

**Working Group 1 “Democracy, Human Rights and Stability”  
Annual Meeting Report**

**11-12 May 2017, Brussels**  
Thon Hotel EU, Rue de la Loi 75, 1040 Brussels

**Summary**

On 11-12 May, the WG1 meeting brought together **59 working group members** from the Eastern Partnership and the EU countries. With one public session and two public side-events, the meeting was mostly dedicated to discussions and work on internal issues.

In the eve of the meeting, the first public side-event titled “***Landmark elections in Armenia: turning the tide or preserving the status quo?***” was organised in cooperation with European Endowment for Democracy on May 10.

**The first day** started with opening remarks by **Maria Golubeva** and **Haykuhi Harutyunyan**, EaP CSF WG1 Coordinators and **Nils Jansons**, Deputy Head of Division, Eastern Partnership, Regional cooperation and OSCE, EEAS. A public panel focusing on the **risks and opportunities for the civil society in the EaP countries** brought together speakers from the EU institutions represented by **MEP Rebecca Harms**, Co-President of Euronest and **Dirk Schuebel**, Head of Division, EaP Bilateral, EEAS and four civil society representatives of EaP CSF from Azerbaijan, Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine. The aim of the panel was to exchange information on the major trends in the governments' approach towards the civil society, legal environment for civil society operations and activities and on opportunities and channels for the CSOs to influence relevant policies. The day continued with four internal sessions focusing on presentation of results (EaP CSF 2017 re-granting, EaP Index, EaP CSF Policy Brief, EaP CSF Mission to Belarus), as well as on work on internal issues for the upcoming period until the EaP summit and EaP CSF Annual Assembly.

At the end of the day, the second side event titled “***How Security Assistance Can Contribute to Defence Reform in Ukraine: Civil Society Perspective***” was organized in cooperation with the Independent Defence Anti-Corruption Committee (NAKO), Transparency International Defence & Security Programme, marking the launch of the NAKO strategy 2017-2018 and its first report on corruption risks in security assistance.

**The second day** started with the WG1 Council breakfast meeting, followed by work in three break-out workshops aiming at capacity building of the members in the area of advocacy messaging, external monitoring and on the model law on protection of HR defenders. The closing session in plenary summarized the meeting achievements. Subsequently, a meeting of the Secretariat representatives with the beneficiaries of the EaP CSF 2017 re-granting scheme took place.

**Public side-event - *Landmark elections in Armenia: turning the tide or preserving the status quo?*** organised in cooperation with European Endowment for Democracy on May 10.

The discussion brought together civil society experts and institutional partners that exchanged their opinions on the parliamentary elections in Armenia that took place on 2 April 2017, the first in the country after its shift to a parliamentary republic. As **Alexandra Kirby** from EED pointed out in her opening speech, the recent elections prompted an unprecedented support from the EU, allowing for a more transparent process and overall satisfactory results. On the other side, however, the electoral process shed light on the significant challenges that the Armenian society is still facing. The following speakers took floor at the event: **Daniel Ioanissyan**, Program Coordinator at the Union of Informed Citizens; **Sona Ayvazyan**, Executive Director of the Transparency International Anti-Corruption Centre in Armenia; **Haykuhi Harutyunyan**, Protection of Rights Without Borders NGO and EaP CSF Steering Committee member; **Boris Navasardian**, member of the EaP CSF Steering Committee and President of the Yerevan Press Club, and **MEP Heidi Hautala**, Head of the EP delegation to the Armenian elections.

## Day 1

### Opening session

EaP CSF Working Group 1 Coordinators **Maria Golubeva**, **Haykuhi Harutyunyan** welcomed the participants and presented the agenda of the meeting. **Nils Jansons**, Deputy Head of Division, Eastern Partnership, Regional cooperation and OSCE, EEAS opened his remarks restating the non-confrontational and non-binary nature of the Eastern Partnership. He highlighted the value of the partnership for the citizens of the six countries and introduced the importance of achieving the [20 deliverables for 2020](#). The document summarized the result-oriented approach, with achievable goals and targets in order to reach the 2017 and 2020 milestones. He highlighted the increased need of cooperating with the civil society in the six countries on achieving these goals. He introduced future events relevant to the EaP and leading up to the EaP summit (November 24 2017), such as the EaP Media Conference, EaP Youth Forum and EaP Business Forum. He restated the importance of the EaP Civil Society Conference and EaP CSF Annual Assembly that is being held in October in Tallinn.

