

Annual Activities Report 2019

EaP CSF GEORGIAN NATIONAL PLATFORM REPORT

The civil society (CS) has an important role to play by providing monitoring and evaluation of the Association Agreement, as well as policy advice in order to ensure that the civil society can play a crucial role in successful implementation of the Association Agreement, by developing and improving the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. The creation of civil society coalitions and establishment of institutionalised formats of interaction with the authorities are key elements for an efficient communication and a growing influence on the process.

In 2010, the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum Georgian National Platform was established in the framework of the European Union-initiated program, which currently unites 179 civil society organizations. Strategic objectives of the EaP CSF GNP are to monitor and advocate for the implementation of Georgia's AA obligations on national and EU levels through supporting dialogue between public authorities and private sector and civil society; to communicate the importance of Georgia's European Integration efforts to the wider public and to ensure the EaP GNP's effective functioning for the achievement of its mission and objectives.

The main aspects of GNP functioning are related to the promotion and realization of the Eastern Partnership goals. The establishment of the Georgian National Platform has contributed to the institutionalization of structural dialogue and civil society becoming an important instrument of the dialogue with the government.

Meetings of the Georgian National Platform's Coordination Council (CC), working groups (WGs) and its subgroups took place regularly within the framework of the GNP. According to the Statute, the Coordination Council's meetings were also attended by the national facilitator for Georgia, Natia Kuprashvili. Additionally, the constituent working groups of the Georgian National Platform held regular meetings. Within the reporting period (January-December 2019) Working Groups (WGs) and subgroups conducted 13 meetings and the Coordination Council gathered 10 times. The WG meetings were attended mostly by Georgian NP members, including regional CSOs, also their online involvement in the coalition activities was very high.

With the aim of supporting the EU integration process, the Georgian National Platform was actively involved in ongoing processes in the country in 2019.

The EU-Georgia Civil Society Platform held two meetings in 2019. The CSP is one of the bodies set up within the framework of the Association Agreement between the European Union and Georgia. All events were attended by the representatives of governmental authorities, leading officials and policy-makers.

ACTIVITIES OF THE PLATFORM IN 2019

Meeting with Chairpersons of the Committee on European Integration of the Parliament of Georgia and Environmental Protection and Natural Resources Committee



Significant progress is evident in cooperation between the Parliament's European Integration Committee and Georgian NP. Existing unique cooperation instrument such as memorandum of cooperation (26 February 2016) and the quality of implementation is its unequivocal proof. The MoC and its integral part, Action Plan document ensure institutional establishment and essential improvement of mechanisms that enables civil society's participation in decision-making process.

On 9 July 2019 working meeting organized with the Chairpersons of the Parliamentary Committee on European Integration and Environmental Protection & Natural Resources Committee. 14 member organizations of the coalition attended the meeting. Main topic of the meeting was discussion of water resources of Georgia, safety of citizens and etc.

The representatives of the Human Rights Centre presented to the Committee Chair the results of the latest research on this topic. The directions of future cooperation defined at the meeting.

Up to present, the committee shared up to 40 draft laws to GNP for consideration. Member CSOs submitted recommendations on the 4 draft laws. Two of these draft laws are in the process of consideration and on the remaining two draft laws GNP hasn't yet got feedback from the committee.

Annual General Meeting of GNP



On October 7, 2019 the 10th Annual General Meeting of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum Georgian National Platform took place at the Multifunctional Center “Republic”. The Meeting was attended by 101 representatives from 95 CSOs (in total 179), members of the GNP, and other invited guests.

At the opening of the Annual General Meeting Carl Hartzell, Ambassador of the European Union to Georgia; Archil Karaulashvili, Head of General Directorate for European Integration, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia; Irina Pruidze, First Deputy Chairperson of the Committee on European Integration, at the Parliament of Georgia and Natia Kuprashvili, Chairperson of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum Georgian National Platform welcomed the attendees.

Ambassador of the EU to Georgia, Carl Hartzell expressed his gratitude for monitoring activities of the coalition. He believes that the Eastern Partnership and GNP member organizations represent the greatest public potential and it is important to use this potential properly and deliberately. Ambassador briefly reviewed the 10-year cycle of the Eastern Partnership (EaP).

