



EASTERN PARTNERSHIP  
CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM

# ANNUAL ACTIVITIES REPORT

2021

**EASTERN PARTNERSHIP  
CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM**

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## COVID-19-related Activities

Being almost two years into the COVID-19 pandemic, the Forum continued to highlight how the Eastern Partnership region has experienced the pandemic's disruptive effects in 2021. The [EaP CSF Policy Papers Series on the effects of COVID-19](#) offers a thorough overview of different thematic areas, such as freedom of speech and media plurality, online and offline education, digital literacy, waste and water management. The papers also highlight the digital transformation of SMEs, decentralisation and local self-government, and labour migration within the EaP countries in the time of COVID-19. This series of papers aimed to deliver policy recommendations for the governments of the EaP and EU decision-makers while also guiding civil society and other sectors. The pandemic overlapped with the implementation period of the '20 Deliverables for 2020', thus these papers assess the results and implications from a cross-sectoral perspective.

To this end, as part of the Forum's [#PrepareEaP4Health](#) campaign, an online public discussion was organised on 14-15 April 2021 to launch the policy papers. The event, titled: ['In Search for COVID-19 Silver Lining: opportunities and policy solutions to be harnessed in the EaP region'](#) consisted of three panels, focusing on the silver linings of the COVID-19 pandemic in the EaP region, the impact of the pandemic on the Green Deal implementation within the EaP, and media freedom and digital literacy during and beyond the pandemic.



## Crisis in Belarus

The human rights situation in Belarus has not improved since fraudulent elections took place in 2020. Repressions against members of civil society are ongoing and growing in intensity. This requires an immediate and effective response from the European and international community.

The Forum and its Steering Committee published 7 [statements](#) on the unchanging situation in Belarus. Serious concerns were raised about the detention of activists, journalists, Forum members and civil society representatives, and the withdrawal of Belarusian authorities from the Eastern Partnership and the Readmission Agreement. Moreover, an urgent response was requested by the Forum to the migrant crisis happening at the border of the Republic of Belarus and the EU, as authorities are endangering the lives and wellbeing of thousands of vulnerable people, who are being held there by force.

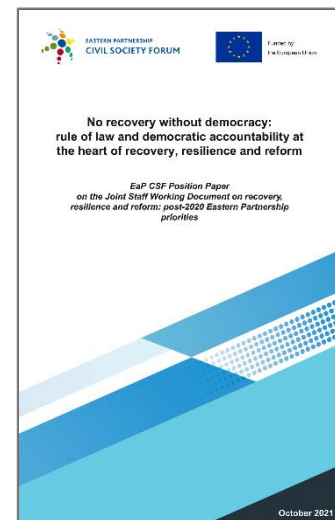
Furthermore, the Annual Assembly 2021 – held between 30 November and 2 December – alerted EU stakeholders to the worsening situation and uncertainty over future political change in Belarus. The Annual Assembly concluded that strengthening Belarusian civil society and its integration into the EaP initiative remains the leading approach.



At the margins of the 6<sup>th</sup> Eastern Partnership Summit in 2021, an [offline event](#) was organised on 14 December by the Forum in collaboration with the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Coordination Council of Belarus, and the office of Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya. The participants of the event discussed the different prospects for the situation in Belarus, possible tools of response to the internal political and migration crises, as well as the role and new configuration of the Eastern Partnership for Belarus.

## Contribution to EaP Policy

A position paper was prepared by the EaP CSF in response to the [Joint Staff Working Document \(JSWD\), 'Recovery, resilience and reform: post-2020 Eastern Partnership priorities'](#) published on 2 July 2021. The JSWD is illustrative of the EU's goals and its commitment to contribute to the reform and recovery of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) region. It details comprehensive targets to deal with challenges faced by the EaP countries in a great number of fields, while also considering the particulars of each country through dedicated flagship initiatives. However, due to challenging circumstances brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, the previously existing social, economic and political problems of the EaP region have worsened, with apparent democratic regression also in play. Consequently, the EaP CSF fears that the JSWD might not meet expectations and lacks balance between supporting economic recovery and democratic development.