In the end, Mr. Jansons identified several action items:

- A need for multi-stakeholder dialogue, funding schemes, improvement of skills, identification of young leaders
- Organizing cooperation and building better cohesion within existing structures within the EaP
- Better effectiveness/streamlining is needed and a restructuring towards a more interdisciplinary approach
- The urgent need to support the civil society and to enable environment for the bettering of civil society

## **Public session – Risks and opportunities for the civil society in the EaP countries**

**MEP Rebecca Harms, the Co-President of Euronest**, started by pointing out the need to address the problems regarding civil societies in the EaP countries. She highlighted the importance of fair and democratic participation in decision-making processes. She identified a number of risks, challenges and needs for the civil society in the EaP countries: the risk of “not being heard” by external actors, the threat posed in some instances by the public authorities and the fact the legislators should be more open to the wishes and needs of the civil society. There is also a need to strengthen civil society organisations within EaP countries. She identified the common burning issues in the EaP countries as corruption, media problems, propaganda, discrimination, climate change issues, problems related to financial aid, and threats against the freedom of expression. Also the need to respect the rule of law and fundamental freedoms, need to find opportunities for better cooperation such as the COSME programme, Erasmus + and visa waivers for the remaining EaP countries were raised.

**Dirk Schuebel**, Head of Division, EaP Bilateral, EEAS, underlined the importance of open dialogue and strategic meetings. He praised the gains achieved in Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine and reminded the audience of the importance of monitoring the implementation of agreements. He signalled the need for developing the civil societies in order to achieve meaningful reform. He continued by voicing his concerns over the election situation and the legal uncertainties in Ukraine, asserting that transparency issues must be dealt with. On the situation in Georgia, he lauded the development of a new constitution but pointed out that better procedures are needed. He also highlighted the need to support the civil society in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, which serves the important role of watching over human rights issues and developments. Commenting on Azerbaijan, he pointed out the restricting legislation that infringes on basic freedoms. He praised the process of simplifying financial matters but pointed out that there is a need for a solid system of checks and balances. He advised upon finding ways to lift pressures on freedom of speech and pointed out that activists are persecuted “as extremists”. On Belarus, he pointed the need to strengthen the civil society by encouraging meetings with political leaders. He mentioned the need for better support for NGOs and a crucial need to consolidate the instruments needed to build a working civil society. Finally, he praised minor improvements in Armenia and Moldova, mainly through funding and strengthening of the voice of NGOs.

**Anar Mammadli**, Election Monitoring and Democracy Studies Centre (Azerbaijan), started by exposing risks for the civil society in Azerbaijan – political and legal impediments for activists, including individuals banned from leaving the country. He pointed out that the EU became more active in Azerbaijan from 2009, but decried the lack of recent involvement from the USAID. Problems for the civil society in Azerbaijan included exacerbated sanctions of NGOs, with many donors and experts leaving the country. The most active part of networking with the civil society happens online, on social media, where the risk of repression is less imminent. He voiced the need of better support from relevant foreign NGOs and institutions, highlighting that there has been less support for the consolidation of human rights.

**Olga Smolianko**, Center for Legal transformation (Belarus), started by pointing out the lack of change in terms of the problems the Belarusian NGOs are facing and identified four major issues:

- 1) NGOs are hard to register
- 2) NGOs face continuous legal issues
- 3) There are serious problems regarding receiving financial aid
- 4) The basic rights and freedoms of NGOs and NGO members are infringed upon

After the 2014/2015 unrests, many activists were detained or persecuted. Therefore, there is a need for increased help from the EU and other external observers in order to improve the existing situation. Most NGOs find it hard to receive official funding or have faced various pressures created by government policies. There is an urgent need to foster the creation of independent NGOs, otherwise parts of the civil society will be replaced by government controlled NGOs. Furthermore, there is a need to improve the human rights situation in Belarus by organising stakeholder tasks and events together with international NGOs and bodies of the EU. She also expressed the need to extend the UN mandate in Belarus and to increase the support coming from EU institutions and other international monitoring instruments redress the situation in Belarus.

