



**EaP CSF Steering Committee Meeting
4-5 July 2019, Brussels**

Attending: Zaur Akbar, Ina Coseru, Lousineh Hakobyan, Mikayel Hovhannisyan, Rasul Jafarov, Maksym Koriavets, Natia Kuprashvili, Mikalai Kvantaliani, Tatiana Marian, Ion Manole, Sofia Strive

Absent: Olga Chyzova, Yurii Vdovenko

Secretariat: Juulia Baer-Bader, Iustina Haroianu, Jakub Libiszewski, Tania Marocchi, Vera Rihackova Pachta, Alexandra Sabou, Alexandra Toussaint, Natalia Yerashevich

EC Representative: Gaby Hagmueller (until 10.40)

Accepting the agenda and order of the day

In absence of elected Co-chairs, the SC agreed on moderation from Ina Coseru and Mikalai Kvantaliani. After a brief tour de table by the SC members and the Secretariat, the SC adopted the order of the day.

The SC was informed that Ukrainian National Platform elections will have to be repeated in line with the Internal Reform (National Facilitator is elected by 20 delegates) and that Yurii Vdovenko (newly elected Ukraine Country Facilitator; absent at the meeting) is not eligible to run as Co-chair.

Presentation of activities of the EC grant to the EaP CSF

The Director of the Secretariat presented the current EC grant to the EaP CSF focusing attention on several activities: monitoring the deliverables for 2020; monitoring missions (the budget line can be moved to 2019/2020 and used for studying developments post-factum (suggestions: Armenia or Moldova); trilateral dialogues in countries, audit of procedures and practices of NPs before providing the support for 2020. EaP CSF's activities; the last one took place in Minsk, 2016. Moving on, the SC discussed gender mainstreaming and reaching out to members with relevant expertise, active within the Forum (examples: gender strategy of the Belarusian National Platform).

On Annual Reporting, the SC was reminded that each NP and WG needs to report to the Annual Assembly. Since there was a change of the SC in the middle of the year, the reporting year will

have to be split between two Coordinators (current and previous one). Special attention should be paid to the section focusing on policy dialogue and advocacy efforts with national authorities and how they affected the legislation and other processes. Finishing on Budget and its Co-funding component, the SC was informed that 5% of the total spent must be matched by co-funding from a source different than the EC grant. Several sources have been identified. The SC asked to help with the task whenever possible.

Operational practicalities

The SC heard about the role of the Secretariat, relevant points of contact and communication channels. In this context, the SC agreed to hold a trial period for Slack, an interactive tool facilitating informal discussions (no change to official Communication tools, used for statutory matters and decision-making processes). What is more, the SC was informed about the structure of SC task forces.

Going forward, there was a brief discussion on the Ethical Code of Conduct and self-reclusion mechanism (where there is an evident conflict of interest) – as well as some brainstorming on the format and expectations of future SC meetings.

Election of Co-chairs

After a round of short, personal introductions and questions about ongoing professional commitments from 3 candidates, Ina Coseru (EaP) and Sofia Strive (EU) were duly elected with 8 and 11 votes each, respectively.

Country updates

Each member of the Steering Committee presented updates from their countries, the challenges they are currently facing, and the activities of their National Platforms. The Secretariat presented the results of the European Parliamentary elections and the staffing of EU top jobs and what these mean for the EaP, as well as the advocacy plan. The SC discussed the plan and voiced suggestions that will be incorporated by the Secretariat.

Meeting with external stakeholders

Guests: **Jeroen Willems** (Deputy Head of Unit “Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus & Eastern Partnership”, DG NEAR), **Radek Darski** (Deputy Head of the Division “Eastern Partnership, Regional Cooperation and OSCE”, EEAS), **Marta Wytrykowska** (Team Leader, “Eastern Partnership, Regional Cooperation and OSCE” Division, EEAS), and **Gaby Hagmueller** (Policy Officer for the Civil Society Centre of Expertise, “Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus & Eastern Partnership Unit”, DG NEAR).

The discussion with the external stakeholders largely focused on the consultation procedure on the EaP beyond 2020 that is to be launched shortly through which the European Commission is asking civil society to provide input and recommendations. External stakeholders also discussed the next EaP Summit, the achievements and shortcomings of the first decade of the EaP, and the need for increased visibility of the EU in the region. They also mentioned that the new deliverables should focus on smaller achievements directly impacting citizens.

EC project advisory committee

The SC decided on the SC members to be part of the Advisory Committee: Ion Manole, Rasul Jafarov, Lousineh Hakobyan.