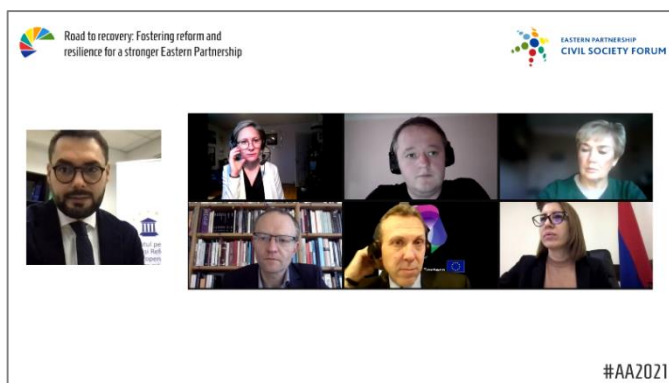
The [position paper](#), with the title *'No recovery without democracy: rule of law and democratic accountability at the heart of recovery, resilience and reform,'* was published on 20 October 2021 and outlines civil society's recommendations on several issues within the proposed post-2020 priorities that deserve further reflection from the European Union in order to set out a convincing, definitive and ambitious plan to chart an unambiguous course of action for recovery that also delivers on the political promises of the joint initiative. The messages formulated in the paper were used during the Forum's campaign targeting the EaP Summit.

Following the release of the position paper, a meeting was held on 28 October 2021 with Jochen Schmidt, Cooperation Officer - Youth and Education - Eastern Partnership at DG NEAR of the European Commission. The discussion addressed the JSWD position paper and relevance of the Youth Dialogue and policies.

The position paper was included in the EaP CSF's monthly newsletter, it was published on its social media platforms, and was uploaded to the organisational webpage, which was viewed by 359 users. There were 218 views of the emails regarding the release of the position paper, and it has also reached 149 stakeholders through direct outreach.

## EaP CSF Annual Assembly 2021

Throughout discussions between the Forum, EaP governments and EU stakeholders at the online Annual Assembly 2021, the Forum highlighted that in order to ensure successful and sustainable cooperation, the EaP policy must overcome current challenges and deliver equally across the Eastern Partnership region. It was illustrated that there is a strong commitment to the region from the EU side, but the EaP countries need to be open to push crucial reforms forward. The Forum addressed challenges related to corruption, democratic governance, and the rule of law, in which progress must adhere to strict conditions. These are also reflected in the [Key Takeaways](#) of the Annual Assembly 2021.



The Forum's main event, the Annual Assembly – between 30 November and 2 December – was attended online by 348 participants this year, which includes 252 members and delegates of the EaP CSF, and a further 90 observers and 2 guests. In the 27 sessions, attendees followed the Annual Assembly either via live stream on the event's platform or Facebook, or directly via Zoom, depending on the session format.

## EaP Summit

On 16 December 2021, the EaP CSF published a [Statement](#) on the 6<sup>th</sup> Eastern Partnership Summit held on 15 December. In the statement the Forum affirmed that it commends the results of the Summit and considers it a success, especially in such complex and difficult times for both the EU and EaP leaders. The Forum welcomed that the Summit Declaration acknowledged the progress of the associated trio of AA/DCFTA countries, and the recognition of the Forum in the text as one of the key stakeholders in the development of the EaP. However, the EaP CSF raised concerns over the future EaP policy, which lacks not only balance between supporting economic recovery and democratic development, but also neglects the involvement of civil society partners that would be willing to further strengthen democracy and the rule of law. Against this backdrop, EaP CSF Working Group 3 has developed [recommendations](#) on how to facilitate full and effective implementation of post-2020 environmental and climate change priorities in EaP countries.

Through the statement, the Forum also ensured its readiness to contribute to the implementation and monitoring process of the Summit outcomes and reforms, with its tools and specifically, the [EaP Index](#) and new project awarded under FSTP – re-granting to members under Lot 1.

## Working Group Activities

The EaP CSF Working Groups (WG) met twice in 2021, however – just as in the previous year because of the pandemic – the meetings were held online. The first meetings were held throughout May and June, while the second meetings were scheduled within the scope of the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Assembly between 30 November and 2 December. The participants of these meetings discussed policy and EaP



CSF updates, and further thematic updates from the respective WG of the six EaP countries. More than 340 members and delegates of the EaP CSF attended the WG meetings throughout 34 sessions. EU stakeholders and external experts were invited to some of the debates to share their ideas and to discuss policy developments and the participation of civil society in addressing the challenges of the region throughout 2021.