**Lilia Carasciuc**, Transparency International (Moldova), opened by voicing the need to get Moldovan stakeholders united in the fight against corruption and the malignant influence of the oligarchs. She suggested that Moldovan NGOs fought for reform in the political environment that followed the riots of 2009. The government and presidency tried to “strangle” the will of independent NGOs in the political environment pre-2009, but the situation has improved since. Corruption is the leading problem of the Moldovan political realm. The oligarchs and the government tried to “capture the state”, but external partners helped discover the negative trend. Moldovan civil society is active and very reactionary towards President Dodon’s policies and public opinion. Moldova needs more support from the EU and that if the necessary measures are not taken, the Moldovan civil society is under serious threat.

**Yulia Tyshchenko**, Ukrainian Center for Independent Political Research (Ukraine) saluted the accomplishments related to the visa waiver programme in Ukraine and continued with outlining some risks that the Ukrainian civil society is facing. The environment surrounding the Ukrainian civil society did not benefit from serious changes in the past years, with serious and productive dialogue still needed. The Ukrainian civil society is quite well established – there are numerous opportunities for open dialogue and individuals tend to self-organise. There is a high value placed on freedom of speech amongst Ukrainian citizens, an element that enables the development of the Ukrainian civil society. Several major risks surrounding the Ukrainian civil society were outlined:

- There needs to be a more meaningful and successful engagement with local authorities
- Most NGOs could benefit from developing better working capacities
- There needs to be more inter-sectoral cooperation; more interaction between businesses and media organisations.

- The need to stop “social fatigue” surrounding human rights volunteers. A stagnation in initiative can lead to a drop in trust levels of the populations in regards to the EU and the Ukrainian civil society as a whole.

### Internal Session I

Within this session, the four out of five [EaP CSF 2017 regranting projects falling under WG1](#) were presented:

- *Adopting Experience on Bilateral EU-Moldova and EU-Georgia CS Platforms to Armenia*, Eurasia Partnership Foundation,
- *Eastern Partnership Think Tank Forum 2017*, Institute for European Policies and Reforms
- *Inclusion in Action*, Unison (Partner)
- *Capacity development for gender subgroups of National Platforms in Armenia, Georgia, Belarus and Ukraine*, Women's Resource Centre

In the follow-up discussion, it was suggested the regranting project “*Adopting Experience on Bilateral EU-Moldova and EU-Georgia CS Platforms to Armenia*” could use the experience of Ukraine and forming of its bilateral platform under AA/DCFTA as well.

**Maria Golubeva**, the Mission leader, presented the work and outcomes of the [EaP CSF Monitoring mission on media, civil society and human rights situation in Belarus](#) that took place on March 28 – April 1. The four expert on the ground interviewed civil society representatives and other relevant stakeholders, drafted the report and developed a number of recommendations to the EU institutions and the civil society.

The questions from the audience on the Mission targeted the current state of affairs in Belarus, such as how many people remain detained. In response, it was mentioned 16 people remain arrested as of 11<sup>th</sup> May. The government realised that it is more difficult to keep people as political prisoners because of growing international attention. Therefore, a new tactics of targeting the same activists repeatedly on less severe charges has been employed. In addition, the high fines (700 USD) issued to some activists were mentioned, as well as the importance of international monitoring missions.

### Internal Session II

The session focused on presentation of the [EaP Index](#) with an aim to involve the WG1 members both, into the Index preparations, and advocacy. The EaP CSF National Platforms representatives were encouraged to plan for advocacy events based on the EaP Index for 2015 and 2016 that is to be issued by the end of June.

**EaP CSF policy brief** envisaged as EaP CSF consolidated input into the document [20 deliverables for 2020](#) was also presented and discussed, especially the part covering the

deliverables relevant to WG1 policy areas. Three selected experts are drafting draft the policy brief based on the input from the EaP CSF members. The process should conclude by May 15.

