

Working Group 3 “Environment, climate change and energy security”

Annual Meeting Report

29-30 May 2017, Brussels

Thon Hotel Brussels City Centre, Avenue du Boulevard 17, 1210 Brussels

Summary

On 29-30 May, the WG3 meeting brought together **25 representatives of the working group and the EU institutions**.

The first day offered discussions and exchange of information on the Action Plan on Luxembourg Declaration as well as on the EU’s Joint Staff Working Document [20 deliverables for 2020](#) and the EaP CSF Policy Brief that offers the civil society perspective on the document. The internal debate was followed by exchange with the external stakeholders from DG NEAR and EEAS. The day continued with internal sessions focusing on presentation of results (EaP CSF 2017 re-granting, EaP Index), as well as on work on internal issues for the upcoming period until the EaP summit and EaP CSF Annual Assembly.

The second day started with internal session on defining priorities for the Civil Society Declaration and with a debate on the review of the EaP CSF Strategy and Forum’s internal operational level. A panel on energy issues followed with the participation of external stakeholders from DG ENER. The closing session summarized the meeting achievements. Subsequently, a meeting of the Secretariat representatives with the beneficiaries of the EaP CSF 2017 re-granting scheme took place.

Day 1

Opening session

Ina Coseru and **Margit Sare**, EaP CSF WG3 Coordinators, opened the meeting by summarizing the agenda. **Anna Golubovska-Onisimova** presented the work the WG3 has done commenting on the **Action Plan on Luxembourg Declaration**. She underlined the group worked on voluntary basis but considers the input provided very important, as the deliverables of the action plan should be measurable and implemented within realistic timeframe. The importance to mainstream the environmental governance across other policy fields and reforms implemented in the EaP countries were reiterated. WG3 of the EaP CSF National Platforms should engage more actively with the government representatives and organize meetings in order to streamline the agenda of the environmental governance into the EaP countries’ policies. **Artashes Sargsyan** presented EaP CSF policy brief elaborating on Joint Staff Working Document “Eastern Partnership – Focusing on key priorities and deliverables”, especially on the parts relevant to WG3 policy areas.

Presentation of EaP CSF 2017 regranting projects

1. *Energy Watchdog Coalition. Lead: Expert Forum (RO), Dixi Group (UA), World Experience for Georgia (GE), ASPE (MD) presented by **Ana Otilia Nutu***

Q: To what extent does the corruption issue impact the assessment? A: We do not assess specifically corruption, rather accountability assessment; corruption is simply a part of bad governance, so it is more representative as an indicator.

Q: How to multiply results in countries that are not part of the project? A: It is a pilot, maybe we can think about it later on.

2. *Smart waste management in EaP countries. Lead: Good Deeds (UA), International Business and Development Centre (GE), National Environmental centre (MD) presented by **Oleksandra Gumeniuk***

Q: A similar project was discussed last year, what is the difference and progress? A: Last year's one was an overview and measuring awareness of changes; this year, practical recommendations for leaders of associations will be developed on how to organize this process so that the waste can be sorted.

3. *Advancing Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine for the European environmental governance reform. Lead: MAMA-86 (UA), EcoContact (MD), Ecohome (BY) presented by **Anna Golubovska-Onisimova***

Q: How did you choose criteria? A: In collaboration with chambers of commerce and environmental groups; but indeed business has to be included as it is rather profitable for them.

The EaP CSF project [EaP Index](#) was presented by **Rasa Uzdavinyte** from EaP CSF Secretariat with an aim to involve the WG3 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.

Discussion on the Action Plan for the implementation of the Luxembourg Declaration with external stakeholders

Angela Bularga from **DG NEAR** participated in the discussion with the WG3 members on the Action Plan for the implementation of the Luxembourg Declaration. **Anna Golubovska-Onisimova (A G-O)** opened the session with a question on the current state of affairs with the draft action plan and when the next (third) draft will be available and circulated. Furthermore, she asked what actions should be taken by the civil society and whether the EaP CSF should conduct regional consultations based on the current draft. The second question asked inquired about the impact of the civil society proposals on the second draft and whether these were taken on board.