The Working Group 1 meetings of [May](#) and [December](#) included policy debates around human rights and security, EaP policy as a priority for the EU and EaP governments and on the continuation of reform processes in the EaP countries. The main topics included national judicial reforms in the EaP countries, challenges to human security in relation to the conflict in the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh and the unprecedented wave of repressions on civil society in Belarus.

Working Group 2 met in [June](#) and [December](#) to exchange updates, knowledge and best practices and take part in numerous debates on topics ranging from digital transformation, investment and access to finance for SMEs, and trade and economic integration. Unsurprisingly, a major focus of discussion was the wide-ranging impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the economies of the Eastern Partnership countries. Another issue raised was the growing disparity between the level of economic integration of the three EaP countries with EU Association Agreements and the three without EU Association Agreements.

Working Group 3 met in [May](#) and [December](#) 2021 to discuss thematic updates, activities implemented through respective WG structures in the EaP countries, and future goals in the context of the ongoing pandemic. During both annual meetings, WG3 members discussed environmental and climate change matters on national levels, including strengthening the environmental legislation, environmental impact assessment (EIA) practices, and water management. While progress with policies and legislation development was highlighted by all EaP countries, concerns were raised about domestic capacity to effectively implement reforms as prescribed in the adopted legislation. In the second half of 2021, WG3 was also supported by an external consultant, who provided research, operational and strategic support throughout WG3 annual activities.

Working Group 4 members convened in [June](#) and [December](#) 2021 to exchange updates from each of the six EaP countries and take part in policy debates on youth, culture, education and research and innovation. WG4 members raised major challenges faced in 2021, such as limited funding and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Opportunities for civil society to actively engage in policy development in 2021 were positively assessed by Armenia, Georgia, and



Ukraine. Fewer opportunities existed in Moldova, given the uncertain political situation, and in Azerbaijan, where civil society organisations are struggling to stay afloat due to limited access to international funding opportunities.

Members of Working Group 5 met in [June](#) and [December](#). As with other Working Groups, the impact of COVID-19 was a major topic of discussion. The effects of the pandemic on the labour market and labour policies being particularly profound in light of national lockdowns and shifts to remote working.

### **EaP CSF Re-granting to Members**

The EaP CSF Re-granting scheme (FSTP), partially financed by the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), supports projects of civil society organisations from EaP countries and the EU member states that have a regional dimension and deliver on the strategic policy, advocacy and capacity building priorities of the Forum. Under the new grant from the European Commission, the Forum's re-granting scheme was reviewed. The new re-granting programme - EaP CSF re-granting to members (2021-2023), has a maximum allocation of €240,000 per year distributed via three lots: Lot 1 - Monitoring EaP deliverables, Lot 2 - Addressing the Forum's strategic advocacy priorities and Lot 3 - Strengthening the linkage between the EaP CSF's members. For Lot 1 and 2 the deadline for submission of proposals was 12 September while for Lot 3, it was 14 March 2021.

Under [Lot 1](#), the Selection Committee chose 1 project out of 1 eligible proposal. The total budget is marked at €188,385 for 2021-2023. The project covers all six EaP countries and aims to deliver comprehensive monitoring of the EaP deliverables, targets and flagship initiatives on a periodic basis provided by civic experts in all EaP countries.

The project proposals under [Lot 2](#) consisted of 18 eligible applications. After careful consideration, the Selection Committee chose 3 projects which make up for a total budget of €119,686. The topics the projects cover include advocating for good environmental governance in the EaP region, improving digital healthcare and digitalisation, and addressing the subject of unresolved frozen conflicts in the Eastern Partnership region.

Under [Lot 3](#), the Selection Committee chose 4 out of 27 eligible proposals, with a total budget of €101,568. The selected projects cover such matters as the management of Transboundary Emerald Sites of Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova, and the role of CSOs in the implementation process of the DCFTAs in Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. They further deal with the promotion of modern international standards of children's rights in Belarus, Moldova, and Ukraine, and also address young people's competitiveness and facilitate their entry into the labour market in Armenia, Moldova and Ukraine.