In the discussion, it was mentioned that the EU makes very vague formulations about deliverables, which is probably common in political world, such evasiveness allows them to avoid being held responsible in case if something is not achieved. The question was posed whether the EaP CSF should accept this procedure and product, and play along, or whether a dissenting voice should be raised against it and demand more clear formulations, which would also make it possible to achieve concrete goals.

### **Internal Session III**

In the format of the **World Café**, the session was designed to define priorities for the Civil Society Declaration on Eastern Partnership Summit that should be adopted at the Civil Society Conference and EaP CSF Annual Assembly in Tallinn in October 2017.

The following ideas scored the highest among the WG1 members:

#### **Public administration and Economy**

To increase the level of decentralisation including financial decentralisation

#### **Human rights**

Develop gender equality policy

Create favourable operational environment for donors and NGOs in Azerbaijan

Promotion of Child rights in HR dialogues

#### **Judiciary/Anti-corruption**

Annulation of norms regarding declaration of assets for NGO

To make clear criteria and procedures for appointment of judges

#### **Enabling environment for CSOs**

Adequate legal rules are to be respected for the functioning of CSOs, in particular to accept financial support at national and international levels, for registration, remove criminalisation (punishment)

To ensure support (financial) for CSOs in disputed territories

#### **Elections**

Criminal liability for electoral fraud should be introduced

#### **Media & Security**

Quality content as an alternative to Russian propaganda

Protection of journalists' rights

### **Internal Session IV**

**Ulad Vialichka**, EaP CSF Steering Committee (SC) member, Eurobelarus, launched a discussion on various aspects of possible **reform of the EaP CSF mechanisms**. He explained that the Steering Committee is keen on starting a process of reform of the EaP CSF operating mechanisms. The review of the text of the strategy itself will be carried out later during the year and it will not target the first part about goal and objectives. However, a preliminary analysis showed that the second part of the text (regarding how CSF is operating) contains some disputed issues that often spark criticisms, such as the re-granting system, or the selection of participants to the Forum.

The timing of the discussion is determined by:

- Technical need: a review of EaP CSF Strategy for 2015-2017 is needed;
- End of a three-year project supporting EaP CSF activities in 2015-2017:
- EaP Summit in November 2017: optimizing EaP structure for synergy and improved delivery of output.
- Internal need to optimize expenses, improve performance and sustainability

Any change would need to be agreed upon and voted during the October AA in Tallinn. Comprehensive feedback from the members via the WGs and NPs is expected. The timeline of the process is summarized below:

SC brainstorming	25/04
Preliminary Concept	07/05
Approaching WG/NP members	11/05-10/07
Updated concept draft	Late June
SC meeting + possible experts – approving concept draft	July 6-8, 2017
EaP CSF Secretariat project application	July 2017
Strategy draft + final concept Proposals to AA on CSF changes	August-September 2017
Last minute feedback of CSF members	September 2017
Annual Assembly Tallinn	25/10

The suggestions are grouped into seven areas.

**Svetlana Karalyova** (Belarus) objected that in the presented 7 points, the role and activities of the National Platforms are not taken into consideration, together with ideas on how to improve communication.

#### 1. CSF cycle, Annual Assemblies, Steering Committee, elections

- Switch to bi-annual cycle of holding EaP CSF Assemblies and SC elections (saving a considerable amount of time and money) while transferring the resources to WGs and SWGs

- Choosing one particular theme for each Annual Assembly (AA)
- Simplify rules for SC elections: 12 persons totally: 6 national coordinators, 1 EU coordinator, 5 WG coordinators (either from EU or from EaP – no matter)
- Direct elections of CSF Speaker (chair) at CSF Assembly

**Chris Bobinski** asked about compliance of bi-annual cycle with the Belgian law.

**Lidia Gromadzka** (EAP CSF Secretariat) replied that according to the Belgian statute, any association registered in Belgium has to meet at least once every two years.

**Svetlana Karalyova** intervened by saying whether the SC members would be able to deal with the heavy workload for a period of two years.

