

12TH ANNUAL ASSEMBLY

of the Eastern Partnership Civil
Society Forum

KEY TAKEAWAYS

December 7-10, 2020

EaP
beyond
2020



RENEWING COMMITMENTS
TO RIGHTS, SECURITY, AND
THE GREEN AGENDA

EAP BEYOND 2020:

RENEWING COMMITMENTS TO RIGHTS, SECURITY, AND THE GREEN AGENDA

In the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic, a severe political crisis in Belarus, the recently finished war in Nagorno-Karabakh and a number of important elections in Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine have significantly changed the political realities of the Eastern Partnership region. Against this backdrop, the 12th Annual Assembly of EaP CSF focused on the future perspectives beyond 2020 and the role that civil society can play in bringing security and prosperity to the region.

Below we present a number of takeaways from our flagship event that gathered, in various online formats, more than 380 civil society representatives and EaP and EU stakeholders.

Learning from the achievements and shortcomings so far, the future EaP policy beyond 2020 should focus on strengthening civil society engagement across all policy areas of the EaP deliverables and provide more opportunities for civil society to participate in the policy making process at the national and local level. There should be a truly joint ownership of a democratic transformational agenda.



Livestream of the
opening
ceremony



Working together with Eastern Partners, EU member states and civil society, we proved that solidarity and resilience are, and will remain, at the heart of the Eastern Partnership.

OLIVÉR VÁRHELYI

European Commissioner for
Neighbourhood and Enlargement

The new deliverables should differentiate among countries and provide a clear guidance on where to go and focus on achieving real change. The EU and EaP should strive for a common sense of purpose, which would result in concrete improvements for the people across the EaP and ensure that we truly “build back better” for the benefit of the EaP citizens.



Every crisis is also an opportunity that we can seize to reshape our future and build more trust.

MAIA SANDU

President-elect of the Republic of Moldova

Environmental protection and support for climate actions are central for the development of a prosperous EaP region beyond 2020. Yet, weak institutions leading to inadequate enforcement of reforms, a lack of transparency, and insufficient consultation with civil society resulted in stagnation in the environmental area. Looking ahead, the European Green Deal should become a generational project, involving citizens into a transformational process and thus becoming a game changer for generations to come. Keeping environmental issues high on the agenda, especially in times of crisis-recovery, and inclusion of climate change into sectoral dialogue will be key priorities for the EU.



The COVID-19 is an opportunity to tilt our recovery towards green and build back better.

**ADONAI HERRERA
MARTINEZ**

Director, Environmental Funds, EBRD

COVID-driven new levels of citizens' self-organisation and bottom up initiatives launched to help others have paved the way to becoming a sustainable generator of societal changes in 2021 and beyond in the whole region.



The only marker we need is a society which is healthy and democratic and free, but this is a never-ending goal - every country can always improve, and no one is ever immune to going backwards. The point isn't to get to a certain situation: it's to develop habits.

NICOLAS BOUCHET

Senior Editor and Fellow, The German
Marshall Fund of the United States

The pandemic and the political crisis resulted in an unprecedented level of mobilisation of the civil society in Belarus. The experiences of the previous societal mobilisations in the region show that it is important to maintain civic activism beyond the culmination points and always be ready for the next trigger that might lead to even bigger mobilisations. Low sense of agency in daily political and social life and negative attitudes towards politics that are persistent in all 6 EaP countries decrease the sense of agency of the citizens. Persistent and almost boring work on grassroots engagement has prepared the foundation for the mobilisation and should be continued.



**Livestream of the
panel on new EaP
deliverables**

The message was reiterated by the EaP CSF Pavel Sheremet Award laureate representing portal tut.by, and the Civil Society Award laureate, the Belarusian Civil Society, represented by the online platform Help-BY that supports victims of the continuing repressions and unlawful arrests in Belarus. Their call for urgent action illustrated the need for more support to the people of Belarus from the international community.

Women have been leading on many fronts in 2020. Gender equality should be viewed not only as an end in itself, but rather as a means to an end. The civil society should be a champion of gender equality and ensure that the sector’s vital work is relevant to all and responds to the needs of all groups in society - men, women, girls, and boys - on equal terms.



The reality of gender equality often requires men and boys to act in new ways, different from cultural stereotypes.

VLADIMIR
MKERVALISHVILI
Gender Expert, Rights Georgia

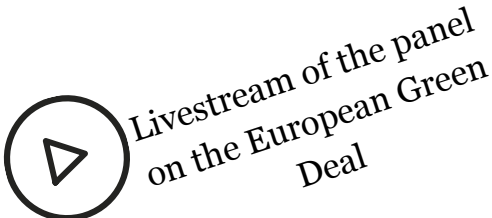


The EU security toolbox is complex and in the upcoming period aims to strengthen the resilience of the EaP countries along many axes and priorities. At the same time, some partners would like to see an enhanced partnership and stronger role of the EU namely in the ‘hard’ security domain. The gap in expectations will likely remain open for some time to come. In the meantime the EU should step up its efforts in the areas it can operate - support to transitional justice, human rights violation investigation, humanitarian assistance and post-conflict rebuilding - in order to strengthen security in the region.

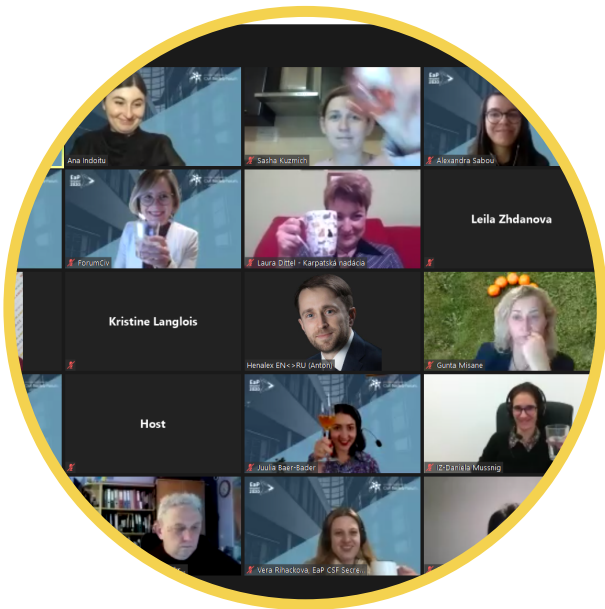


Eastern Partnership is about resilience - it is a transformative experience. The EU is aiming at long-term partnership to enable partners to make the choice for the future internally, by themselves, without any external threats.

SANITA PAVŁUTA-
DESLANDES
Ambassador Extraordinary and
Plenipotentiary, Permanent Representative of
the Republic of Latvia to the EU



This flagship annual event of the EaP CSF gathered, in various online formats, more than 380 civil society representatives and EaP and EU stakeholders. We are grateful to all our members and guests who took part in the event for their insights and rich contributions and look forward to continuing our work together in the frames of the Eastern Partnership policy.



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.

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Eastern Partnership Civil Society
Forum



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