

EaP CSF WG3 recommendations on EaP post 2020 priorities on environment and climate

The Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum's (EaP CSF) Working Group 3 (WG 3) on environment, climate change and energy security welcomes and supports the recently published [EaP CSF position paper](#) on the Joint Staff Working Document (JSWD), 'Recovery, resilience and reform: post-2020 Eastern Partnership priorities' as well as the results of the 6th EaP Summit.

EaP CSF WG3 members would like to raise some specific recommendations on how to facilitate full and effective implementation of the post-2020 environmental and climate change priorities in EaP countries: regrettably, yet the current climate, green growth, environmental and sustainable development policies, and legislation in the EaP region are either underdeveloped or poorly implemented and enforced. National institutional capacity, knowledge, and resources are highly insufficient. The continuous EU assistance is welcomed and would support speeding up necessary policy reforms on environmental, climate, energy and green transition reforms. To improve the environmental governance in EaP countries, WG3 members recommend:

On multiplying benefits for people's health and well-being

- We encourage the planned joint work on reducing air pollution through better legislation. The absence of any reference to sustainable transport and energy efficiency as a means to improve air pollution is somehow surprising as both have enormous potential to reduce harmful (including GHG) emissions and improve air quality (outdoor and indoor) to benefit people's health and wellbeing. There is a need to further highlight the importance of these two areas and holistically integrate measures on sustainable transport and energy efficiency in the processes of national and urban development planning.
- Considering public awareness, national institutions should actively cooperate with civil society and capitalise on their ability to raise awareness within EaP societies, where environmental consciousness remains relatively low. Thus sufficient funding for the period 2021-2027 should be allocated for projects aimed at promoting environmental awareness and public campaigns calling for the implementation of the relevant environmental legislation in both urban and rural areas.

On circular economy, climate neutrality and green growth

- The Eastern Partnership countries should be encouraged to participate in the implementation of the European Green Deal, to adapt their policies in accordance with the European ones approved for the implementation of the European Green Deal. Green deal for all could be promoted as a flagship initiative to engage citizens and other stakeholders to transition to a climate-neutral economy and accelerate green growth in all EaP countries.
- The continuous EU assistance is highly welcomed and efforts should be mainstreamed to speed up the necessary legislative reforms in line with the relevant bilateral agreements with the EU and the Paris Agreement. In parallel, governments should be stimulated to communicate and actively involve academic, business, and civil society in all stages of the policymaking processes. The rules for such dialogues need to be jointly agreed by all parties and be based on clear and transparent procedures.



- Good governance in the areas of environment, climate change and energy, based on a transparent and inclusive decision-making process, should be one of the requirements of financial, economic and sectoral support to the EaP countries. Strengthening the environmental public institutions, improving their architecture, and implementing capacity should be supported as part of environmental governance reform. At the same time, targeted support is needed to develop accountable, transparent, and effective mechanisms for monitoring the implementation of the climate and environmental policies, including the instalment of a modern environmental monitoring system, with an active involvement of the civil society.
- In all EaP countries, there is a persistent need to support and promote circular economy strategic planning at the national and city level and pinpoint the economic opportunities and benefits from such transition (e.g., GDP growth, reducing GHGs, environmental impact, and jobs creation). The focus needs to be on the sectors that use most resources and where the potential for circularity is high (e.g. electronics and ICT, batteries, vehicles, packaging, plastics, textiles, construction and buildings, food, water). While industry, business, and cities are the main drivers of the transition, policymakers should be further encouraged to create an enabling environment by removing regulatory and market barriers and stimulating market actors to act. Better access and broad dissemination of best practice examples from EU and the EaP region would benefit policy makers and other stakeholders throughout the process.
- Setting a new target for EaP countries to move towards climate neutrality by 2050 is welcomed. Considering the current state of national policy agendas and activities, institutional fragmentation, and the overall low level of awareness on energy, environmental, and climate matters, at first place efforts are to be multiplied to support governments to complete swiftly already ongoing reforms in key sectors. Good governance and sound and effectively implemented government strategies and policies will then give the necessary confidence and facilitate the appetite of public and private investors to create pipelines of sustainable development projects and scale-up investments required in all economic sectors to achieve climate neutrality.

On biodiversity and economy's natural assets base

- There is a need of continuous EU support to implement good environmental governance in the EaP region, based on the integration of environmental policies in various economic sectors, including energy, transport, agriculture, etc. At the same time, environmental policy should be given higher priority in all EaP governments' agenda.
- Additional and more attention is to be given to the effective implementation of the ecosystem approach in all EaP countries, mapping and assessing ecosystem services, restoration of ecosystems, and adaptation to climate change.
- To that end, an EU supported regional flagship initiative could facilitate and support cooperation in biodiversity protection and preserving sustainable livelihoods. At national level, measures should target increasing the area of nature reserves and strengthening the capacity of national parks and other nature reserves as well as integration into the NATURA-2000 network
- EaP countries need to be encouraged and further supported to set ambitious national targets to extend organic agriculture land areas in line with the targets in the EU Green

Deal. Policy measures should be targeting farmers and stimulating the increase of organic production at the same time addressing consumers and boosting final demand.

