minsk
- EaP Panel on Environment and Climate Change, 27-28 May 2019, Vienna
- 3rd EaP Energy Panel, 17 June 2019, Brussels
- EU4Environment Regional Assembly, 27-28 June 2019, Brussels
- EU4Clima Regional Assembly, 28 May 2019, Vienna
- 3rd LNG Workshop – Energy panel, 20 September 2019, Kyiv
- EU4Climate - first regional workshop on LEDs, 15-16 October 2019, Chisinau
- 4th EaP Energy Panel, 17-18 October 2019, Vilnius
- EU4Climate workshop on Climate Change Adaptation, 30 October – 1 November 2019, Chisinau

- EU4Climate workshop on Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCS), 18-19 November 2019, Tbilisi
- Transport Panel, 20-21 November 2019, Vilnius
- Platform 3, 26 November 2019, Brussels
- 4th and final EaP regional sub-sectoral networking group on LNG markets, 17 December 2019, Świnoujście (upcoming)



On March 27-28, Working Group 4 “Contacts between People”, gathered for this year’s WG4 meeting and produced the following [recommendations in the areas of Education, Culture, Youth and](#)

[Integrated Border Management.](#)

EaP Platform and Panel meetings attended by members of Working Group 4:

- Platform 4 Meeting, 9 April, Brussels
- EaP Panel on Migration, Mobility and IBM, 13-14 June, Minsk
- Panel on Education, Youth and Culture, 30 September – 1 October, Brussels
- Platform meeting Mobility and people to people contacts, 12 November, Brussels
- Research and Innovation Conference, 21 October, Chisinau
- DG EMPLOYMENT Conference on Youth and Employability, 28 November, Kyiv
- Conference on strengthening of potential for youth, 27-28 November, Tbilisi
- Research and Innovation Panel, 13 December, Brussels

EaP CSF Re-granting to Working Groups

The regranting scheme funds multi-country projects of the EaP CSF members in one of the thematic areas of the EaP policy. In 2019 we received 39 proposals, out of which 31 passed the eligibility screening. After the evaluation process, **13 projects were selected** by the Selection Committees. The infographics and further information on the projects and their results can be found [here](#). The 2019 Re-granting projects are the following:

- “Building a common response to hybrid threats – enhancing cooperation of EaP CSOs in policy solutions building”

- “Russian military presence in some of the EaP countries and its impact on human rights situation”
- “Monitoring Recent Developments of Russian propaganda’s: Messages, Tools and Methods”
- “Developing the joint advocacy plan of the EaP Forum, EaP National Platforms for the promotion of the prevention, protection and prosecution of the Gender based violence in EaP Countries and the implementation/ratification of the Istanbul Convention”
- “Contributing to the formation of the agenda and institutional preconditions for enhancing digital competencies in Belarus, Ukraine and Georgia”
- “Development of SME strategies and its impact on regional SMEs”, “Ecosystem approach to hydropower: facilitating the implementation of European requirements to development of hydropower sector in states of Eastern Europe Partnership”
- “Energy poverty - Guidance for state Policy and Public Discourse on energy Poverty in the time of Reform.”
- “Facilitating Effective Visa Liberalization in Georgia, Moldova and Armenia through Experience Sharing”
- “Supporting Economic Participation of Excluded Youth in EaP Countries”
- “Assessing the Needs of Youth in the EaP (ANY EaP)”, “Partnership for Social Inclusive and Gender Equal Employment Policy”
- “Study: Labour Rights of Migrant workers from EaP countries Working at the Informal Sector in European Union”.

Activities of National Platforms



The Azerbaijan National Platform initiated the campaign on imprisoned blogger Mehman Huseynov who started a hunger strike due to the attempt of the prison authorities to start a new criminal case against him that would have led to prolong his detention. Based on the signals from NP, the EaP CSF was first to issue a statement on the

case and contributed to the urgent resolution of the European Parliament, as result, Mehman’s detention was not prolonged and he was released from prison. The NP discussed the results of EaP CSF project focusing on advocacy for prevention,

protection and prosecution of the Gender based violence in EaP Countries and the implementation/ratification of the Istanbul Convention. NP takes the gender mainstreaming seriously, and it elected the board that is composed of three women and three men. NP members met with the EU Ambassador to Baku, took part in consultation meeting ahead of meeting of EU-AZ Subcommittee on Justice, Freedom, Security and Human Rights and Democracy and met with Donald Tusk during his Caucasus visit. The NP adopted its new statute in November.