Angela Bularga (AB) responded that DG NEAR took on board all civil society suggestions for the next draft. The work is ongoing, but there is a need to structure the plan and make it clearer. She pointed out that they expect to send the new version of the draft in the few upcoming weeks and that they asked countries to signal activities they would like to lead. So far, there was not much feedback on that issue and it is expected the next draft will be easier to comment on. Green economy, environmental governance and climate change will be included in the new draft with funding attached. This way it will be possible to see how the EaP panel discussions can be translated into concrete actions. Civil society approach is feasible, however, it is better to wait for the next draft and to understand well the framework and political processes. EaP summit is the key event of the year; the document 2020 deliverables will be the key document. A number of events are on the way before the EaP summit, for example, an unofficial meeting on energy efficiency. The civil society should be integrated in some way and the DG NEAR is expecting the feedback on this issue.

A G-O reiterated WG3 is glad to hear that the input was valuable and considered; it is the first time such an acknowledgment was communicated to the group. The suggestions for the study as well as on how to include the civil society will be shared. She continued by saying the institutionally weak ministries of environment face a big challenge in dealing with so many tasks. Whole governments should be held responsible for the environmental agenda, not only ministries of environment.

Ina Coseru (IC) proposed to have meetings of CSOs with ministries of environment before the summer holidays, to see how CSOs can be involved and what joint activities can be conducted.

AB noted that the action plan is meant to be regional undertake: “it is a good idea to choose your battles to avoid overload, your view is good, the regional and national coordination could be an important element.”

Inga Zarafyan (IZ) noted the Armenian EaP CSF National Platform is worried that the government can delay the implementation of the action plan. What can the EU suggest?

AB: Monitoring is the key word, and it is a useful activity regionally and nationally. It is where the civil society is at highest and where the EU institutions need the feedback. Non-AA/DCFTA countries are not marginalised; it is the governments who decide on the implementation measures and the monitoring of the process is very important.

A G-O responded that it should be universal requirement to have equal footing to talk to all six EaP countries. Monitoring is ongoing. Where can the civil society find the funding for the activities included in the action plan?

AB: When you suggest some actions, you are ready to be in the lead. As for the funding, instruments such as TAEX for ad-hoc actions are available, for long term objectives further discussion on funding is needed.

IC: Suggestion to work on declaration in the way that this document and themes become a priority for the governments. AA/DCFTA does not bring all the solutions and even in AA/DCFTA countries environment is not a priority.

IZ supported this suggestion. Formerly AA/DCFTA was the main goal and each country did some efforts to achieve this goal but at least three countries don't have this goal anymore. The EU should set priorities for the governments and societies to pay more attention to environmental goals.

AB: Priorities have some impact, political ownership of priorities is important. We try to match the proposals from countries and the need to follow-up with the funding available.

Questions following the presentation: Why environmental deliverables are very vague? Others are more concrete.

AB: In the document, the deliverables are more concrete, based on the directive. Environmental issues are very wide; it is difficult to have very concrete deliverables.

IZ: About ecological responsibility, why not use the complaints that are collected already by the Secretariats of different Conventions? All countries are responsible for implementation of the Conventions.

Artashes Sargsyan (AS): CSOs are not part of cleaner productions plan. Could it be changed in a way so that the civil society can participate at least in the trainings?

AB: This program will be continued as it was recognized as valuable; we will see how other stakeholders can be involved.

A G-O: There should be more support to EaP countries, the program is full of great vision but without concrete proposals. There should be support for strategic actions of the ministries of environment.

AB: result 3 is exactly about that, environment level playing field (not only as a source of income, but also obligations). It means respecting environmental law and trying to design it to fit SMEs, so it is not deregulation. It should bring the regulation closer to the capacity of SMEs. In general, we expect to continue exchanging views, circulate feedback, and we should see how to organize information flow with EaP CSF WG3. There is a need to have more communication in between the meetings.

IZ: All green processes need to introduce concrete definitions, any activity has social impact, and without a definition, it is difficult to work or determine what is legal/illegal, right/wrong.