Archil Karaulashvili, Head of EU Integration at the MFA during his welcoming address, stressed the importance of the Memorandum concluded among the GoG and the GNP and highly respected those joint activities the parties implemented during this period. According to the MFA representative “Entire Ministry expressed readiness for close cooperation with the Georgian National Platform. It is important that existing co-operation mechanism continues and becomes even more intense with future sectoral meetings with both the Coordination Council and working groups/sub-groups”. Mr. Karaulashvili appreciated the platform's contribution to the EU-Georgia Association Agreement and found extremely important implementation of the Association Agenda.

Ms. Pruidze focused on the Platform's work on recommendations on legislative amendments and noted that last year nine recommendations were submitted by the GNP member organizations and most of them have been fully or partially taken into consideration.

On 16 October 2019 during the Coordination Council meeting, Mr. Sulkhani Saladze, head of the Georgian Young Lawyers Association (GYLA) was elected as a deputy chairperson.

At the GM, the Platform Chair and WG coordinators were elected. Mr. Lasha Tughushi, Director of the European Initiative - Liberal Academy Tbilisi (EI LAT) was unanimously elected as the Chairperson of the coalition. The meeting discussed/approved new Statute and its amendments, as well as code of ethics/conduct. GNP member CSOs had their views and suggestions regarding the amendments to the Charter. Following active discussions, majority of attendees of the coalition approved the new Statute and revised code of ethics.

Newly established body of the GNP, the Compliance Committee and its 5 members elected at the General Meeting. Each GNP member will have an opportunity to submit complaints and CC (Compliance Committee) will discuss the problematic issue if any. To avoid a conflict of interest (COI) situation, whole process will be regulated/monitored by the deputy chairperson, who is a professional legal expert and head of respectful organization "Georgian Young Lawyers Association" (GYLA).

Video produced by National Facilitator for Georgia as part of GNP General Meeting 2019
<https://www.facebook.com/abambebi/videos/2521806774722391/?v=2521806774722391>

5th Meeting of the EU-Georgia Civil Society Platform (CSP)



On September 13, 2019 Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies hosted the 5th Meeting of the EU-Georgia Civil Society Platform. The meeting of the Platform was opened by the Co-chair of the EU-Georgia Civil Society Platform: Kakha Gogolashvili, Director of the EU

Studies Center at Rondeli Foundation and Istvan Komoroczki, member in the EESC Employers' Group opened the meeting.

CSP meeting was also attended by the Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia Archil Karaulashvili and the EU Ambassador to Georgia Carl Hartzell. Representatives of the civil society of the EU and Georgia discussed the achievements of the Association Agreement between Georgia and the EU and future of the Eastern Partnership, as well as labor safety and the rights of migrants. The delegates adopted a joint statement involving the evaluation process of Association Agreement implementation and the relevant recommendations.

The EU-Georgia Civil Society Platform was established under the Article 412 of the Georgia-EU Association Agreement. Its aim is to monitor the AA, issue recommendations and pass them over to the Georgia-EU Association Council, other relevant institutions of the governments and parliaments of European Union and Georgia.

Annual High-Level Joint Conference of the GNP and the Government of Georgia



Joint High-level Conference “Closer to People – Stronger Civil Society” of the Government of Georgia and the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum Georgian National Platform in cooperation with the Georgian Civil Society Sustainability Initiative took place on March 29, 2019 at the Hotels & Preference Hualing Tbilisi (address: Hualing, Tbilisi Sea New City, 0190). The conference was supported by the Government of Georgia.

The conference "Closer to People – Stronger Civil Society" was an unique opportunity to Civil Society representatives to meet with key decision makers of the country. More than 250 CSOs from all parts of Georgia attended the event.

Parallel to the conference, the CSO and Volunteerism Fairs was conducted, where local CSOs had an opportunity to present their work and activities as well as growing culture of volunteerism across the country.

The conference was organized in the framework of the European Union funded and Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung co-funded project "Georgian Civil Society Sustainability Initiative".

Sectorial Meetings



Government of Georgia has launched consultations with the civil society to elaborate recommendations for the paper on the future of the Eastern Partnership and contribute to a broad and inclusive structured consultation process. The President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker and Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations Johannes Hahn launched the initiative. GNP member CSOs have developed concrete recommendations and submitted them to the Government of Georgia.

Additionally, the GNP participated in elaboration of the Annual Action Plan on the realization of AA/DCFTA by means of providing comments and feedback to the working document shared by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). Georgian National Platform member organizations received the draft document of the National Action Plan for further comments and recommendations. In total 7 member organizations provided their recommendations, which were presented to the GoG. For discussing proposed comments and recommendations, 5 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). The meetings have been organized with the following line Ministries and responsible

LEPLs: Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia, Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia (MIA), Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, 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 above-mentioned experience makes Georgia unique among the AA implementation countries. Such consultations and meetings are a great instrument for bringing CSOs opinions and ideas to the governmental level.