**Ulad Vialichka** suggested that half of the SC members are already working for a period of 2 years, so a new work frame of 2 years is feasible.

**Several speakers** did not agree with just one theme to be adopted for each AA.

**Lasha Tughushi** commented on direct elections of Chair/s. It is not clear how the person would be chosen and what his/her competences would be. If the rule is to be written down it should be done carefully. About the bi-annual AA, he suggested that if it is not only for financial matters, there are pros and cons to this solution. He added that the issue of his concern is foremost how to measure the outcome of the Forum.

**Ulad Vialichka** replied that the financial aspect is the main one but there is also an effort to increase the efficiency and input of the EaP CSF to the EaP policy process.

**Lukasz Wenerski** raised a concern over the SC composition under the proposed new rule, as theoretically there might be 11 people from the Eastern Partnership and only 1 person from the EU in the SC.

**Gubad Ibadoghlu** asked whether under a 2-year mandate for the SC members there would be a right to be elected for a second mandate. Suggesting that if this is not possible, all members would drop out after two years and there will be problem with continuity. The solution could be to nominate some members for a one-year mandate and other members for two years

**Chris Bobinski** added that if the SC runs the Forum for 2 years, it might partially lose contacts with members. So it is interlinked with the issue of bi-annual AA and how much control the members will have over the SC and the Secretariat. If the SC role is strengthened, Forum might be less democratic.

## 2. Membership, selection of participants to the Forum

- Selection of AA participants is made by the National Platforms according to agreed quota, taking into consideration opinion of WG coordinators
- National coordinators are elected by NPs before the AA
- All CSOs that participated in any AA are treated as CSF members and can be invited to WG meetings and other events independently from their year of participation
- Annual membership fee of CSOs

**Svetlana Karalyova** indicated that it is important to keep the role of the EU Delegations and partners in the selection process because there are violations of fundamental freedoms and discrimination at the NPs. She suggested the rules and more clarity should be introduced in order

to understand how s ‘democratic National Platform’ is defined; the issue of openness and transparency of NPs was underlined.

**Gubad Ibadoghlu** expressed concerns that the selection of the participants to the AA by NPs would run a risk of increasing the participation of GONGOs [others in the audience seemed to have the same concern]. Then he asked for clarification on the election of WG coordinators at the national level (timing).

**Mikayel Hovhannisyan** shared a concern over the process of selection of the National facilitators only by the respective national delegation, because it entails inherent conflict. The national coordinators need to receive votes from all members of given NP.

**Olga Smolianko** raised issue of NPs WG coordinators who are not members of the Forum in given year and cannot attend the working meetings. In addition, the issue of two representatives of one organization within the Forum’s structures was raised.

**Chris Bobinski** objected that it is very important to keep the balance within the selection, especially in decision-making between the National Platforms and the WG coordinators. He explained that if the initiative was left within the National Platforms – which over the years have become quite stagnating, rejecting people from the outside only to become more and more closed – than they would become even more closed, merely because of their role of selecting candidates. According to the proposed reforms, the balance in the CSF will shift to the NPs at the expenses of the international element. The WG is a part of the international element, which looks at an issue ‘across the border’ in whatever is doing, whereas NP look only at their national interest. He reiterated that in combination with the SC running the Forum for 2 years and the selection for the AA done by NPs at the expenses of the WGs, the Forum would become de facto a ‘National Platform Forum’ that is likely to lead to a deterioration because the CSF is about working together across the countries. Finally, there is also the danger of marginalisation of EU people.

**Anar Mammadli** commented on the selection of the AA participants and NPs role that might be difficult for example in Azerbaijan, where they have many GONGOs. As for the selection process before the AA, it was complicated because there are many GONGOs and they cannot function normally. He is also concerned about the membership of donor organizations (as far as AZ is concerned), because in some cases the head of the organization is at the same time a member of NGO State Council, which is a national donor and receives therefore funds from the government. This somehow represents a conflict of interests and such organizations cannot be part of independent platform.

**Lasha Tugushi** noted that there is a systematic problem in their case: NP carries out (democratic) elections and, furthermore, not everyone (WG coordinators) know well what is going on in in Georgia but they can nevertheless take decisions. It should be clarified and decided on who is in charge of final decisions – if it is representative/s elected by the Forum members, it would be more fair.