The Armenian National Platform was focusing on a series of Government-civil society roundtable discussions on the CEPA implementation and provided a number of recommendations, some of which were adopted. Recommendations related to the Electoral Code, new law on mass media, as well as the reforms in the Judiciary were accepted or taken into consideration for further discussion at the Ministries. The NP was actively working to ensure the balanced composition of the civil society platform under CEPA. The result of this work has been a revised proposal from the EU side, partially responding to the NP concerns. The NP also conducted a series of regional visits to learn more about the EaP policy-related concerns of the regional organisations to better reflect them in the planning of the NP activities. As a result of these meetings a number of regional CSOs submitted applications to become NP members.

The Belarusian National Platform organised in October one of the largest media literacy events in the Eastern Partnership with speakers and participants from 23 countries. One of the key results of the event was the creation of [media literacy map](#). The NP was actively preparing the input to the EU-Belarus Coordination Group meeting taking place in December and taking measures to ensure the implementation of the EaP CSF Ethical Code of Conduct. Within the framework of the Volunteer Festival organized by the National Council of Youth Organizations RADA, the NP held youth debates on the following topics: the need for a law on combating domestic violence and non-discrimination, and the need to amend the law on military service. During the reporting period, the Coordination Committee of NP adopted statements on the threat to independence of Belarus and denouncing the secrecy around the development of roadmaps on integration of Belarus and Russia, on the need to develop a law on combating domestic violence and on street protests in Moscow. The gender policy was adopted by the NP in January, and currently it is in process of implementation.

The Georgian National Platform participated in elaboration of the Annual Action Plan on the realisation of AA/DCFTA by providing comments to the working document shared by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). NP member organizations provided their recommendations and 4 sectoral meetings took place at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia and Information Centre on NATO and EU with GNP members (in total 94 attendees) to discuss the recommendations. The meetings have been organized with the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia, Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia (MIA), Georgian Pension Agency, Emergency Management Agency and Georgian National Communication Commission. The meetings aimed at discussing overall progress in EU integration process, priority policy issues identified by the thematic working groups. The EU Integration Committee of the Parliament shared 40 draft laws to GNP with the NP. Member CSOs submitted 59 recommendations for the 4 draft laws. Two of these draft laws are in the process of consideration.

The Moldovan National Platform played a key role in stabilising the situation in Moldova in summer 2019 when the NP promptly recognised the legitimacy of the Government invested on June 8th and appeal to central and local authorities, civil servants, and international partners to follow suit and collaborate with the new Moldovan government. The NP urged the Constitutional Court to urgently review its decisions that permitted the unconstitutional disbandment of the Parliament, a suspended President, and two acting Cabinets, one legal and the other illegal. With the support of international partners and active involvement of NGOs and public opinion makers the situation stabilised and the Constitutional Court withdrew its decisions.

The Ukrainian National Platform took part in the organisation of the Association Exchange Forum that took place in November in Kyiv and took stock of the implementation of Association Agreements by Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine and discussed the future steps required by the AA countries and the EU to ensure more effective implementation.

EAP CSF REGRANTING TO NATIONAL PLATFORMS

Four National Platforms (Armenia, Belarus, Georgia and Moldova) are benefiting from regranting to NPs (operational support) starting May 2019. They are receiving 100,000eur as operational and project support for the period 2019-2020.