AB: Please send your feedback to the PP presentation within a week, and the feedback to the study: by end of June, ideally 15 June.

Decision of the WG3:

To send feedback on the PP presentation within a week time

To send further feedback to the study and 2020 Deliverables and the EaP CSF Policy Brief by the end of June after meetings of the WG3 of the EaP CSF National Platforms.

To send the feedback on the third draft of the action plan - no deadline envisaged

Discussion on the EaP CSF policy brief “Joint Staff Working Document EaP – Focusing on key priorities and deliverables – Assessment and recommendations by the civil society” with the external stakeholders

Ina Coseru summarized the discussions that were carried out during the day and invited the participants to present the proposals and concerns that arose during the internal sessions. At the same time, she invited **Camelia Suica, EEAS**, to talk about the document and to answer to the following questions: What is to be expected in the 3 years of the document’s implementation period? What role is there for the civil society?

Camelia Suica (CS) reiterated the main EU instruments deployed in EaP countries so far, which Angela Bularga already mentioned in the previous session, are:

- **European Neighbourhood Policy Review**, aimed at providing support to reforms in four priority areas: good governance, democracy, rule of law and human rights; economic development for stabilization; security; migration and mobility;
- **Multiannual programming of the financial cooperation**, providing a framework for the 2014-2020 period;
- **Joint Staff Working Document (2020 Deliverables)**, which can be considered a novelty. In fact, it contains a set of key deliverables identified in the framework of those priorities delineated in Riga and, for each of them, specific milestones (to be achieved by next EaP summit in November 2017) and targets (to be achieved by 2020), along with implementation procedures and actors involved. However, she reminded that DG NEAR and DG Environment are still working on it, so it may still need some adjustments and inputs that she hopes to collect in occasions such as the present one. She also expressed the hope to have a short EaP Summit Declaration, containing a political introduction – where constraints and concerns can be mentioned – and an annex with milestones and targets to be achieved by 2020 based on Joint Staff Working Document (roadmap).

In such a framework, at a first stage it is fundamental to understand well and include the role of civil society in the roadmap, whereas, at a second stage, it is important to have an effective implementation, supported by a **widespread dissemination & communication strategy**. The information activities should reach the authorities, the civil society, the general public and in particular the organizations in the regions: this is of the outmost importance and she strongly encouraged WG3 participants to substantially **decrease the existing gap between capitals and the rest of the countries** by 2020.

Also, the EaP multilateral cooperation framework is reviewed and its activities shall be more efficient and more targeted. The multilateral track will remain as **inclusive** as it is, in contrast to the recent desire expressed by some EaP countries to see the EaP more in its bilateral form than its multilateral dimension. However, such a method will prove to be effective only if members actually realize its added value and try to work on joint interests. As a matter of fact, the next EaP summit should promote a message of **unity** among member states and partner countries too, and their **joint interests**. Finally, she invited the participants to voice their criticisms and she reminded them that the **Estonian EU Council Presidency** represents an opportunity to have a good EaP Summit Declaration.

IC agreed with necessity to include the regions and remote areas and to consider this issue in the policy brief, along with ideas on how to implement it. A question on timeframe to make further proposals was made.

CS clarified that the timeframe for the input on the Action Plan for the implementation of the Luxembourg Declaration is set meanwhile on the Joint Staff Working Document there has been already sufficient time for comments. However, comments are always welcome and can always be included as the JSWD will serve as an annex to the EaP Summit Declaration. What is important is that targets and milestones that were set are clearly understood by the public. The priorities for the EaP Summit Declaration at the moment are: 1) a short political declaration, 2) an annex, 3) an action plan to implement the Luxembourg Declaration.

AB explained that they have tried to make the document as clear as possible, as well as comprehensive, as they need to reconcile different objectives. Then, regional plans need to be developed so that, in turn, they can develop more specific targets and indicators at a country level, a task she is in charge of.

Manana Devidze (MD) asked about the ways for CSOs to implement effectively an inclusive programme and the necessity to have experts or workshops to do so.

