

## EaP CSF Steering Committee Meeting Online, Wednesday, 16 June 2021

### Session 1 || 11:00-13:00 CET

*SC members present (10/13): Sofia Strive, Tatiana Poshevalova, Goda Neverauskaite, Irina Sukhy, Otilia Nutu, Ruslan Havryliuk, Lousineh Hakobyan, Sintija Bernava, Shahla Ismayil, Maksym Koriavets*

SC members absent (3/10): Adrian Lupusor, Natia Kuprashvili, Yurii Vdovenko

*Secretariat staff present: Alexandra Sabou, Kristina Pitalskaia, Vera Rihackova, Laura Ponikelska, Juulia Baer-Bader, Tania Marocchi, François Villard, Calum Thomson*

EaP CSF SC Co-chair, Sofia Strive, opened the meeting by thanking the outgoing Communications Manager, Juulia Baer-Bader, for her work over the last three years. The new Communication Manager, Laura Ponikelska, was introduced to the Steering Committee.

#### **1. Co-chair responsibilities**

Alexandra Sabou, Administrative and Statutory Processes Manager, gave a brief presentation on the SC Co-chairs' responsibilities as outlined in:

- [EaP CSF Statute](#)
- EaP CSF Steering Committee members - description of roles
- EaP CSF Steering Committee Handbook.

Referring to EaP CSF Statute - Art. 7.3.:

*“The Co-Chairs are responsible for:*

- *Convening and chairing Steering Committee meetings, directing debates, ensuring observance of the rules, facilitating decision-making in disputable cases, and putting questions to vote;”*

SC member, Lousineh Hakobyan, asked for examples or cases when the two EaP CSF SC Co-chairs had a decision-making role.

The formulation of the above mentioned article, namely the fact that *“The Co-Chairs are responsible for: ...facilitating decision-making in disputable cases, and putting questions to vote”* was questioned, however the idea of amending the Statute was not encouraged.

It was agreed that all the SC members have the final decision making power, rather than the Co-chairs alone; the Co-chairs' role is to facilitate this decision making process.

**The following decisions were taken:**

- A short paragraph clarifying the Art.7.3. and the role of Co-chairs will be added to the internal documents: “SC - Description of Roles and Responsibilities/ EaP CSF Steering Committee Handbook”. The SC members will be invited by the Secretariat to contribute to the formulation of this clarification.
- EaP CSF Statute, namely Art. 7.3. will not be submitted for amendments to the GA.

**2. The Conflict in the Nagorno Karabakh and its impact on the internal and external workings of the Forum**

The SC members discussed the impact of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict on the Forum’s life and touched upon possible initiatives and suggestions that could be implemented in the context of the belligerent relations between two EaP countries (Armenia and Azerbaijan).

After a discussion involving all present SC members **the following decisions were taken:**

- Create a list of concrete examples when the NK conflict had an impact on Forum’s workings;
- Create a list of concrete solutions that could smoothen/ solve such arguments;

The Secretariat will facilitate the exchange among SC members for the development of the two lists.

The SC members agreed that creating a new document that will set the behavioral boundaries of members/ governance bodies of the Forum when it comes to the NK conflict is not a solution. The Forum’s [Code of Ethical Conduct](#) is already very comprehensive and touches upon the relevant ethical values and principles that should guide the Forum. The SC members were also reminded that the [Forum’s Compliance Committee](#) is now fully operational.

However, **the following actions should be taken:**

- At the level of each National Platform (NP), more importance should be paid to raising awareness about the EaP CSF Code of Ethical Conduct (CoEC) and the similar CoEC documents which exist in each NP;
- The implementation of the CoEC both at the Forum and NP level should be reinforced (i.e. the NP self-assessment process could entail wide NP discussions);
- After the snap elections in Armenia (20 June), the Secretariat will reach out to the Armenian and Azerbaijani NPs to discuss whether any joint projects between the two NPs could be initiated and what type of funding would be secured;

Given the level of uncertainty in the region, the SC agreed that a decision on the way statements around the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict are/ should be drafted cannot be taken during the current meeting.