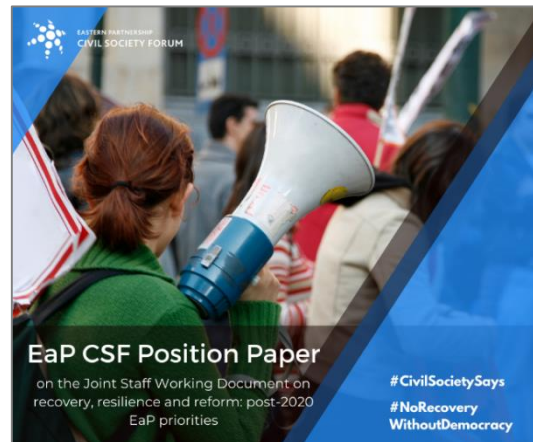
### **Outreach and external communication**

The EaP CSF Steering Committee has issued a total of 13 statements in 2021 that the Secretariat disseminated in order to attract attention to several developments in the EaP region. Moreover, the National Platforms continued to express their views on important matters for their respective country and developed more than 31 statements.

In 2021, EaP CSF worked on four major communication campaigns that aim to promote the Forum's activities to an external audience.

As already mentioned, the Forum continued its #PrepareEaP4Health campaign in order to promote its policy paper series on the effects of the pandemic on different areas, such as digital literacy, online and offline education and the digital transformation of SMEs. The campaign also promoted the online [public discussion](#) that launched the policy papers.

As stated above in our contribution to the EaP policy, based on the JSWD on recovery, resilience and reform: post-2020 EaP priorities, the EaP CSF published a [position paper](#), outlining civil society's recommendations on several issues within the proposed post-2020 priorities. While the EaP CSF welcomed the release of the JSWD, it fears that the JSWD might not meet expectations and lacks balance between supporting economic recovery and democratic development. To promote the key messages and highlight the most prominent recommendations of the EaP CSF's position paper, the Forum continued with the #CivilSocietySays campaign and launched an additional hashtag: #NoRecoveryWithoutDemocracy.



As the EaP CSF Annual Assembly 2021 was again held entirely online, the #AA2021 campaign raised awareness for this event by promoting the agenda and giving insights from the event to the broader public beyond membership. Many Annual Assembly sessions were accessible to the public on the event platform and Facebook.

To promote the Eastern Partnership Index 2021, the campaign #EaPIndex was launched in late 2021. It informs the broader audience on social media about the EaP Index 2021 and its contents. The campaign will be continued in 2022.

In 2021, EaP CSF communicated its activities via several social media channels, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn as well as via our website and newsletter.

During the course of the year, the number of followers on social media grew continuously and the content created by the EaP CSF reached more than 450,000 people across all social media platforms. Over 2,200 people are subscribed to the monthly newsletter while the EaP CSF website has been viewed over 100,000 times by over 45,000 individual users. The Forum and its activities have been mentioned over 67 times in various media outlets from the EU and the EaP region.



## EaP Index

The latest edition of the [Eastern Partnership Index](#) – the EaP CSF monitoring tool charting the progress made by the six Eastern Partnership countries towards sustainable democratic development and European integration – was published in December 2021 and a launch event was held within the framework of the 2021 Annual Assembly.

The Eastern Partnership Index 2021 covers the period from 2020 to mid-2021, a timeframe that includes some of the most challenging phases of the COVID-19

pandemic. The findings of the Index show the wide-ranging impacts the pandemic and its fallout had in the region, from the fight against corruption, freedom of assembly to independent media and equality. Consequently, insights from the Index provide critical evidence from the region at a time when governments, civil society organisations and the EU are working on recovery plans.

The results presented in this report provide an up to date and nuanced appraisal of developments across core political, social and economic themes and issues in all six EaP states. The Index is based on national and sectoral expert-level insights from specialists in EaP countries working in CSOs, academia, the media and think tanks. Consequently, the results are grounded in authentic insights and understandings of the socio-economic and political landscapes of the countries in the region.

This year the project managers of the EaP Index have attempted to broaden the reach of the EaP Index, so that it may bring the work of the Forum to new audiences, whilst remaining a useful and influential tool for researchers and policy analysts.

### Re-granting to National Platforms

The six National Platforms (NPs) of the EaP CSF benefit from the re-granting scheme with an overall financial allocation of a maximum of €684,000 for the period of 2021-2023. Re-granting to the National Platforms scheme is meant to strengthen the role of the NPs in EaP countries.

On the operational front, the re-granting scheme will ensure that the NP Secretariats have the capacity to properly facilitate the work of the NPs and further ensure proper functioning of NPs including policy, membership engagement, communications, monitoring and evaluation, and statutory matters.