AB suggested there are several possibilities to get actively involved. She referred to calls for proposals such as the calls presented at the euneighbours.eu website. She expressed the will to send new calls for proposals as they are published, if the WG3 participants wished so.

Further interventions from the audience included the **Giorgi Mukhigulishvili** question about the EU plans for energy subsidies, as in the past there had been actions implemented in the framework of the Green Programme. **AB** pointed out that indeed there is a general support to energy efficiency (production, industry, building) and to green-related issues and they would like to see more similar initiatives. **Inga Zarafyan** intervened, saying that the issue of energy efficiency is not a problem (at least for the Armenian government), especially if there are subsidies. The problems are more related to the administration and the political forces within, so this needs to be taken into consideration.

Ina Coseru closed the session by encouraging the participants to take more active stance in their activities, in those of the Forum, and in involving other organisations because when the civil society is not involved, political forces prevail. She also committed on behalf of the WG3 members to cooperate more actively on joint actions, especially to raise environmental issues at a governmental level, a theme that usually has a very weak popular support.

Day 2

The session started with presentation of the **activities of WG3 of the Armenian National Platform**. The recent meeting of the EaP CSF National Platform with the representatives of Armenian government proved that the priority of the government is the economic development and that the environmental issues are secondary agenda. WG3 would like to define better the priorities so that all stakeholders can understand the same language. WG3 concluded memorandum on joint meetings with the WG2 in order to work on the overlapping topics like the green economy and energy efficiency. This practice was suggested to other National Platforms to follow. The issue of hydropower stations and their extensive construction on the several Armenian rivers was mentioned as an example of misuse and misunderstanding of the renewable energy policy, as the impact of the excessive construction on water levels and water management is serious.

The session continued with **brainstorming on the WG3 priorities** for the issues to be mentioned in the **Civil Society Declaration** to be adopted at AA and EaP Civil Society Conference in Tallinn in October 2017. It was agreed the EaP CSF National Platforms WG3 will hold the meetings to keep working on the identification of the key issues to be included and that a WG3 task force will develop the part of Declaration on behalf of WG3. It was suggested Inga Zarafyan and Anna Golubovska-Onisimova to be members of the task force. The issues shall fall under the three priority areas of the WG3 as defined at the Annual Assembly in Brussels (November 2016): Good environmental governance, climate change and energy security.

The issue raised were as follows:

- Green energy
- Fight against the HHPs (other members of the WG3 disagreed)
- Waste management and proper implementation of the EU directive on waste
- Action plan on Luxembourg Declaration
- Role of CSOs in climate change agenda
- CSOs to monitor the compliance with the Energy Community commitments
- Illegal deforestation and use of firewood as energy source (not acknowledged by the legislation)
- Energy security – to link the investigation of GAZPROM by DG COMP to how the company behaves in the EaP countries
- Nordstream 2 issue
- Occupation and ownership of key energy infrastructure by Russian Federation
- Better implementation of existing agreements and improved participation of CSOs
- Green zero tax on solar energy panels
- Implementation of EMERALD (Natura 2000)
- Difficult conditions for the green CSOs to operate

The session continued with brief presentation on the review of the **EaP CSF Strategy** and of the proposed reform of the internal operational mechanism. Vera Rihackova, EaP CSF Secretariat summarized the discussions within the EaP CSF Steering Committee and presented the PP by **Ulad Vialichka**, EaP CSF Steering Committee (SC) member. Further steps of the process were described including the call for experts facilitating the internal debate and a plan for the strategy session to be held shoulder to shoulder with the next EaP CSF SC meeting in July 2017.

Q&A

A G-O: WG3 declined recently in membership, what is its place in the new Forum? For the moment, we don't have even 3 delegates per EaP country.

VR: If we align ourselves with the reviewed EaP multilateral structures, we'll have 4 WGs and the distribution of members should indeed be reconsidered.

IC: Another possibility is to have more applications, I strongly suggest involving more active NGOs, not all applied this year and to involve NGOs from the regions.