Internal discussion: Advocacy strategy and campaigns for 2019-2020

The SC reviewed the six advocacy campaigns and their different targets. The reviewed document will be shared with the SC members for further comments. In addition, the SC discussed how to prepare for the structured consultation of the European Commission on the future of the EaP policy and the new EaP roadmap that should be opened during the week of July 8-12. The methodology of the action was discussed and will be further elaborated by the EaP CSF Secretariat.

Annual Assembly

The Annual Assembly will take place in Brussels, on 4-6 December 2019 (with two half days on either side, for arrivals and departures). Following the Selection Committee decision, the contract will be signed with OFCORES after agreeing on the venue after the visit. The SC decided on the composition of the Task Force, responsible for shaping up the Agenda: Zaur Akbar, Mikayel

Hovhannisyán, Natia Kuprashvili and Sofia Strive. The SC brainstormed on the agenda of the meeting. The notes are saved in a separate document.

EaP CSF Statutory Documents

Regulations of the Compliance Committee (previously referred to as Arbitration Committee) are ready for public upload, with the mechanism of addressing the Committee available: email complaints@eap-csf.eu. The Statute is also in the pipeline, with one element pending – Guidelines for Written Products, which are expected to be finalised by the end of the summer. The Secretariat will share the document with the SC members for comments, before sharing it with the members for adoption at the AA.

The SC discussed the provisions, stemming from the Internal Reform: compliance mechanism at the level of National Platforms, rotating principle and quotas on thematic priorities, when it comes to new delegate selection. Here the SC voiced their concerns: currently, there is a requirement to include three non-members in any new intake (i.e. organisations, which are not part of the National Platform). According to some, it is not a viable provision, especially where the pool of applying NGOs is small.

Update on the re-granting to WGs

The discussion focused on how the re-granting cycle can be harmonized with the membership cycle and what should be the purpose of the re-granting scheme in the future.

On the case of the re-granting project *Transparent energy trading in secessionist regions* where the lead applicant did not submit the final report and inflicted a potential loss that amounts to EUR 4.500 EUR, the SC decided to place this issue on the agenda of the next SC meeting, when an official letter on behalf of the SC listing measures targeting the lead applicant in line with the grant agreement will be issued. Moldovan NP Coordinator Ion Manole requested to receive full documentation on the case so that it can be discussed within the Moldovan NP.

Update on the re-granting to NPs

The contracts with all NPs have been signed, except the Azerbaijani NP. According to the contracts, the implementation periods are from 15 April 2019, except Belarus (01/05/19) until November 2020. The NP grants cover two years for all NPs, except Ukraine which has a granting period of one year starting in 2020. The first report will need to be submitted at the end of November 2019. Country Facilitators presented updates on the project as much as they were aware

of them. It was agreed that the Secretariat will share the projects and the accountability mechanism of the receiving organisation to the NP members with Country Facilitators.

The requirements that the NPs have to fulfil to get the funding for 2020 was discussed in details: establishment of the compliance mechanism at the national level if absent, appointment of code of ethical conduct advisor and self-assessment of the codes implementation by the AA and several others. The external consultant will assess the compliance before the end of 2019. The SC members will be able to comment on the self-assessment form and the criteria for the assessment of the NP processes.

The SC also decided on the composition of NP Re-granting evaluation Committee: Tatiana Marian, Sofia Strive or/and Olga Chyzhova if interested.

Yurii and Olga can join any Task Forces of their interest.

Regulations Task Force

The SC decided on the composition of the Task force for regulations: Maksym Koriavets, Ion Manole, Natia Kuprashvili and Lousineh Hakobyan.

Index Presentation

Following the presentation of the EaP Index 2017, some suggestions were made regarding the promotion of the Index. NPs will feature the Index on their websites and further disseminate Index press-releases to their pool of contacts. SC members will support the dissemination sharing the contact details of journalists, and looking out for opportunities to organise a launch event in the EaP countries and the EU. The EaP CSF team is ready to share the InDesign template in case NPs want to proceed with translating the text into the national languages and further disseminate the publication keeping the same format.

Discussion of the nomination process for the EaP Platforms and panels

SC members discussed the database of experts that is a pool of EaP CSF candidates for EaP events. The question of sharing the database with WG Coordinators was raised, which will be possible provided compliance to GDPR regulation. It was also mentioned that if an external expert is selected to represent the EaP CSF at the event, s/he should at least be requested to contact the NP. The SC discussed the process of nomination of the SC members to represent the EaP CSF at high-level events as Ministerials and others. Self-nomination before a certain deadline remains the main principle with voting organised if there are several candidates.



The next Steering Committee meeting

The SC agreed that the next SC meeting will take place in Brussels in September. The agenda will include discussions on the Annual Assembly, the selection of delegates, updates on re-granting implementation, guidelines on the misuse of funds, and a visit of the AA venue.

Adopted 19 July 2019