In a changed post-war socio-political life, the general apathy and disappointment had a major negative impact on the **Armenian National Platform's** activities and the level of its engagement. Coupled with the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the limitations on holding large in-person events and thus, ensuring better networking among the Armenian National Platform members and other relevant stakeholders was also limited. The



implemented project activities were directed at ensuring the regular operation of the Armenian National Platform in accordance with main procedures envisaged by its Statute, contributing to the EU-Armenia dialogue and benefitting from the expertise of the WGs in this process. Among others, activities implemented by the Armenian National Platform WGs (mostly studies/papers) and progress made in the formation of the EU-Armenia Civil Society Platform can be highlighted. Thus, the activities of the Armenian National Platform in 2021 were consistent overall with the project goal of reinforcing the dialogue process with the EU and positioning the Armenian National Platform as the main consolidator of the civil society voice in Armenia.

The start date of the **Azerbaijani National Platform's** project implementation was delayed due to the prolonged yet successful grant registration process. In 2021, the Azerbaijani National Platform offered its members an opportunity to participate in an international conference on “The role of civil society of Azerbaijan in the process of Open Government Partnership” and further offered its members consultations on research methodologies.



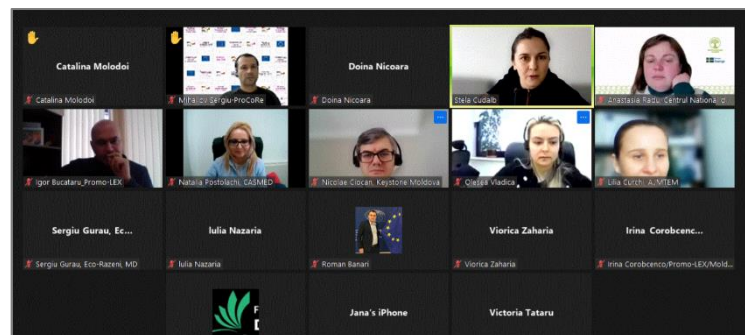
The Azerbaijani National Platform also started the review process of the existing assessment report of the National Platform. While some of the activities were moved from 2021 to 2022, the highlights of the activities implemented by the National Platform in 2021 include, but are not limited to: enhanced dialogue with in-country and external stakeholders and advocacy to support the European integration process in Azerbaijan; improving capacity of Azerbaijani civil society organisations, among others, via establishing a CSO School, for which the research process has been initiated; developing institutional capacities of the Azerbaijani National Platform on the Human and Institutional Capacity Development (HICD) scheme, for which the review of the existing baseline assessment report of the 2020-2021 data of the National Platform members has already started.

The **Belarusian National Platform** continued its major activities in 2021 in face of the deteriorating human rights situation in the Republic of Belarus. To date, more than 270 CSOs have been liquidated in the country, including some EaP CSF members. Suspension by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus of the country's participation in both the Eastern Partnership and the Readmission agreement on 28 June 2021 further challenged activities of the Belarusian National Platform. In these trying times, the EaP CSF Secretariat continued to provide operational support to the Belarusian National Platform to implement and engage in advocacy processes as much as possible, to measure the needs of its members and provide necessary support, which will continue in 2022.

In the circumstances of increased political and societal polarisation domestically and ongoing regional tensions, the **Georgian National Platform** continued to drive its activities and follow the annual plan. The project of the Georgian National Platform envisaged increasing the efficiency of the National Platform, enhancing its role and participation in the policy-making process, as well as strengthening the positioning of the coalition both within the

country and within the EaP format. To achieve its goals following directions realised inter se: securing an uninterrupted functioning of the Secretariat of the National Platform, increasing involvement of the member organisations in policy-making processes, and facilitating collaboration between the National Platform and the EU-Georgia Civil Society Platform established under the Association Agreement. In March-October 2021, the Georgian National Platform conducted a multitude of activities including a joint conference of the Government of Georgia and the Georgian National Platform of the EaP CSF, Annual General Meeting, sectoral meetings and Coordination Council meetings, as well as Working Group meetings. In total, 567 representatives attended all events organised by the coalition. Overall, in 2021, the GNP maintained a trustworthy reputation with the executive and legislative branches of the government that prepared fertile ground for further collaboration.

In the framework of its “Advocating for a European future and better collaboration with EaP” project, the **Moldovan National Platform** supported its members in being vocal in relation to public authorities by promoting public declarations about problems and challenges in Moldovan society.