Funding to NPs is contributing to strengthened mechanisms of trilateral dialogue with participation



of civil society on the national level dedicated to the sector reforms in the framework of the EaP. In particular, the regranting funds the activities focusing on:

- 1) Strengthening institutionalised sectoral dialogues with participation of the civil society;
- 2) Ensuring participation in and provision of quality input to the trilateral dialogues/EU agenda in the EaP countries;
- 3) Monitoring reforms implementation in EaP countries and conducting advocacy
- 4) Contributing with a substantial input to at least one of the 20 Deliverables for 2020

Launching the work of COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE

Since last July, the [Compliance Committee of the EaP CSF](#) is operational. Its members are Iulian Groza (chairperson), Jan Cingel, Mihaela Padureanu, Lasha Bliadze, Grigori

Yeritsyan. The current Compliance Committee will perform its duties until the next Annual Assembly in 2020. The Compliance Committee is an independent body of the Forum that provides members with a mechanism to address grievances and ensure transparency and accountability. The Committee has not received any complaints in 2019. To ensure that complaints are dealt with at an appropriate level, the National Platforms that are lacking such an instrument were encouraged to establish such a committee.

CODE OF ETHICAL CONDUCT

The [Code of Ethical Conduct](#) was adopted at the Annual Assembly 2018 and 2019 was a year of implementation of its provisions. Each EaP CSF body (NPs, EaP CSF WGs, Compliance Committee, Steering Committee, Secretariat) is conducting its self-assessment of the implementation of the Code in November-December 2019. This process gives the opportunity to each body of the Forum to deliberate on the ethical aspects of their operation.

A GENDER-FAIR FORUM

The Forum wants to lead by example on gender. In 2020, we will be developing the Gender Mainstreaming Strategy (GMS) of the Forum. Preparatory steps have already been made in 2019.

CALL FOR DELEGATES FOR THE 2020 -2021 CYCLE



In November, we launched a [new call for delegates](#) for the 2020 – 2021 cycle. The selection will be concluded by March 2020. The delegates will be selected based on the votes of the National Platforms, Working Group Coordinators and EU delegations in line with several selection criteria and geographic and

thematic quotas. We encourage all the current delegates to apply!

Financial overview 2019

Last updated on 27/11/2019

Funding sources

The general funding sources of the EaP CSF via the EaP CSF Secretariat are the European Commission and foundations or national institutions (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, development agencies, etc.). The strategy of the EaP CSF Secretariat is to secure funding for the functioning of the EaP CSF and to fundraise for extra projects.

The EaP CSF Secretariat is currently operating a three-year grant from the European Commission (EC) entitled “*Support to the activities of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum II ENI/2018/387-389 (2018-2020)*”.

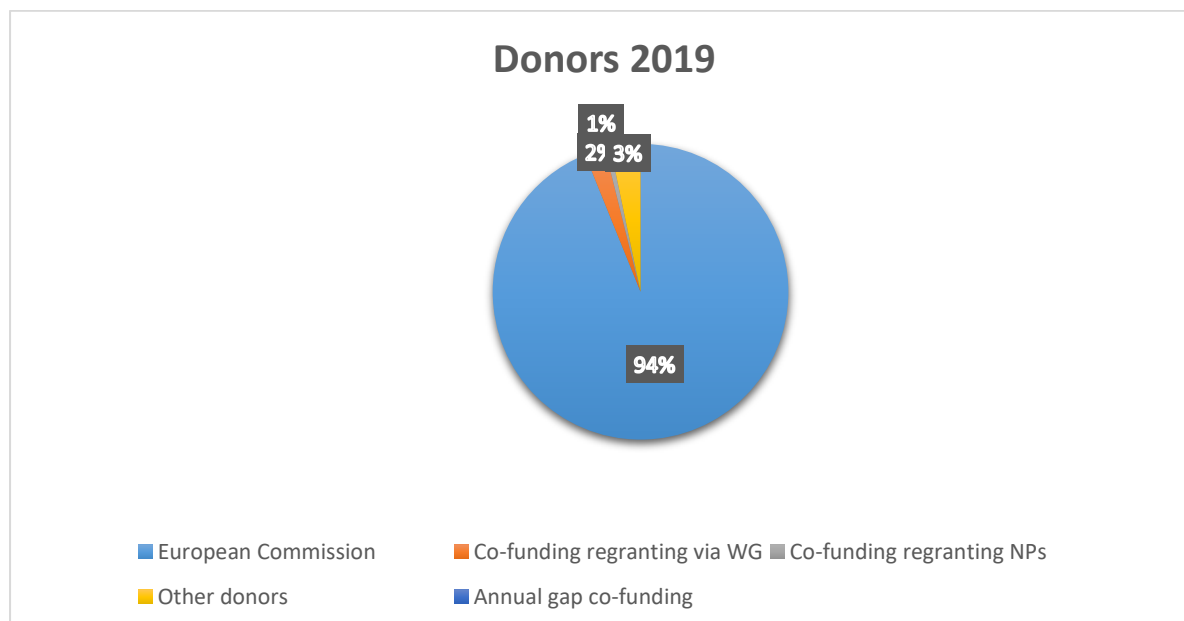
The objectives of the three-year project are:

