

**The 10<sup>th</sup> meeting of Eastern Partnership Panel on Security,  
CSDP and Civil protection  
Eastern Partnership Platform 1 on Democracy,  
Good Governance and Stability  
15 May 2018, Brussels**

**REPORT**

The 10th Eastern Partnership Panel on Security, CSDP and Civil Protection was organised by EEAS (CMPD) on 15 May in Brussels (with financial support from DG NEAR). It was the first such Panel meeting under the Eastern Partnership (EaP) revised institutional set-up endorsed by the Summit participants in Brussels last November. As a result, the Panel addressed not only security and CSDP matters, but also civil protection issues. It gathered over 60 representatives from all EaP countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine), EU Member States (MS), EU institutions and the Civil Society Forum (CSF). The Panel was co-chaired by Ms Clara Ganslandt (Head of CSDP, Partnerships and Agreements Division, CMPD), Ms Julia Stewart-David (Head of Unit in charge of the Civil Protection Policy, Emergency Management Directorate, DG ECHO) and Mr Severin Strohal (Deputy Head of Unit covering Georgia, Moldova & Neighbourhood Cross-Border Cooperation, DG NEAR).

During the Panel meeting the participants were briefed on the revised EaP architecture, the state of play in the Implementation Plan on Security and Defence, the EU activities in the area of strategic communication (StratCom) and developments around civil protection in the region. The Panel also discussed the cooperation activities within its framework as well as further proposals and ideas for further developing multilateral cooperation.

The participants were briefed by EEAS on outcomes of the EaP Summit, which confirmed the interest and commitments of the EaP countries and MS. The EU relations with partners are advancing, e.g. new agreement with Armenia was signed and negotiations with Azerbaijan are on track. EaP countries were urged to continue cooperation with the EU, but also regionally among Partners. Updated Joint Staff working document "20 Deliverables for 2020" with deliverable 12 focusing on building the resilience of the Partner countries to security threats, including hybrid threats, and to disasters will be strengthened through stronger cooperation in the area of security and disaster risk management. "The aim is to support Partners, including through capacity building projects in their fight against organised crime (in particular in the areas of illicit firearms trafficking and cybercrime), to make them more resilient to hybrid threats, including cybersecurity to mitigate Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear (CBRN) risks of criminal, accidental or natural origin, and to be better prepared to prevent conflicts and manage crises."<sup>1</sup> Responding to CSF inquire on the mechanism of reporting it was informed that reporting is done via EaP architecture: respectively from Panels to Platforms, Senior Official Meetings, and Ministerial meetings to inform the Summit. On 15 October 2018 the Ministerial meeting will discuss the progress and identify the lack of it in the areas. It was pointed out that StratCom and gender are mainstreamed through all Platforms and respectively Panels. Armenia stated to consider the architecture to be successful, providing for Partners, MS and institutions possibilities for cooperation through Panels and Platforms and also creating the necessary networking.

East StratCom Task Force provided information on their activities and future plans in the region in the areas of raising awareness setting-up communication and StratCom skills and ensuring

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<sup>1</sup> Joint Staff working document "Eastern Partnership – 20 Deliverables for 2020: Focusing on key priorities and tangible results", 9 June 2017 SWD(2017)300

media plurality. Georgia, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine expressed their gratitude to the East StratCom Task Force for the activities conducted in their countries and support provided in developing StratCom capabilities and expressed readiness for further cooperation.

EEAS briefed the participants on the status of progress on the implementation of the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), European Defence Fund (EDF), Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD), military mobility and other security and defence issues including civilian CSDP. Partner countries inquired about the status of Capacity Building in Support of Security and Development (CBSD), enhancing the procedures for possible third country participation in PESCO projects and coherence between the European Defence Agency (EDA) managed and PESCO projects. They also inquired about the European Peace Facility, cooperation between EU and NATO in the military mobility initiative. Some MS stressed that the military mobility initiative should look at increasing resilience of both the MS and partner countries, as stipulated by the even geographical distribution principle; some of those present stressed the need for continuing civilian CSDP capabilities development.

