

## EaP CSF Steering Committee Meeting Minutes

Online, 15 -17 September 2021

### Wednesday, 15 September, 13h00 – 15h00 CET

*SC members present (7/13): Goda Neverauskaite, Sofia Strive, Ruslan Havryliuk, Sintija Bernava, Irina Sukhy, Lousineh Hakobyan, Otilia Nutu*

*SC members absent (6/13): Shahla Ismajil, Makysm Koriavets, Tatiana Poshevalova, Yurii Vdovenko, Adrian Lupusor, Natia Kuprashvili*

*Secretariat Staff present: Laura Ponikelska, Vera Rihackova Pachta, Alexandra Sabou, Kristina Pitalskaia, Zuzana Sladkova, Erika Zimmer*

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### **Draft Agenda of the Annual Assembly 2021**

The Steering Committee Co-chairs opened the three-session Steering Committee meeting, welcomed the SC members and thanked them for their active participation throughout the meeting.

The first session of the SC meeting was focused on discussing the agenda of the Annual Assembly 2021. **All the present SC members agreed to shape the agenda around the Eastern Partnership Summit and to concentrate all the sessions of the Assembly in 3 days, from Tuesday 30 November to Thursday 2 December 2021.**

After discussing several title options for the event, **all the present SC members agreed on the following title: “Road to recovery: fostering reform and resilience - extended with “for a stronger Eastern Partnership”.**

To further discuss the structure and the thematic focus of the event, Administration and Statutory Affairs Manager, Alexandra Sabou, briefly presented the draft agenda, the type of the envisaged sessions (sessions/ webinars), expected audience, and possible speakers. Further elaboration was given on the daily sessions, thematic panels, trilateral country stakeholder sessions, Working Group sessions, side events and the General Assembly.

The General Assembly will discuss the draft EaP CSF Strategy (2022-2030) which is currently being developed.

The SC discussed the organisation of the e-reception, including the presentation of the two EaP CSF awards and the networking options for the attendees.

The SC members agreed that the three thematic panels of the Annual Assembly will be focused on the following topics:

- Main panel on upcoming EaP Summit with focus on Security, multilateralism, human rights, rule of law, role of civil society
- New EaP agenda - Economic recovery, investment plan, post-COVID recovery
- New EaP agenda - Governance, conflict resolution, conditions for reconciliation/cooperation, implications for the EU

The participants have agreed that the Secretariat will work further on developing the agenda and the Annual Assembly Task Force will be involved in the process. Based on the agreed structure of the Annual Assembly, the Secretariat will prepare for the launch of the registration of participants (expected launch date is October 6, 2021).

Finally, based on the agreed content to be featured in the Annual Assembly, the Secretariat together with the SC Co-chairs will prepare the “Save the Date” communication that will be sent to all members prior to the registration.

#### **The following actions are envisaged:**

- EaP CSF Secretariat will develop all the visual materials for the event based on the approved title.
- Together with the SC Co-Chairs, the Secretariat will prepare the “save the date” communication that will be sent out to all members before the end of September.
- The Secretariat will work further on preparing the launch of the registration process for the AA.
- The AA Task Force will be involved in further developing the concept of the thematic panels and specific sessions.
- The National Facilitators will be reached out to initiate the preparations for the specific Trilateral Country Stakeholder sessions.
- The WG sessions’ agenda will be shaped by WG coordinators together with dedicated WG consultants and staff members of the Secretariat. At least one of the WG sessions will be focused on the ongoing strategic reform of the WGs and will be led by the external strategist S. Bokulic.
- The call for applications for “side events” will be announced in parallel with the invitation to register for the AA shared with all members and delegates of the Forum. Externals are also welcome to submit their event proposals. The SC will be invited to vote on the preferred side events.

#### **EaP CSF Awards**

Laura Ponikelska, Communications Manager, informed the SC that the voting process for the two Awards of the Forum was launched on Wednesday 15 September, 15h00 CET. All the SC members

were invited to cast their votes and endorse the preferred candidate for the Awards. The vote is conducted in an anonymous manner via Election Runner.

The polls will close on Friday 24 September. The results and the next steps will be communicated to the SC within the next couple of days.

### **Friday, 17 September 2021, 09h30 – 11h30 CET**

*SC members present (6/13):* Sofia Strive, Ruslan Havryliuk, Sintija Bernava, Irina Sukhy, Lousineh Hakobyan, Ana Otilia Nutu

*SC members absent (7/13):* Shahla Ismayil, Makysm Koriavets, Adrian Lupusor, Tatiana Poshevalova, Yurii Vdovenko, Goda Neverauskaite, Natia Kuprashvili

*Secretariat Staff present:* Laura Ponikelska, Vera Rihackova Pachta, Alexandra Sabou, Kristina Pitalskaia, Mihai Damascan

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### **EaP CSF Delegate Selection Process**

Given that the current cycle of delegates is fast approaching to an end, the Forum is preparing for the next delegate selection process (November 2021 - March 2022). In this context, the second session of the SC meeting was focused on the Delegate Selection Process, its timeline and procedures.

The Secretariat (Alexandra Sabou, Statutory Affairs Manager) gave a short presentation illustrating the different stages of the delegate selection process, including the National Platforms' self-assessment and external assessment, the eligibility criteria, the thematic and structural quotas that will be taken into account in the selection.

**The National Platforms that did not perform the yearly self-assessment are invited to submit the results by 22 October.** The Secretariat will reach out to them in the upcoming days to give further instructions and inform them about the new deadline.

**The external assessment will be performed as of November 2021 following the selection and recruitment of an external assessor. All the NPs will take part in the external assessment.** Four NPs which were considered “not ready” to take over the delegate selection process in 2019/2020 will be assessed again on their compliance with the main statutory documents of the Forum, including the Code of Ethical Conduct and the Statute. Based on their statutory developments, the assessor will report on the NPs' readiness to take over the upcoming delegate selection process.