In 2019, 10 issues raised by the GNP having had an influence at the country level/EU level. 7 recommendations were taken into consideration by the Government of Georgia and 5 consultative meetings organized as well.

During the year, Georgian National Platform member CSOs were actively involved in developing recommendations on the document “Eastern Partnership beyond 2020” shared by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA).

Recommendations of EI LAT Director, Mr. Lasha Tughushi taken into account by the GoG and included in the Foreign Policy Strategy (MFA).

STATEMENTS AND APPEALS OF THE GEORGIAN NATIONAL PLATFORM

Besides the aforementioned, the GNP issued 8 statements and 1 resolution in regards to different topics actual for that moment for the society and the country in 2019.

All the Statements/appeals/resolutions developed by Georgian NP disseminated through mailing list reaching more than 600 people at the local as well international level including EU institutions. Besides, communicated with Media.

See in the annex all the Statements.

- ✓ Statement on Candidates for Election as Judges of the Supreme Court <https://eap-csf.ge/images/doc/gancxadebebi/%20-%20%20%20%20gancxadeba%20uzenaesi.pdf>
- ✓ Appeal to the Government of Georgia regarding the Process of Elaboration of the Legislative Framework and Policy for Prevention of Accidents Related to the Water Objects <https://eap-csf.ge/images/doc/gancxadebebi/wyalshi%20daxrchobis%20prevencia.pdf>
- ✓ Assessment of NGOs on Impeachment of Adjara TV and Radio Director <https://eap-csf.ge/images/doc/gancxadebebi/2019.04.16.pdf>

- ✓ Statement by the Platform Member Organizations on developments in Georgia
<https://eap-csf.ge/images/doc/gancxadebebi/%2021.06.19.pdf>
- ✓ Statement of the Platform Member Organizations on the Occupation Line https://eap-csf.ge/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=919%3Aaqarthvelos-erovnuli-platformis-tsevri-organizaciebis-ganckhadeba&catid=10%3Aghonisdziebebi&Itemid=1363&lang=ka-GE
- ✓ Members of the Georgian National Platform call on international organizations to express their attitude towards Russia's provocative and aggressive actions
https://www.interpressnews.ge/ka/article/561812-sakartvelos-erovnuli-platpormis-cevri-organizaciebi-saertashoriso-organizaciebs-moucodeben-mkapiod-gamoxaton-rusetis-provokaciuli-da-agresiuli-mokmedebebis-mimart-damokidebuleba?fbclid=IwAR0e-gJPiS2SGS_TBVKylacxizWDXNJDzWI_qHwl6hWDxv7b1WUIK0ZZIXA
- ✓ Civil sector addresses the government with the initiative of involving the citizens in port construction in Anaklia.
https://eap-csf.ge/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=924%3Aqanakliashi-ghrmatsylovani-sazghvao-navsadguris-mshenebloba-vaqciot-sakhalkho-proeqtadq&catid=10%3Aghonisdziebebi&Itemid=1363&lang=ka-GE

The GNP's activities were comprehensively covered by various television stations and the media, and the GNP's web page. It is important to mention that all statements and appeals issued by GNP are posted on the webpage of leading partner news agency "InterPressNews" <http://www.interpressnews.ge/en/>

GEORGIAN CONFERENCE "GEORGIA'S EUROPEAN WAY"

On 11-12 July, Coordination Council of the EaP CSF Georgian National Platform participated in the 16th Batumi International Conference Dedicated to 10th Anniversary of Eastern Partnership "Georgia's European Way".

Charity Initiation of the GNP “Europe – Loving of Books”



On December 3, 2019 the Georgian National Platform initiated and held a charity event “Europe- Loving of Books”.

As part of the charity event, the chairperson of the coalition, Mr. Lasha Tughushi and coordination council members visited the public school located near the so-called Administrative Border Line (ABL) in the village of Tsitelubnani in Gori municipality.

Upon the initiative, the GNP donated up to 200 scientific and educational literature to the school library.

The children and the school administration expressed highest gratitude and appreciation for the support made by the coalition. Their library has become diverse and more interesting today.

In the future, such activities will certainly continue, so that the Georgian National Platform member organizations will consider every step taken towards educating children and making steps for better future.