### 3. Structure and working mechanism of WGs\SWGs

- Adjust the WG\SWG structure (full or partly) to composition of intergovernmental platforms and thematic panels
- SWGs are established not by initiative of CSF participants but on the basis of established WG thematic priorities (EaP Summit / CSF Strategy) and operate certain period of time (new ones are not established)

- Expanding number of working meetings of WGs/SWGs to up to 2-3 per year
- Each WG\SWG develops and implements priorities for 2-3 years and annual action plans
- Each WG/SWG (according to priorities and action plans) is responsible for producing certain outputs, which are further used as EaP CSF input to the policy dialogue
- Change of priority from internal communication in WGs\SWGs to producing "messages" for communication with EaP stakeholders
- Requirements/guidelines for WG\SWG coordinators
- Assistant to WG coordinators (from Secretariat)
- Joint working database of partners and stakeholders for WGs and SWGs
- Well-established system of communication and decision-making on particular issues and functions (for instance who will represent WG at intergovernmental panel)

**Svetlana Karalyova** suggested there should be more discussion about WGs and SWGs in order to optimize their work, as they are the main elements of the EaP CSF.

**Maria Golubeva** suggested it is a good idea to established thematic priorities for each WG. Yet, she expressed her concern over sup-point 5. The outcomes listed there are already limited to the extent of the budget of every WGs and SWGs, so there should be a detailed strategy about this.

**Svetlana Karalyova** underlined in Belarus the government has no interest in ensuring fundamental human rights, how to formulate action plans with the EU in this regard so as it is not a 'comfortable theme' they would simply drop.

**Mikayel Hovhannisyan** added that if the priorities of the official dialogue are the role of the civil society, it means that it is not working. About the communication function, he maintained that we need to adopt institutionalised mechanisms so that the communication between the members of the Forum is more effective.

#### 4. CSF production

- EaP index, other analytical outputs
- Mapping of civil society by EaP CSF
- Political declarations, statements, CSF recommendations to EaP stakeholders
- Policy proposals/briefs to meetings of intergovernmental platforms and thematic panels and the same – at national level (in coordination with NPs)
- Regranting projects and their results
- Regular monitoring missions and their reports/recommendations to relevant stakeholders
- Advocacy events in Brussels and EU\EaP capitals, more regular participation of CSF representatives in informal consultations both at national and program level
- Alternative reports and other watchdog outputs of CSOs regarding projects and programs of intergovernmental cooperation of EU-EaP

**Svetlana Karalyova** objected that in the last AA they issued a [statement \(resolution\) on gender issues](#) with a specific plan and recommendations but finally no concrete decision was taken, so such documents have no real effect and the situation should be improved.

#### 5. Formats of activity out of WGs, NPs, regranting

- Cooperation projects/regional meetings between NPs (exchange of experience, policy-development)
- Annual Advocacy plans (campaigns) of CSF in general as well as in specific countries (NPs)
- Rapid response reaction mechanism for particular standard situations
- Capacity building\training for CSF members
- CSF applies to observer status to CoE, BFUG etc.
- Joint important thematic events in cooperation with other big scale partners

No comments

#### 6. Additional structures and norms

- EU Platform
- Establishing group of “CSF friends” from experienced politicians and active public figures
- CSF ombudsman (arbitrary role)
- Special task force on preparation of the EaP CSF monitoring missions (with further advocacy support)
- Minimal standards introduced for the NPs
- Clear procedures on how to work further with CSF resolutions

No comments

#### 7. Re-granting scheme

- Allowing for multi-years projects
- Stimulating follow-up projects funded from other donors, supervising development of such projects
- Re-granting as a tool of implementing thematic and advocacy priorities of CSF
- Connecting re-granting directly with WG\SWG action plans
- WG Council members do not participate in the selection
- Evaluation of proposals at WG level with relevant external experts (competence, continuity, interconnectivity etc.)
- WG coordinators can't apply to re-granting call

**Chris Bobinski** asserted that the CSF is not a machine, but rather a ‘living animal’ that do not respond to a simple pushing of buttons. The members should have an opportunity to comment, as it was impossible during the one hour session.