- To contribute to a more enriched and more people-oriented EaP agenda;
- To increase EaP CSF’s engagement in dialogue on sector governance issues covered by 20 deliverables for 2020;
- To strengthen mechanisms of trilateral dialogue with participation of civil society on the national level dedicated to the sector reforms in the frames of the EaP
- To make the Forum’s structures and internal processes more effective

The total amount of the grant is **4.764.979 EUR**. The EC undertakes to finance a maximum amount of **4.500.000 EUR** and the grant is further limited to 94,44% of the eligible costs of the project. There is an obligatory co-funding of 5,56% to find over the 2018-2020 period.

A variety of donors co-funded the EaP CSF activities during 2018 and 2019: National Endowment for Democracy, Czech Foreign Ministry, Expert Forum Association Romania, and Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung ‘Dialogue Eastern Europe’.

Table 1 – EaP CSF donors in 2019



By the end of December 2019, 1.584.209,58 EUR (estimated) will have been spent.

The main type of expenditures in 2019 are the organisation of EaP CSF meetings and events, such as annual meetings of five Working Groups, four Steering Committee meetings, five Working Groups meetings, the Annual Assembly and advocacy meetings. The second main budget item is Working-Group and National Platforms re-granting scheme and the third - personnel costs.

Table 2 – Estimated expenditures for the period January-December 2019

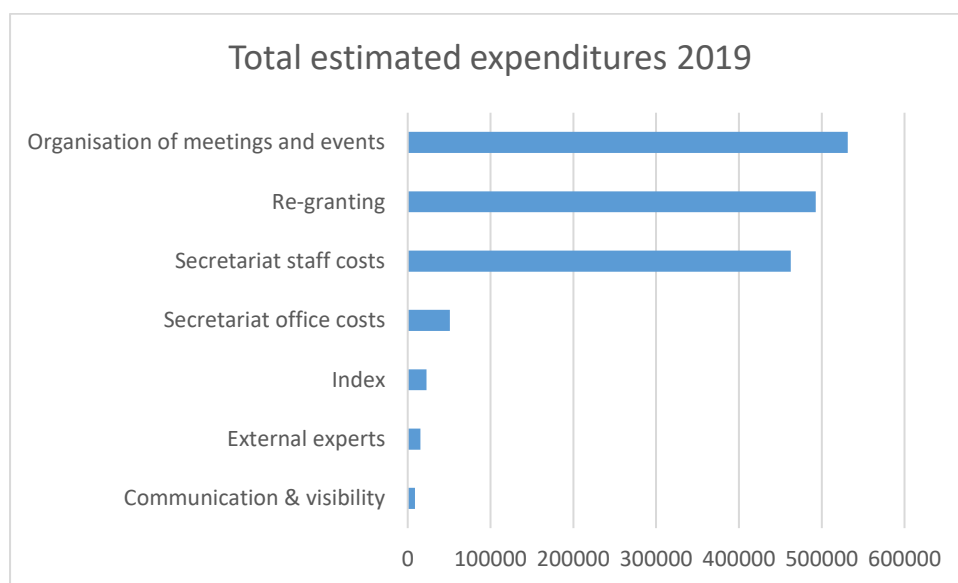
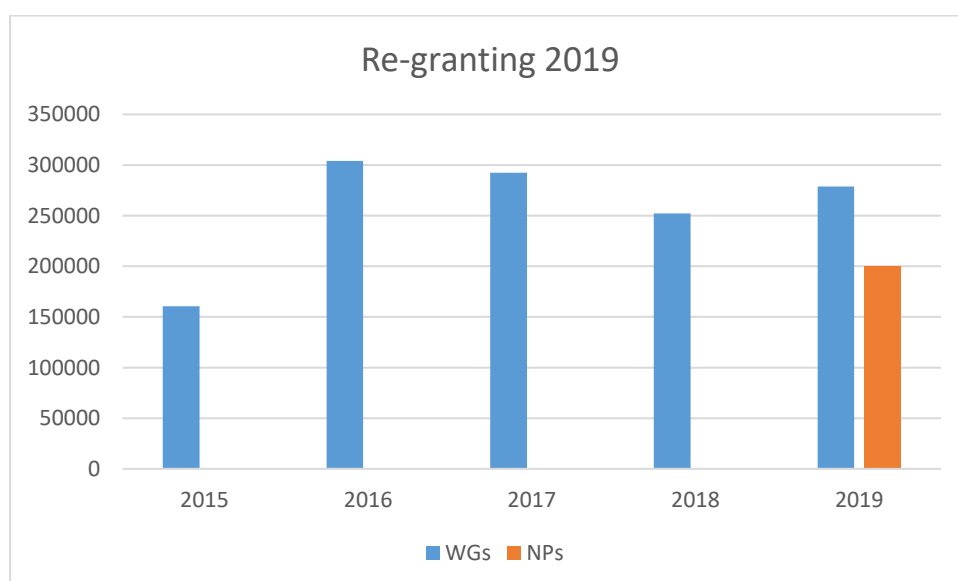