On strengthening energy security and nuclear safety

- The unfolding gas crisis in the EU, deepened by Gazprom's pressures to finalise Nord Stream 2 and operate it bypassing the EU rules, shows now more than ever that the EU and EaP are in the same boat on energy security. The experience of some EaP countries, which have long been exposed to energy-conditioned political pressure from Russia, shows that countries' resilience has increased despite this political pressure where energy supplies were diversified and transparent and fair rules were fully implemented. The EU has greatly supported both Ukraine in recent years and Moldova this year to cope with gas cuts and political pressures conditioning access to critical energy supplies. Given the importance of EU and EaP's energy market as a whole for Russia, acting in solidarity and fully implementing EU rules for fair competition in energy across the region is key to protect all our consumers from the risks of energy supply interruptions, while also protecting our administrations from undue political pressure.
- Ensuring energy security should be a main objective in EaP countries. To achieve this, countries need to reduce energy import-dependency, diversify energy supply sources and routes, increase the flexibility, security and resilience of critical energy systems and infrastructure, and develop renewable, energy efficient alternative technologies, including green hydrogen by 2030. To achieve these objectives strong political will be essential to strengthen strategic planning capacity, reinforce coordination with international partners and regional synergies among countries, increasing investment in education, research, and development. Strong cooperation between EaP and EU is needed to deal with many challenges to energy security such as cyber-security of critical energy infrastructure, resilience against climate change, or the consequences on energy security of the on-going Russian occupation and separatist regimes in Ukraine, Georgia or Moldova.
- Whereas the "energy efficiency first" principle is highlighted, the potential role of energy efficiency and behavioural changes are somehow neglected in connection with achieving energy security and the suggested pathway to climate neutrality. Energy efficiency must become a central pillar to achieving energy security, climate neutrality, fostering green growth, green jobs creation, tackling fuel poverty and improving public health and wellbeing. In all EaP countries, energy efficiency strategies and legislation must be holistically integrated into the broader policy framework on the environment, climate neutrality, energy security, and green economic development. Broader engagement of business and civil society in all processes, from policy setting to evaluating its implementation, is encouraged.
- Moreover, broadly communicating the multiple benefits of energy efficiency would create opportunities for political leaders and private and public actors to take action and scale up necessary investments for the implementation of energy efficiency projects. Civil society and consumer organisations could be trained to be the primary influencers and champions of the multiple benefits of energy efficiency campaigns.
- The areas identified for EU support are of high relevance. In addition to introducing energy efficiency building standards, capacity building and making renovation affordable, EaP countries need to be encouraged and supported to develop comprehensive long-term renovation national strategies, Nearly zero buildings requirements and effective

monitoring and compliance mechanisms. Only when an appropriate and robust policy framework is in place, we would expect to see an increasing number of investments in energy efficiency and the creation of the desired economies of scale.

- Tapping on the low-hanging fruits – e.g. by setting a top ten target of only 20% reduced energy consumption (with current potential estimated in the region in the range of 40-60%), would only make the required deep renovation of existing buildings more expensive and unaffordable for citizens in the future.

On accelerating the shift to sustainable and smart mobility

- The planned initiative on sustainable and smart mobility at the city level in cooperation with IFIs is highly relevant for all EaP countries. What is further needed, however is a fundamental shift of the general understanding of what sustainable and smart mobility means and how to build the necessary infrastructure in short, medium and long term of course accompanied by adopting the necessary legislative initiatives at national and local level and boosting technological innovations and digitalisation.
- The need to develop sustainable urban mobility plans (SUMPs) for cities is evident and important in the context of the pandemic, which affected the EaP countries' transport systems. Decision makers at the national and local level should cooperate closely together, working in synergy with international and non-governmental organisations to strengthen the resilience of the urban transport system, adopting protocols and frameworks for the development of multimodal transport, land-use planning and non-motorised transport modes. The EaP governments in particular should simplify procedures, update standards and facilitate the coherent development of urban mobility across their countries.
- The governments and partners on international, national and local levels should jointly apply an integrated Safe System Approach to achieve the targets set in the Global Plan to implement the second Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021-2030 proclaimed by the UN General Resolution 74/299. It is crucially important for every country to develop and implement national and local strategies and plans to achieve the main target of a 50% reduction in the number of road traffic deaths and seriously injured by 2030. All the relevant stakeholders, civil society and business sector should make urgent efforts to contribute to reach this goal. A road safety fund allocated and capacity building are core needs in the region.
- The EaP CSF Working Group 3 welcomes the launch of the EaP Regional Road Safety Observatory (RRSO) to improve constructively road safety practice, policy and statistical data and analysis by establishing an integrated analytical platform for sharing the best practices involving EaP member countries. All the relevant national stakeholders should cooperate within the set platform for strengthening the data collection and evidence-based system to manage the key road safety indicators. The CSO sector in its turn should be involved in the road safety activities of the RSO (such as exchange of profile knowledge, raising awareness, contributing to changes of public attitude, sharing the efficient and good practices) to facilitate road safety performance on the national and regional levels.