

THIRD EASTERN PARTNERSHIP YOUTH CONFERENCE REPORT

#EaPYouth4Environment

September 24-26, 2020



Funded by
the European Union



Key messages of the event

UNITE YOUR FORCES ACROSS COUNTRIES

in order to efficiently tackle environmental challenges.



GREEN AGENDA IS YOUTH AGENDA!

Only if young people coalise to actively vocalise and demand policy changes, transformation can happen.



MAKE YOUR COUNTRIES GREENER AND MORE SUSTAINABLE

by turning the current health crisis into an opportunity for change.



INSPIRE OTHER PEOPLE

by sharing your environmental activities online and on social media. Others will follow suit.



EXPAND YOUR CONNECTIONS AND KNOWLEDGE

with like-minded people all over the European Union, Russia and the Eastern Partnership countries. Share your knowledge and best practices.



Summary of the event

The role of young people in shaping environmental policies is crucial for the successful implementation of the European Green Deal in the EU and its Eastern neighbours. Discussions during the Eastern Partnership Youth Conference “Youth4Environment” were built around the need for young activists to unite their forces within countries and between them, globally, in order to efficiently tackle environmental challenges.

Young people believe that the COVID-19 pandemic is an opportunity for governments to drastically change their current approach and strive for greener and more sustainable policies.

The youth of today expect their governments to show greater determination to create better environmental legal frameworks in the EaP region, to include the younger generation in strategic dialogue, and to raise awareness and tackle “eco-illiteracy” in society.



We want to further encourage youth to be very proactive, raise their voices, increase their participation and demand.

IRINA GHAPLANYAN

Deputy Minister of Environment,
Republic of Armenia

Joining forces with like-minded people and strengthening international cooperation is the key priority for success. The current political crisis and upheaval in Belarus can serve as an example of this: against the odds, and in the face of real adversity, the Belarusian people have united in local communities and expressed solidarity to each other.

This creation of communities represents a big opportunity for the development of ecological approaches in the future, said **Irina Sukhy**, environmental activist from Ecohome Belarus.



In order to bring concrete results to the people, we need a coalition beyond policy makers. We need a coalition of the young people and people on the ground.

VASSILIS MARAGOS

Head of Unit, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus & Eastern Partnership, DG NEAR, European Commission

Irina Ghaplanyan, Deputy Minister of Environment of Armenia, echoed the need for strong voices from the young people to help push environmental issues to the top of EaP governments' agenda, in spite of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Yet, young people are not alone in this battle. An important instrument in today's environmental activism is the gaining, and especially sharing, of knowledge, according to **Hans-Jürgen Heimsoeth**, Special Representative for the Eastern Partnership at the German Federal Foreign Office.

Iryna Stavchuk, Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources of Ukraine, who is also a former climate activist herself, shared the motivation and drive of the conference participants to bring real change to their countries. She highlighted that environmental policy and climate change mitigation in Ukraine has become one of the government's main priorities for the coming years.



Changes in the world happen when there are energetic and very motivated people. I wish for all of you to be part of this change process in the world.

IRYNA STAVCHUK

Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources, Ukraine



Livestream of the first day



Livestream of the second day



Livestream of the lunch concert

Recommendations

The conference allowed participants to identify the most pressing environmental issues in the Eastern Partnership, EU and Russia in three main thematic areas: environment, clean energy and alternative mobility. Based on their findings, participants have developed recommendations for the upcoming EaP environmental Ministerial in October 2020.

Recommendations on environmental issues:



- Water pollution should be tackled by involving rural populations to implement small scale solutions on the ground.
- Public awareness should be raised on waste management and recycling through targeted media campaigns.

Recommendations on clean energy issues:



- The EU should support Eastern Partnership countries by exchanging best practices and know-how on the implementation of clean energy innovations.
- Incentives should be created for the adoption of renewable energy sources at the consumer level, such that consumers become “prosumers”.

Recommendations on mobility issues:



- Road infrastructure should be improved through bus and bike lanes creation, in order to facilitate the use of alternative modes of transport to private cars, and thereby reduce the high level of pollution in cities.
- People's behaviour should be shifted towards taking eco-friendlier transport alternatives, inciting a generational change in attitudes through raising awareness on this subject at kindergarten and in schools.

