

SC meeting

Monday 21 December 2020, 09:30-12:00

Online

Current SC members present: *Sintija Bernava, Ruslan Havrilyuk, Shahla Ismayil, Goda Neverauskaite, Ana Otilia Nutu, Tatiana Poshevalova, Sofia Strive, Irina Sukhiy*

Current SC members Absent: *Lousineh Hakobyan, Maksym Koriavets, Natia Kuprashvili, Adrian Lupusor, Yurii Vdovenko*

Outgoing SC members present: *Zaur Akbar, Ina Coseru, Mikayel Hovhannisyan, Nikolai Kvantaliani*

Secretariat members present: *Natalia Yerashevich, Billie Bell*

1. Election of Co-Chairs

The Quorum to elect Co-Chairs is 9 members. Since only 8 members were present, the election of interim Co-Chairs was conducted, with formal election to take place at the next meeting. This proposition was unanimously approved.

Nominations for interim Co-Chairs:

- Sofia Strive
- Irina Sukhiy

Unanimous approval of Sofia Strive and Irina Sukhiy as interim SC co-chairs.

2. SC communication tools

SC Google Group is the main channel of communication between all SC members and the Secretariat.

Google Doc with individual contact details for SC members and Secretariat will be made available to all SC members for filling in.

Official eap-csf.eu email addresses (visible at the eap-csf website contact page) are available for all SC members. The Secretariat has added their personal address as a forwarding address. The SC members will be provided with passwords to those accounts too.

Google Groups exist for all WGs, managed by respective Secretariat members (WG1 - Vera Rihackova, WG2 - Alexandra Sabou, WG3 - Tania Marocchi, WG4 - Juulia Baer-Bader, WG5 - Alexandra Sabou)

Occasional issues with Google Group and Secretariat emails going to spam - be sure to monitor.

3. Indicative plan for 2021

The plan for 2 months was presented by Natalia Yerashevich.

January

WG capacity building for WG2, WG4, WG5 in January/February (WG1 and WG3 capacity building has already taken place)

Revision of Index methodology: plan to revise substantially, Tania Marocchi will reach out to SC members and other members with Index experience in the new year

Development of advocacy plan for 2021: traditionally developed in collaboration with SC and NPs, need to reflect on multi-country issues we should prioritise over the coming year, SC will need to approve the plan

EaP architecture meetings: architecture in flux so remains to be seen how many meetings will take place, but we will continue to participate, with Forum representatives selected according to an existing process and approved by SC

COVID regranting to NPs: all contracts are now drawn and will cover period between now and February

Capacity-building for NPs: proposals from all NPs (except BY) including website development, capacity building on particular topics, translation of statutory documents, etc. received

NP Secretariat assessment: survey to be circulated to NP memberships to evaluate existing Secretariats, in order to assist with designating the entity responsible for the NP Secretariat from March 2021 onwards

Code of Ethical Conduct self-assessment: form being revised based on feedback from last time, to be approved by SC and circulated to NPs

Preparation of new FSTP (regranting to members/WGs): procedure to be changed within new project, and regulations will need to be developed by SC Regranting Task Force

Revision of regulations on regranting to NPs to be overseen by members of SC Project Advisory Task Force → regulations likely to remain similar but scope for some changes, therefore a proper conversation needs to be had within the SC on how this NP regranting should work → AZ working on management guidelines which it hoped to adopt at AA on 22 January

Final reporting for 2020 WG regranting projects: 1 project in Jan, 8 in February

COVID policy papers: selection of peer reviewers for policy papers, and recruitment of experts to draft framework paper (summarising all 8 thematic papers)

EaP Summit: planned for March, but may not take place at that time → Forum will nonetheless need to be prepared for this important event (Civil society declaration? Event? Pre-assessment of deliverables?)

February

Finalisation of 2021 advocacy plan: joint discussion on draft plan with SC and interested members, consultation with NPs, adoption by SC

Implementation of WG capacity building which hasn't taken place in January

Revision of Index methodology

Gender Mainstreaming Strategy: first actions under Action Plan

Completion of COVID regranting

Joint capacity building on communication for NP Secretariats: initial session led by Juulia Baer-Bader, further training by external facilitator

Implementation of NP capacity building

Participation in EaP architecture meetings

Final reporting for 2020 WG regranting projects

COVID policy papers: second peer-review, finalisation by 22 February → to be followed by publication and information events

Questions/queries

Perhaps limited knowledge of and communication with NPs from the point of view of EU members (EU representative on SC), how is it possible to receive more information on this? → some pertinent issues to NP regranting to be discussed later in the agenda of the current meeting; also the SC members receive regular updates from NPs during the SC meetings; extra actions and information-sharing in this regard can be discussed.