**Ulad Vialichka** agreed and proposed to send a questionnaire to WG1 members to collect feedback from everyone.

The session continued as a **work in SWGs**

The day closed with **Open side event “How Security Assistance Can Contribute to Defence Reform in Ukraine: Civil Society Perspective”** organized in cooperation with the Independent Defence Anti-Corruption Committee (NAKO), Transparency International Defence & Security Programme, marking the launch of the NAKO strategy 2017-2018 and its first report on corruption risks in security assistance. **Oleh Rybachuk**, Co-chair, Independent Defence Anti-Corruption Committee, **Katherine Dixon**, Programme Director, TI Defence & Security Programme and **Hennadiy Maksak**, Ukrainian Prism, EaP CSF SC Co-chair, WG1 Security SWG coordinator featured as speakers.

## Day 2

### **Break-out workshop I – How to develop advocacy messages?**

The workshop was an interactive training session for those WG1 members who wish to further develop their advocacy skills. It was conducted by **Maria Golubeva**, PASOS, EaP CSF WG1 Coordinator, **Boris Navasardian**, Yerevan Press Club and **Virginie Amato**, Regional Coordinator for Europe Coalition for the International Criminal Court (CICC). The session started with Virginie sharing best practices on how to structure advocacy and presentations of policy messages in a successful way. She was followed by Boris, who also shared successful examples from his work within the SWG on Media Freedom. The second part of the workshop was intended as a practical laboratory, where participants prepared a draft advocacy plan, taking Maria’s suggestions as main guidelines. The workshop ended with the presentation of group assignment results.

### **Break-out workshop II – How can external monitoring contribute to reform?**

The workshop was carried out as an interactive roundtable. The session began with a presentation on lessons learned from a number of monitoring groups, including the Monitoring & Evaluation Committee in Afghanistan. The methodology for analysing and evaluating corruption risks and anti-corruption efforts was presented. The group assignments on how to hold the public figures accountable were performed. The workshop was run by **Katherine Dixon**, Programme Director, Transparency International (TI) Defence & Security programme and **Karolina MacLachlan**, Senior Research Officer, TI Defence & Security programme.

**Break-out workshop III – Enabling environment for civil society – how to improve the situation in the EaP countries?** Interactive roundtable on the model law on protection of human rights defenders.

**Haykuhi Harutyunyan**, Protection of Rights without Borders, EaP CSF WG1 Coordinator and **Mauricio Angel**, Head of Policy, Research and Training Unit, Protection International conducted the workshop on the model law and national public policies for HRD protection. There were around 10 participants from different countries. The general level of knowledge about this topic seemed to be rather low so the trainers focused on awareness raising without

going into technical details of the different existing mechanisms or laws while describing the model law in general. It was concluded further work on the issue would be carried out namely in Armenia.

### **Closing session**

**Maria Golubeva** and **Haykuhi Harutyunyan**, the WG1 Coordinators, closed the meeting with summarizing the meeting activities. It was pointed out the EaP CSF Strategy 2018-2021 is in process of making and a sequence of meetings on the issue is envisaged. SWGs had the opportunity to discuss the areas where they can have an input for the developments in the run up to the EaP summit. The conducted workshops were useful exercise that will help to shape up similar activities in the future. It was noted the people responsible for the National Platforms should transfer the information and knowledge gained during the WG1 meeting and pass it on the other members of the NPs who did not participate. The EaP CSF Policy Brief analysing the *2020 Deliverables* document should be used by the NPs for their further work with the relevant policy makers.

**Chris Bobinski** presented the letter to Azerbaijani authorities on allowing Intigam Aliyev to travel and seek medical assistance for his serious health issues in the Czech Republic. It was adopted as WG1 statement by majority of the participants and will be proposed to the EaP CSF Steering Committee to be adopted as the Steering Committee statement.

**Meeting with EaP CSF 2017 Re-granting grantees** and the EaP CSF Secretariat was conducted after the closing of the official agenda at Thon Hotel EU.