Table 3 – Regranting expenditures over the 2015-2019 period.



An average of 14 regranting WGs projects have been awarded yearly. In 2019, 13 projects have been funded.

Starting 2019, the National Platforms have access to funding via EaP CSF re-granting scheme that contributes to strengthened mechanisms of trilateral dialogue with participation of civil society on the national level dedicated to the sector reforms in the framework of the EaP. Each National Platform is receiving 40.000 euros for operational support and 60.000 euros for project support per year. Four National Platforms (Armenia, Belarus, Georgia and Moldova) are benefiting from regranting to NPs (operational support) starting May 2019.

Audit of previous grant ENI/2014/347-121 “Support to the activities of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum” (2015-2017)

In April 2018, the European Commission hired an external auditor to carry out a financial and system audit of the previous grant to the EaP CSF. The audit report resulted with 50.000 EUR ineligible costs. The EaP CSF Secretariat has provided additional documentation and justifications to prove the eligibility of the expenditures. Following the audit, the EaP CSF Secretariat followed the auditors' recommendations and reinforced internal rules. The European Commission accepted all the costs and the Secretariat is waiting for the written confirmation.

Audit current grant ENI 2018/387-389 “Support to the activities of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum (2018-2020)

Following the first expenditure verification for the current grant for 2018, 4.324 EUR are ineligible costs. This amount relates to one of WG grantees from 2018 regranting scheme, who could not provide financial documentation about the activities. The Steering Committee have discussed the situation and measures have been taken to recur this amount from the grantee.

Furthermore, the auditor questioned the eligibility of the VAT applied by our organiser for the previous Annual Assembly in Tbilisi, amounted to 34.564 EUR. The decision of the EC is pending.

EaP CSF Secretariat Annual accounts 2018

The EaP CSF Secretariat is registered as a non-profit organisation under the Belgian law, and its accounts are expressed in Euro and maintained in compliance with international accounting standards and the legislation on international non-profit making association (AISBL) applicable in Belgium.

According to the Belgian legislation, the annual accounts of the EaP CSF Secretariat are audited on a yearly basis. On September 16th 2019, the Secretariat received the audit report from external auditors (DGST & Partners) on the General Accounts of the EaP CSF Secretariat for the reporting period January-December 2018. No inconsistencies have been found (“*Opinion sans reserve*”).