It was agreed that the SC must hold an unbiased view, listen to, and understand the different perspectives shared by Forum members on the conflict. The SC should not refrain from speaking up about different developments in the region in a constructive manner that represents the region.

**Session 2 || 14:00-15:30 CET**

SC members present (8/13): *Sofia Strive, Tatiana Poshevalova, Irina Sukhy, Otilia Nutu, Ruslan Havryliuk, Sintija Bernava, Shahla Ismayil, Adrian Lupusor.*

SC members absent (5/13): *Lousineh Hakobyan, Maksym Koriavets, Goda Neverauskaite, Yurii Vdovenko, Natia Kuprashvili*

Secretariat staff present: *Alexandra Sabou, Kristina Pitalskaia, Vera Rihackova, François Villard, Calum Thomson*

Guest speaker: *Snjezana Bokulic, EaP CSF Strategy Development Consultant*

After a brief introduction by the moderator, Irina Sukhy, the floor was given to **Snjezana Bokulic** to describe the envisaged methodology for the preparation of the new EaP CSF Strategy.

The methodology:

- Will be developed in a participatory manner and will involve discussions with the Secretariat, Steering Committee, WGs and NPs,
- Will be based on desk-based research that will involve understanding better the peculiarity and the complexity of the Forum (i.e. current strategy of the Forum, governance documents, advocacy plans, membership strategy, etc.),
- Will involve the development of an external analysis (what affects the work of the Forum and how),
- Will involve the development of a stakeholder survey,
- Will involve the organisation of focus group discussions;

The consultant requested feedback on the current strategy of the Forum and support to properly map all the Forum's stakeholders.

WGs will offer thematic input, and NPs will contribute with the relevant geographic perspective.

After an agreement is reached on the methodology, the next steps will be organised in order to deliver a first draft of the Strategy by the beginning of autumn.

The envisaged deliverables are:

- A short "crispy" Strategy of about 2000 words would externally present what the Forum stands for and the strategy for the given period.
- An implementation/ operational plan would clarify roles and resources needed to implement the strategy.
- A results framework will be developed to assess the implementation of the strategy.

- A document that will assess the performance of the WGs and the ways their activity could be further improved;

In order to organise the vote of the General Assembly by the Annual Assembly of the Forum (29 November - 4 December 2021), the draft strategy should be available by the beginning of November to allow all delegates to get accustomed with the text of the Strategy and provide their comments. One session of the Annual Assembly will be dedicated to discussing/ announcing the new strategy.

A timeline for the whole process will be developed within the next week(s).

The SC members pointed out that online fatigue and the fact members are exhausted from online meetings and surveys must be taken into account; the consultation and survey must be straightforward and well-designed/ user-friendly.

The initially agreed timeframe of the Strategy was questioned (see February 2021 minutes of the SC meeting).

The consultant pointed out that, a strategy development is expensive and time consuming. The strategy should reflect what the organisation stands for and its long-term objectives.

As such, it should be more ambitious than the current 4 years planned (2021-2025).

Thus, all the SC members suggested extending the length of the period covered by the new strategy. Since the quorum was not met, **SC members unanimously decided to put the length of the strategy to a second vote online**, involving all SC members this time.

Action points:

- The Secretariat will organise one e-poll on:
  - Extending (or not) the period covered by the strategy to 2022-2030.
  - Approving (or not) the draft methodology proposed by Snejana Bokulic

All SC members will be invited to cast their vote;

- SC members have been reminded to join the SC Strategy Task Force (DDL 1 July). To join the task force, any SC member can send an email to [admin@eap-csf.eu](mailto:admin@eap-csf.eu) expressing his/ her interest in joining it.

Currently, the SC Strategy Task Force is made up of the following SC members: *Lousineh Hakobyan, Otilia Nutu, Tatiana Poshevalova, and Irina Sukhy\** (Irina considers joining at a later stage, at the beginning of September 2021).

**Adopted 25 June 2021**