Anna Otilia Nutu: I try to involve all NGOs, but all were rejected.

VR: review of the selection process also under consideration

Update from the EaP CSF National Platforms WG3s

Ukraine: Ukrainian members of WG3 organised an eco-platform in Kyiv on May 14th for the Europe Day, they made 11 presentations to introduce guests and citizens to their work and the CSF. A discussion panel and a press-conference is planned about the Luxembourg Declaration, jointly with government. Several projects are implemented in the sphere of

hydro-energy, climate change, waste management. We meet 4 times a year to share our plants and report about achievements.

Georgia: Monthly seminars on energy-related issues are organised and conducted, we involve experts, CS, foreign experts. A conference is organised against high voltage lines projects in Georgia, this project has raised serious concerns among environment specialists. We advocate for environmental issues. Cooperation with financial institutions about implementation of projects. Example: IMF issued a recommendation for G government to suspend a risky project in order to minimise financial risks.

Belarus: All organisations that are part of WG3 are part of our "Green network" group, we developed a joint strategy and we act based on this strategy. We prepare our position paper on the situation with development of nuclear stations in our country. There was an increase in repressions against eco-activists in the country, we stand against it.

Armenia: Involved into projects on power transition. We organise seminars and give recommendations on strategy improvement.

Moldova: Statement on the new structure of the government where the environmental ministry is eliminated and its functions transferred to the ministry of agriculture, this is very concerning and big issue for our country. Our main object is monitoring of AA implementation, we developed a table of activities and we share it with other WGs of our MNP in order to find out what activities can be conducted jointly by members of different WGs and the idea was supported by the EU delegation.

Discussion with **Marion Schiller-Probst (MSP) from DG ENER on the energy issues** started by stating that the energy will remain one of the key pillar of the cooperation after the upcoming EaP Summit. Major priorities ahead of the summit include:

- Riga summit priorities: 2 subsectors of energy:
 - o Enhancement of interconnectivity and security of energy supplies
 - o Support to cleaner and more sustainable energy
- However there are others too, such as:
 - o Regulatory approximation (AA countries are parties to Energy Community)
 - o Achieving the climate change goals
 - o Energy market reform
 - o Nuclear safety
 - o Off/onshore gas/oil issues

As for the milestones and deliverables set by the JSWD, EaP countries are on a good path in the energy field and all milestones are hoped to be reported achieved by the EaP summit. On 19 May, the first official SC meeting of the EU4Energy was held where the inception phase was discussed. The next EaP energy platform will be held on June 23 and should be dedicated to the consumers and how to engage them.

Giorgi Mukhigulishvili (GM) continued by presenting the EaP workshop on Energy regulators.

Q&A:

Anna Otilia Nutu: EC is on the side of consumers, all directives are pro-consumer but governments, not only in the EaP countries but also in the EU are hiding skillfully the subsidies.

GM: yes, for example in Georgia we have identified 5 schemes for subsidies accounting for 500 mln GE lari. We need political support to reforms for the sector to change the inefficient subsidy schemes.

Plamena Borissova: subsidies are not sustainable, in Bulgaria we get the bill for the green energy, and we basically pay double.

Tony Vidan: There is progress, which will make possible solar energy produced at low cost. For existing bad examples of policy and legislative implementation we should not forget the good goals of the policy. How is the EC trying to vector in what is justified to invest in? Profitability of gas projects is questionable. How does the EC support innovation?

MSP: One of the 5 dimensions of the Energy Union is innovation/technology, there are instruments for EaP to participate via Horizon2020.

Anna Golubovska-Onisimova raised the issue of representation of the EaP CSF at the Steering Committees of large projects like CLIMA EAST, EaP GREEN, EMERALD etc. Several nominations were made. WG3 agreed A G-O will represent EaP CSF at OECD's Green Instrument Conference. It was agreed the WG3 will step up its activity in this regard. The selected representatives of the group will have to report back.

The meeting was **closed by the EaP CSF WG3 coordinators**, summarizing the major conclusions and agenda agreed for the period up to the next EaP CSF AA.

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