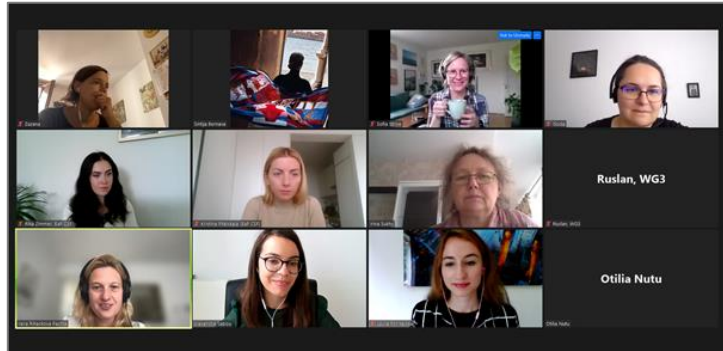


The National Platform had the opportunity to act and develop their activities regardless of the COVID-19 pandemic (lockdowns) and the difficult political situation in the Republic of Moldova (electoral campaign). At the same time, the needs of the members have been charted, in order to identify the capacity-building necessities of the members, especially regarding their advocacy capacities. The Moldova National Platform Members have been engaged in various joint initiatives at national and regional level, in collaboration with other countries of the EaP, promoting the values of the European Union. One example is the participation of the Institute for European Policies and Reforms within the project “The role of CSOs in DCFTA Implementation in Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine”.

The **Ukrainian National Platform** continued its activities aimed in several directions. The Secretariat of the Ukrainian National Platform established good working relations with the European Integration Committee of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, including via participation of the members in the meetings of the Committee. The members of the National Platform also participated in different EaP panels and other EaP events. As part of the Ukrainian National Platform awareness raising campaign, its Secretariat published four issues of the information bulletin and maintained an active Facebook page with on average 26 posts per month. In 2021, the Ukrainian National Platform Secretariat organised three capacity building training sessions: “Digital tools for NGO communication” (parts 1 and 2) and “Key Problems of Introducing Strategic Environmental Assessment as the Main Tool for Achieving Balanced Development of Local Communities.”

## Steering Committee Activities

In 2021 there were six meetings of the Steering Committee. These took place in [February](#), [March/April](#), [June](#), [July](#), [September](#) and November (minutes not yet published). Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic situation, all of these Steering Committee meetings took place online. During these meetings, the Steering Committee members discussed and voted on numerous important issues and processes of the Forum. These included advocacy priorities for 2021, strengthening the synergy between EaP CSF National Platforms, the development of the new EaP CSF Strategy for 2022-2030, a review of the updated EaP Index methodology, Working Group meetings in May and June, the 2021 Annual Assembly, the departure of long-time Director of the EaP CSF Secretariat, Natalia Yerashevich, and the departure of Steering Committee Co-Chair, Sofia Strive along with many other topics.



Preparations were made for Mikayel Hovhannisyan to replace Sofia Strive on the Steering Committee as WG1 Coordinator for the remainder of the current mandate. The composition of the Steering Committee as we move into 2022 is therefore as follows: Sintija Bernava, Ruslan Havryliuk, Shahla Ismayil, Lousineh Hakobyan, Mikayel Hovhannisyan, Maksym Koriavets, Natia Kuprashvili, Adrian Lupusor, Goda Neverauskaitė, Ana Otilia Nutu, Tatiana Poshevalova, Irina Sukhy and Yurii Vdovenko.

## Delegate Selection

A new cycle for delegates begins in 2022 and will last until 2024. To that end, preparatory groundwork for the selection of a new cohort of delegates began in 2021, culminating in the launch of the official Call for Delegates in November. CSOs, both familiar and new to the Forum, from across the EU and Eastern Partnership region were invited and encouraged to apply for delegate status within the EaP CSF. After the closure of the Call for Delegates, the applications will be checked against the eligibility criteria and elections will be arranged according to the selection procedures. National Platforms, Working Group Coordinators and EU Delegations will be invited to cast their votes.

The Secretariat also engaged the services of an External Assessor, Gwen Jones, to conduct an assessment of the National Platforms. The assessment will consider the progress made by the six National Platforms across several different processes and reforms, such as the implementation of the Code of Ethical Conduct. The External Assessment will also evaluate whether the National Platforms not already deemed so, are ready to take over the delegate selection process at the conclusion of this cycle.

