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Resolution by Working Group 1 of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum on gender policies and further updates

The 10th Annual Assembly of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum (EaP CSF) set the stage for the Forum's drive to promote gender equality. Gender equality is a common value and an integrated part of the process to achieve democratic transformation and European integration, free from discrimination. It is thus vital that EaP CSF National Platforms and Working Groups work towards promoting women's human rights (WHR) and gender equality – fight all forms of discrimination against women and girls, gender-based and domestic violence, as well as to promote security and equal representation of women in decision-making positions. The sustainable development of the EaP region critically depends on gender equality. It is therefore important that all EaP CSF members fully recognise the problem.

Many members of the EaP CSF are already actively involved in national and regional programmes on gender equality. There are successful examples of projects on vocational education for women, representation of women in politics, mainstreaming gender equality in the environmental sector and a help centre for victims of domestic violence. However, further efforts are needed, as the EaP countries face severe gender-related problems – such as gender-based discrimination, domestic violence, gender pay gap, poverty among women and lack of representation and leadership of women in decision-making positions and politics.

EaP CSF highlights significant regional issues – and seeks solutions for problems from within. However, the mainstreaming of gender equality needs to be promoted further. Consequently, gender inequality and discrimination remain one of the core reasons that pose a risk to hampering the overall development of the region.

Based on EaP CSF Resolution 3/AA/2016 from the 8th Annual Assembly, which highlights the urgent need to explicitly address gender equality – and connects it with cross-cutting 20 Deliverables for 2020, we hereby present the following recommendations:

- EaP CSF Working Group 1 should conduct a follow-up review of results and outcomes of Resolution 3/AA/2016, approved at the Annual Assembly in 2016.
- In line with the above-mentioned Resolution, EaP CSF National Platforms should promote the work of gender sub-groups – where already established, and set up new ones, where needed. The gender sub-groups should monitor projects and programmes of the EaP CSF, as well as EU funded projects in the EaP countries. In order to improve and ensure the implementation of gender equality obligations at state level, gender sub-groups should develop and build on cooperation with state bodies.
- According to the above recommendation, gender sub-groups should organise a bi-annual EaP Gender Policy Forum to address relevant gender issues – and develop a strategy aimed at countering all forms discrimination, in line with the national priorities, as well as international human rights and gender equality standards.
- EaP CSF National Platforms should review their policies and regulations through gender sub-groups – to ensure that gender equality and elimination of discrimination

of women and girls is mainstreamed throughout all leading documents, as well as in projects focusing on areas such as environment, entrepreneurship and education.

- When working towards gender sensitive society, it is vital to address and change the attitudes of young men and boys. EaP CSF National Platforms and Working Groups should thus encourage projects aimed at discussing gender roles, stereotypes and attitudes, prevalent among youth in general – and young men and boys in particular.
- Members of EaP CSF National Platforms and Working Groups are encouraged to focus on young women and girls – on their security and inclusion in schools as well as in other activities, as women and girls often face discrimination or different treatment in comparison to men and boys of the same age.
- Members of EaP CSF National Platforms should be obliged to address the significance of women’s leadership in decision-making – when cooperating with political parties, trade unions and other movements.
- More focus on young entrepreneurs, especially women entrepreneurs, should be encouraged – through the creation of a common ground for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). This is in line with the goals of 20 Deliverables for 2020 on stronger economy and stronger society, helping to boost the economy and decrease unemployment.
- EaP CSF National Platforms should encourage projects and organisations to work with the inclusion of family planning and sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR) in the school curriculum, in order to fight stigma and disinformation.
- EaP CSF National Platforms should encourage projects and organisations to work against sexual and gender-based violence, bride kidnapping and discrimination towards lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people.

Members of Working Group 1 of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum