

## **Minutes of the Steering Committee Meeting, Brussels, 4-5 April 2019**

**In attendance: Steering Committee members** Zaur Akbar, Krzysztof Bobinski, Ina Coseru, Laura Dittel, Haykuhi Harutyunyan, Rasul Jafarov, Mikalai Kvantaliani, Hennadyi Maksak, Boris Navasardian, Goda Neverauskaite, Ana Otilia Nutu, Lasha Tughushi

**Absent:** Petru Macovei

**Secretariat:** Director Natalia Yerashevich

**Present for relevant sessions:** Communications Manager Juulia Baer Bader, Administrative Manager Alexandra Sabou, Financial Manager Iustina Haroianu, Membership Manager Tania Marocchi, Advocacy Manager Vera Rihackova Pachta

### **Adoption of the agenda and country updates**

The agenda was adopted and updates from EaP countries and the Secretariat were presented.

### **Policy papers**

- The key structure and preliminary recommendations of the policy paper dedicated to the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the EaP was presented by the Secretariat. New timeline was suggested: the first draft ready on April 12<sup>th</sup>; the first draft will be shared with members of focus groups and the people who took part in the online public consultation for feedback. After the analysis of the feedback, the final draft will be ready for peer review on April 25.  
The EaP Index data will be used for the policy paper (indicators of the evolution of EaP from 2012 to 2017). One of the main elements already identified is the civil society involvement in policy processes.
- The decision to fund the policy paper on DCFTA implementation for the informal ministerial on trade of 3 AA countries
- The decision to fund the policy paper on values in higher education for the conference organised by DG EAC “Promoting Common Values through Education and Culture” in Tbilisi on 25-26 June

### **SOM**

The SC discussed ideas for the inclusion to the EaP CSF speech at Senior Officials Meeting

### **Regranting to WGs**

The discussion focused on the purpose of re-granting and how to ensure that it delivers the outputs that can be used in advocacy and at the same time benefit the EaP CSF members and strengthen the WGs. The project of Ruslan Surugiu was discussed and measures to be taken by the Secretariat were agreed upon.

### **Regranting to NPs**

The SC received the timetable of regranting as well as grant proposals to understand the ambitions of each national platform. The status of all the actions was presented. There was a discussion on the personnel funded via regranting to NPs. It was advised either to do a proper selection process (open call) or in cases where the people have already been recruited via an open call before, keep the same people.

The question was raised about the possibility cover the period before the signature of the grant. The EaP CSF cannot fund the activities retroactively, but will ask the EC about possibilities. There was a question about the flexibility in funds distribution between first and second year of the regranting and lowering the minimal size of the amounts to be regranting to the members. On this matter the Secretariat will also inquire the EC. It was mentioned that a SC member cannot be remunerated from the regranting according to the Belgian legislation and the Code of Ethical Conduct.

### **Communication and visibility**

The discussion focused on the logos and websites of NPs and the possibility for streamlining those. Several countries are happy to work jointly with the Secretariat on the structure of their websites (Azerbaijan, Belarus, Moldova), others prefer either to stay with their current formats or gradually move to different website formats. It was discussed that full streamlining of all the website in accordance with one website structure is not necessary, but some minimal elements can be the same.

### **Discussion on the EaP CSF Pavel Sheremet Award**

It was decided to invite the mother of Pavel Sheremet to present the award at the Annual Assembly together with the CSF member and to involve her in the selection process (without voting rights) of awardees. It is important to stress that CSF is open to suggestions from her side, but the proposed scenario can be the start our cooperation in 2019. In general we need to improve the nomination and selection process from our side.

### **Update on Council of Europe (CoE) Conference of International NGOs (INGO)**

Krzysztof Bobinski provided an update on his meeting with INGO President, Anna Rurka and the need to work together. It was agreed to explore the possibility of conducting an anti-money laundering seminar in the margins of the upcoming WG1 meeting (14-15 May).

### **Draft Statute**

The SC agreed to review the document and provide collective input via Google Docs, until 22 April. The revised version/input will then be passed on the external consultant, Gwen Jones who will prepare the final document in May.

### **Delegate selection (EaP)**

Following the Internal Reform, the process is passed on to the NPs – coordinated by Facilitators, with the final selection (list of 20 organisations) done together with WGs and EU Delegations in each country. The facilitator must ensure the balance, and that selection proportions are being respected (i.e. minimum percentage of newcomers, rotation). The call will be announced in October 2019 – and there will be minimal regulations for all. This can only be done if “NPs are willing and ready”.