The European Security and Defence College (ESDC) informed about the plans to organise 2 CSDP Orientation Courses with support from Austria and Lithuania (June in Baku and October in Kiev) and 1 thematic CSDP seminar (TBD, e.g. StratCom, hybrid threat) in 2018. Austria remains committed to supporting ESDC training activities for EaP countries in 2018 and 2019. Most EaP countries expressed their gratitude for the ESDC activities and readiness to continue cooperation. To inquire of the Republic of Moldova on the progress of e-Learning platform for the EaP initiative it was stated that EEAS together with European Commission are looking into several options of funding as well as to needs assessment of Partners (level, audience, targets) that would lead to assessment of costs efficiency of implementing the targets of initiative. CSF inquired on possibility for CSF/NGOs to participate and/or organise activities under the Panel, as they have training skills for conflict analysis, disaster relief, humanitarian assistance etc. It was suggested to CSF to find MS as co-organiser and then the event if approved would be eligible for funding under the Panel activities.<sup>2</sup>

Representatives from EaP countries expressed their satisfaction with the on-going activities in the Panel's framework, which shed further light on recent developments in the CSDP area, contributed to developing Partners' capacities in building resilience and provided good networking opportunities.

Georgia informed that their planned workshop on StratCom in the beginning of 2018 (with support of Lithuania) has now been rescheduled to autumn due to the reorganisation of governmental structures in Georgia by the end of 2017/beginning of 2018. Sweden confirmed their readiness to co-organise a visit for EaP representatives to Brussels (as a follow up to previous field visits to CSDP missions) in order to familiarise themselves with crises management mechanisms and CSDP missions and operations at the end of 2018/beginning of 2019. Lithuania informed about preliminary plans to organise a workshop for EaP countries on legal framework and sharing best practices for developing mechanism for better deployment to CSDP missions and operations in the beginning of 2019 as a follow-up of the visit for EaP representatives to Brussels.

The afternoon session of the Panel was dedicated to civil protection and was opened by Mr Johannes Luchner, (Director, Emergency Management Directorate, DG ECHO). He welcomed the opportunity to address the security-civil protection nexus, to promote stronger dialogue and

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<sup>2</sup> The illustrative example of such MS and CSF/NGO cooperation is annual "International Security Experts Conference" held in Lithuania – the last "Eastern Partners in European Security and Defence: Putting EU Global Strategy into Practice" was held on 26-28 September 2017 in Vilnius.

cooperation with all those involved in disaster risk reduction and disaster management at different levels, including a cross-border and regional dimension, and to develop actions in complementarity with other EU services through the Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC). European Commission pointed out that EaP was there to deliver tangible results and civil protection is a key area where this can happen. It is therefore central to a number of the EaP 2020 deliverables. European Commission also called for the panel to support, maintain and discuss the implementation of the relevant indicators under deliverable 12. It should in the future also include further references to gender related issues. European Commission further presented the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) and its recent activities in the European Neighbourhood, mainly through the UCPM exercise programme, calls for prevention and preparedness, the exchange of experts and training programmes. In terms of technical co-operation, all six EaP countries have benefitted from most of those financial and technical support opportunities available and were invited to use the programmes again in the future.

European Commission presented the CBRN Centres of Excellence (CoE) and related activities that involve EAP countries: CoE projects, Medipiet, network of regional CBRN training centres, International Science Centre in Ukraine, export control of dual use and cooperation with NATO. Among the upcoming events, mention was made of the workshop with CoE that will be hosted by the Association for Biosecurity and Biosafety, the exercise on nuclear smuggling in the EaP region and the cross border river contamination exercise in Central Asia. The two exercises will invite observers from the other region promoting exchange and cooperation. The planned revision of the UN Security Resolution on CBRN is another important engagement and a sign of strong political and technical recognition of the subject matter. Representatives from EaP updated on their activities under CBRN projects and their links with CoE.

Lastly, the meeting addressed activities of EaP countries in the area of civil protection, in particular under the current EU funded flagship initiative, the PPRD East 2 Programme, noting the main lessons learnt, both positive achievements and gaps, and exchanging suggestions on future priorities and interests. The PPRD East 2 Programme has delivered tangible outcomes at national and regional level, notably the full-scale MOLDEX exercise in Republic of Moldova, and is seen as a very important contribution to strengthen capacity for disaster preparedness and risk management that could be projected into the third follow-up phase. With this in mind, European Commission invited Partner countries to narrow down and prioritise their wide scope of expressed interests and to consider which activities best align with each financing instrument but also the 20 deliverables for 2020. The need for strong ownership of the process and sustainability of PPRD outcomes, strongly linked to civil protection authorities, was also stressed. This can be facilitated by ensuring that highly qualified individuals and established structures remain operational and that equipment pooling opportunities in the region are explored and used. In terms of the future of PPRD 2 East, activities could include flood risk mapping, study visits, strengthening of water purification capabilities and forest fire preparedness. Before embarking on PPRD3 however, European Commission emphasised the need to have a clear sense of priorities. Partner countries agreed to provide a written list of priorities by end of May at the latest in order to facilitate the programming of a possible PPRD3.

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