## EaP CSF Strategy 2022-2030

Following the Steering Committee's decision in February 2021 to start work on the preparation of the new EaP CSF Strategy, a consultant, Ms. Snježana Bokulić, was recruited to facilitate the participatory and rights-based development process of the new strategy. Besides developing the strategy, the new documents to be guiding the work of the Forum - an action plan with a results framework, as well as practical guidance on maximising the Working Groups' efficiency were also the part of the assignment. In June 2021, the Steering Committee decided that the new strategy should cover the period of 2022-2030, to coincide with the end of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The success of the strategy development process hinged on the extensive participation of EaP CSF members and delegates in the consultation and the drafting of the document. The comprehensive participatory process included an online survey for all members, followed by focus groups discussions, six strategic workshops and presentation and discussion of the draft strategy at the 2021 Annual Assembly (AA) during a dedicated session and in the framework of the AA WGs meetings. External stakeholders also provided input to the drafting process through a series of individual interviews led by the consultant. The draft of the strategy was finalised during the final validation workshop on 17 December.





[EaP CSF's Strategy 2022-2030](#) will be adopted by the Forum's delegates in January 2022. The work on developing the results framework and the action plan, as well as Working Groups Guidance will resume in January 2022 with further structured engagement of EaP CSF delegates and members.

## **Code of Ethical Conduct**

The National Platform Self-Assessment process, which invites National Platforms to assess themselves and their implementation of, and adherence with, the [Code of Ethical Conduct](#), was launched in late 2020 and Self-Assessments were submitted in March and April of 2021. The Self-Assessment allows us to track the progress of each National Platform and the results are incorporated into the External Assessment.

In 2021, the [EaP CSF Compliance Committee](#) came in full composition. Following the 2020 elections, two positions remained vacant in the Compliance Committee, which, following the General Assembly votes in May 2021, were filled by newly-elected **Compliance Committee members: Margit Sare** (WG3 delegate, EU – Estonia, Peipsi Center for Transboundary Cooperation), and **Ashot Melikyan** (WG1 delegate, EaP – Armenia, Committee to Protect Freedom of Expression). They joined the three members of the EaP CSF Compliance Committee who were elected back in November 2020: **Nino Elizbarashvili** (WG2 delegate, EaP – Georgia, The Georgian Association “Women in Business”); **Elchin Sultanov** (WG3 delegate, EaP – Azerbaijan, Azerbaijan Ornithological Society); **Pavel Havlíček** (WG1 delegate, EU - Czech Republic, Association for International Affairs).

Moreover, [the EaP CSF Complaints Management Guide](#) was also made available online. The Guide provides the most essential information about each step of the Complaints Management Procedure at the Forum. It aims to offer each member an easy and accessible way of understanding how and when to submit a complaint, and in which circumstances the Forum's Compliance Committee can take action. No specific complaint has been addressed by the EaP CSF Compliance Committee in 2021.

## **Gender Mainstreaming Strategy**

The [Gender Mainstreaming Strategy](#) (GMS) was adopted in 2020 and is planned to be implemented by 2023. The start of the implementation process was, however, postponed until January 2022 due to unexpected events within the Secretariat team. A series of action points, including the establishment of a GMS Task Force, the development of a vision note and roadmap will guide the implementation of the Gender Mainstreaming Strategy over the course of 2022. The Forum is committed to the promotion of gender equality and equity, and diversity and inclusiveness – as set out in the Code of Ethical Conduct.



## **Outreach to Members**

Throughout 2021, the EaP CSF further consolidated the internal communication channels towards its membership. Members received a bimonthly Members' Update featuring the most relevant news on the EaP policy cycle, EaP CSF-led advocacy activities, opportunities for engagement, internal consultations as well as internal updates on the Forum's statutory processes. Each edition of the Members' Update integrated information from National Platforms in an effort to further consolidate cross-network and cross-platform communication.

The process of consolidation and segmentation of the EaP CSF membership database (now counting 1,146 active member organisations) was carried out in 2021. This process will enable targeted outreach and more effective consultation with members on focused subjects. A database update was run over the late summer/early autumn period in cooperation with the National Platforms.

## **Our Funders**

In 2021, the EaP CSF was funded by the EU with the co-funding provided by the National Endowment for Democracy. More can be found in the [Financial Report for 2021](#).



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