The SC agreed that the existing practices should put down on paper – to find the common denominator, and build the same interpretation from the bottom up. The main concern is that the operating environment and specifics of each country (as well as NPs) can be very different. Another issue is the role and involvement of EU Delegations, and objectively deciding on the “readiness” of each NP.

The Secretariat will provide the basic scenario within one month, then each NP will provide their input with possible timeline and suggestions. Going forward, the SC will decide on which principles to follow on the NP level.

### **Delegate selection (EU)**

The SC noted that the Internal Reform is vague on how to proceed. It stipulates that all EU members can vote (any organisation that has ever participated in AA) for the new EaP CSF delegates, with EU Coordinators drawing up the list. To try this system out it was decided to get back to the EU CSOs that participated in AAs in the last 3 years to confirm their membership (e.g. via a link) and informing them about their obligation to vote for the future delegates. The process will be first tried out in summer 2019, with possible improvements after the first selection cycle.

### **Election of EU Coordinators**

The SC decided that if there is no willing EU Coordinator (i.e. who agrees to sit in the SC as EU Facilitator), the representation is shifted to the next WG (EU) Coordinator. Thus in the current cycle, in case of absence of willing candidates in WG1 or 2, the representation will be shifted to WG3 EU Coordinator.

### **Code of Ethical Conduct: Implementation**

The Code of Ethical Conduct recommends appointing an Ethical Code advisor or advisory body at the NP level; other existing options are also acceptable if having the same function. The assessment of the implementation of the Code will be done as part of NP Re-granting by the end of 2019.

The SC noted that in line with the Code, EaP CSF members cannot hold official positions in a political party. The SC agreed that there should be a suspension mechanism, for a period of time of elections and prohibition to using the Forum's name in campaigning during elections.

It was agreed that Rasul Jafarov will step down from his official position in the party for the time of his term in the SC.

It was discussed that SC members cannot be paid or remunerated from the NP regranting in accordance with the Belgian law and the internal Forum's regulations.

### **The Annual Assembly**

After the evaluation of the previous AA, the SC discussed the key topics for the upcoming AA in Brussels. The evaluation of 10 years of the EaP, Deliverables for 2020 and post 2020 are obvious topics to be discussed. Kick-off session was appreciated a lot by the attendees, but it is important to bear in mind that we will have the same participants coming so need to rethink the session. There were several opinions about the goal of the AA. It was stressed it is important to invite high-level officials from all EaP countries as it helps to build dialogue with them in countries, though it was agreed more space for the civil society should be reserved; it is also important to bear in mind that the change of guard at the EU institutions and importance of keeping the EaP on their agenda. The options discussed were: to hold 2 high-level panel to have all 6 countries covered, but the problem here is that the speakers tend to focus on the issues they want and there is not much space for dialogue. Taking 3-4 hours for high-level panels only doesn't leave much time for other important discussions. As an alternative it was also suggested to have trilateral meetings on the arrival days with a smaller number of participants from EaP countries in one of the Perm Reps.

It was mentioned that the AA should have a voice so it would be good to have a resolution, though there can be a lot of issues. It was agreed to invite the new President of Slovakia for the opening.

### **Rules of procedures of the Arbitration/Compliance Committee**

The SC in general positively commented the draft. Though the time has already been taken to comment on the document already, it was agreed to take 2 more weeks for comments from SC members and then send the joint comments to the document developed by the Committee. The Arbitration/Compliance Committee has the last word on the regulations and will finalise the regulations. It is important to specify the relationship between the local compliance committee and the committee at the CSF level.

A concern was raised that if there are local issues, they need to be resolved at the local level, and it is important to avoid overlapping of functions; the new system proposed is very bureaucratic and not practical. In response to this it was mentioned that we are already discussing the mandate of the body for the second year and cannot go back on something that was already discussed.

### **Handover mechanism**

It was mentioned that new EU members need more information when they start their position. On top of the SC members manual the Peer-to-peer conversations between the outgoing SC members and the new one was suggested and agreed upon.

### **Next SC meeting**

It was agreed to fix the date and place of the next SC meeting in the next 2 weeks.

Adopted on 22 April 2019