Recommendation on cross-cutting issues:



- Integrate environmental education at all levels of the formal educational system.

Green Ideathon

Over the course of a three-day conference, young environmental activists took ownership of environmental changes into their hands, addressing current challenges by practical actions. Three cross-country projects produced during the conference sessions were selected by a jury to be implemented by the end of 2020 in their respective countries and cities. The projects will be supported by the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Regional Office “Dialogue Eastern Europe”.



GREENY GRANNY (BELARUS, CZECH REPUBLIC, RUSSIA, UKRAINE)

Raising ecological awareness in rural areas through educational sessions for residents of 4 villages with ecological problems.



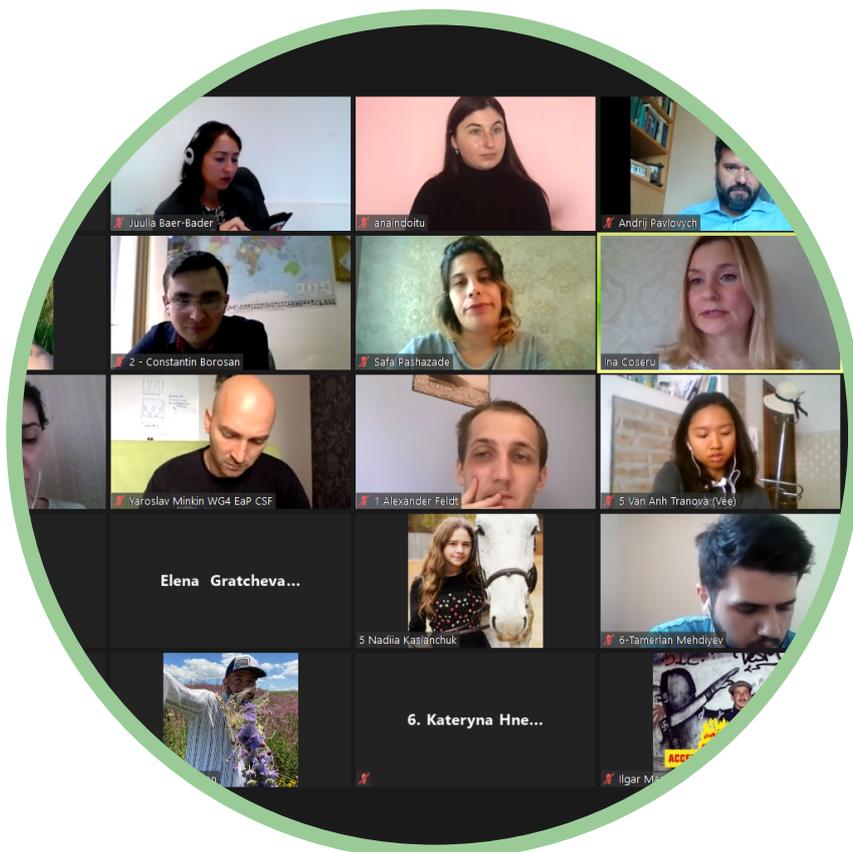
ROAD 2 THE FUTURE (AUSTRIA, BELARUS, RUSSIA)

Create a street festival focused on education of the residents and general street users about the impact of cities on climate change.



SUSTAINABILITY OF GREEN ENERGY IN MOLDOVA AND GEORGIA

Online workshop for young people to increase their skills regarding green energy, share ideas and create a network.



About the Eastern Partnership Youth Conference 2020 - Youth4Environment

The Eastern Partnership Youth Conference 2020 “Youth for Environment” took place entirely online on 24-26 September 2020. Held under the auspices of the German Presidency of the Council of the European Union, the conference was organised by the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum (EaP CSF).

Some 90 young people from 21 countries met in various online formats with 16 high-level stakeholders from the Eastern Partnership countries and the EU. Over 7,700 unique viewers followed the discussions online via our livestream. 5 projects were developed on the course of a 3-day conference. Three of them were selected for further implementation. View the event video [here](#).

The conference was conducted with the financial support of the European Union, German Foreign Office under the German Presidency and the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung.