4. Formation of task forces

The members have expressed their interest for the task forces. *Maksym Koriavets, Natia Kuprashvili, and Yurii Vdovenko* will sign up for the task forces by indicating their interest to join a task force by email before the next SC meeting.

General Strategy Task Force

- Shahla Ismayil
- Tatiana Poshevalova
- Lousineh Hakobyan

Advocacy Plan Task Force

- Shahla Ismayil
- Tatiana Poshevalova
- Irina Sukhiy
- Sofia Strive
- Ruslan Havryliuk
- Adrian Lupusor

Project Advisory Task Force (3 SC members: 1 from NPs, 1 from WGs, 1 from EU) – currently one EU representative too many.

- Sintija Bernava (WG/EU)
- Ana Otilia Nutu (WG/EU)
- Sofia Strive (WG/EU)
- Lousineh Hakobyan

Regranting to Members Task Force

- Goda Neverauskaite
- Tatiana Poshevalova

5. NP support in 2021

To ensure the support to NPs provided as soon as the new grant starts (March 2021) the following actions need to be made:

January

- Survey of NP members to assess operations of NP Secretariats
- Survey results would feed into the process of the appointment of entity that will serve/continue to serve as the NP Secretariat for 2021-2023, with potential NP vote in line with the NPs procedures.

February

- NP Secretariat fill in self-assessment form on implementation of CoEC

- Discuss and elaborate project proposal for March 2021 to December 2023 with a detailed annual plan for 2021 → proposal to be submitted to Forum Secretariat by end of February/beginning of March

Issues pertaining to NP regranting

Accountability to NP boards and other bodies: EaP CSF Secretariat relies on information the NP Secretariats themselves provide → already set up quarterly calls with NP Secretariats. Important to have the proper accountability at the country level; already developed in the previous grant; renewed attention in the new grant → comments and ideas from SC members (especially those involved in work of NPs) are welcome

- AZ: particular situation with being supported via an organisation in GE → board only having limited involvement in project, hence new project management guidelines development; hoping to designate an AZ-based member next year as NP secretariat to have more oversight and a greater connection; grateful for Forum Secretariat's active communication with NP facilitators, and welcomes prospect of more regular meetings; Shahla preparing an annual report on activities and successes; this can be combined with the reporting that is to be provided to the EaP CSF Secretariat by the end of the current cycle of the NP support
- BY: BNP has regulations in place to ensure accountability of its secretariat, reporting during Annual Assembly of BNP and confirmation/approval of reports and expenditures by BNP board
- UA: satisfied with support of NP Secretariat, NP SC wants to continue with IER for the next period
- ARM: In general satisfied with support of NP Secretariat; ANP Statute prescribes accountability of the Secretariat to the Executive Body and the ANP; Secretariat also has a Supervisory Council; need to further improve accountability in practice.

Exchange of information and coordination between NP Secretariats and National Facilitators: no issues for some NPs (we see they are naturally a part of communication and dialogue), but for others the National Facilitators are not participating in quarterly meetings with Forum Secretariat. The EaP CSF Secretariat would encourage an exchange if more participation and information provided to the National Facilitators would be beneficial.

Participation of GONGOs in NPs: in some NPs they are members and influence decisions and actions taken by NPs; they have a chance to get funded via NP regranting. Often they are best placed to operate in restrictive civil society environments like in AZ; also difficult to identify GONGOs, as there are different nuances and 'borderline' cases; need to define clear criteria. We should pay more attention to this matter due to the knock-on effect on the reputation of the Forum.

- AZ: effort to make number of independent organisations more proportionate in recent years, but still difficult to determine which organisations are really independent → not criticising the government is not enough to clearly designate an organisation as a GONGO

Results: difficult to see results from annual reporting in its current form → need to focus on most important results, effectiveness of support, etc.

Weak understanding of the notion of the conflict of interest: some NP Secretariat staff have a limited understanding → joint capacity building to be carried out on this with Forum Secretariat

Responsiveness of NP Secretariats: some NP Secretariats are not very responsive and do not respect the requirements of grants unless reminded → may need to liaise with National Facilitators on how to improve this situation. If NP Secretariats and National Facilitators are both unreachable, an alternative mechanism of communication is needed (NP boards? Forum SC?).

6. Next meeting

Next meeting will take place at the end of January → will be split across several short sessions (~2 hours each)

Adopted on 11 January 2021