The Call for Delegates will be launched on November 8, 2021 and will be open until January 21, 2022. Beside the already-existing thematic division along WG lines, new thematic areas stemming

from the [Joint Staff Working Document](#) will be included in the list of areas associated with the five Working Groups of the Forum.

### **Brief overview of the upcoming Delegate Selection process (main milestones):**

- NP Self-assessment - to be finalised by October 22, 2021
- NP External Assessment – to be initiated at the end of October/ beginning of November 2021
- NP external assessment report – to be drafted by December 2021 and finalised by mid-January 2022
- Call for Applications for Delegate Selection – to be launched on November 8, 2021 – to be closed on January 21, 2022
- Applications' verification process – to be concluded by February 4, 2022
- Voting process – to be organised between mid-February and the beginning of March 2022
- Approval by the European Commission – to be received by end of March 2022
- Publication of the new list of delegates - to be done by the end of March 2022

Further information over the criteria can be found here: <https://eap-csf.eu/membership/delegates/>

Further information over the Delegate Selection procedure can be found here: [https://eap-csf.eu/wp-content/uploads/delegate-selection-guideline\\_final.png](https://eap-csf.eu/wp-content/uploads/delegate-selection-guideline_final.png)

### **Friday, 17 September 2021, 15h00 – 17h00 CET**

*SC members present (8/13): Sofia Strive, Ruslan Havryliuk, Sintija Bernava, Irina Sukhy, Lousineh Hakobyan, Otilia Nutu, Goda Neverauskaite, Natia Kuprashvili*

*SC members absent (5/13): Shahla Ismayil, Makysm Koriavets, Adrian Lupusor, Tatiana Poshevalova, Yurii Vdovenko,*

*Secretariat Staff present: Vera Rihackova Pachta, Alexandra Sabou, Iustina Haroianu, Kristina Pitalskaia, Mihai Damascan*

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### **Miscellaneous Issues**

#### **1. EaP CSF Secretariat Director Recruitment**

Steering Committee Co-chair, Sofia Strive, opened the session with an update on the ongoing recruitment process for the position of EaP CSF Secretariat director. Ideally, the appointed person will be introduced to the Forum at the 2021 Annual Assembly and will start his/ her activity in January 2022.

Further information over the vacancy can be found here: <https://eap-csf.eu/work-with-us/director-eap-csf-secretariat/>

The SC will be kept informed about the selection process and the decisions taken by the SC Director Recruitment Task Force involved in the selection.

## **2. Strategy Development**

Interim Director, Vera Rihackova Pachta, informed the SC members about the latest updates regarding the development of the Forum strategy. The consultation period with the members of the Forum is beginning with the launch of a survey on September 22 and will be open for 2 weeks.

National Facilitators have been encouraged to highlight the importance of the members' participation in the survey.

Further engagement will be established through 6 focus groups which are set to include 8-12 participants for 60-90 mins in English and Russian language. The content of these Focus Groups is to be based on the results of the survey and the desk research, conducted by the Consultant hired for this matter. The Focus Groups will take place between October 4-15 and the follow-up reports to be completed between October 18-22. In the meantime, interviews with stakeholders – namely, EU representatives, donors, and partners – will be held by the end of September.

The presentation also elaborated on the consultative workshops to discuss sections of strategic plan, as these included: theory of change, strategic outcomes, specific objectives and methods, and expected results.

The final draft document is expected to be ready by the time of the Annual Assembly which will dedicate one session for this specific matter. Furthermore, the final Strategy of the Forum will be submitted for the online adoption to the General Assembly (made up of all current delegates of the Forum) after the AA. The SC will be further involved in the Consultation and Operational Plan in January 2022 on how to implement the new Strategy.

## **3. Financial Matters**

The Annual Account of the organisation was approved following the detailed presentation provided by the Finance and Grants Manager, Iustina Harioanu. The presentation offered a detailed overview of the balance sheet, income statement and auditors' last report.

## **4. Annual Assembly 2022**

As in the current circumstances it is difficult to foresee the place (online or in-person) of the Annual Assembly 2022, the SC had discussed the possible options currently at hand. Consequently, **the option of organising the next Annual Assembly in Prague** – during the Presidency of the Czech Republic to the Council of the EU – **was discussed**. The SC members agreed with the continuation of the negotiations.

**The Secretariat will follow up with the Czech Permanent Representation to discuss this option and will keep the SC updated.**

## **5. Membership Requests**

Two requests for EaP CSF membership were received and submitted to the vote of the SC:

- **Strategic Analysis Think Tank (SATT)** based in Slovakia – focusing on European Neighbourhood issues, namely the Western Balkans and the South Caucasus
- **Sustainable Strategies Network (SSN) based in Poland** – focusing on environment, education, gender and civil rights.

All the present SC members approved the two membership requests.

The Secretariat (Kristina Pitalskaia, Grants and Membership Manager) will inform the new members about the decision, their rights and responsibilities as new members of the Forum. Respectively, the EaP CSF Membership database is to be updated to reflect the new additions.

## **6. Annual Assembly 2021 – Preparation**

The Administrative and Statutory Affairs Manager, Alexandra Sabou, had concluded the Steering Committee meeting by giving an overview of the timeline of the preparations for the Annual Assembly (November 30 - December 2).

The Secretariat will reach out to the SC members, namely the AA Task Force members, throughout the AA preparation process to contribute in terms of content and strategic advice.

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By concluding with that, the Co-chair had closed the three-session Steering Committee meeting.

**Adopted 24 September 2021**