



EASTERN PARTNERSHIP Civil Society Forum

UKRAINIAN NATIONAL PLATFORM REPORT 2013

The Ukrainian National Platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum was established on January 29, 2011 at the founding conference in Kyiv, which adopted a memorandum of the platform establishment and elected the steering committee of the platform.

At that time, the national platform became an open site for community organisations (NGOs — non-governmental organizations) and their networks for the discussions, consultations, information activities in the implementation framework of the Eastern Partnership policy.

The National Platform initiated drafting of Comments on Progress Reports on ENP implementation, it also launched consultations on the development of the roadmap Eastern Partnership, as well as the information events and conferences in the framework of the Working Groups of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum.

NGOs members of the National Platform were actively involved in activities of Working Groups, which were aimed to represent the Ukrainian civil society view on achievements and shortcomings of Ukrainian reforms aimed at getting closer to the EU.

Experts representing NGOs-NP members participated in meetings of official panels of the Eastern Partnership, as well as in the international activities within the Eastern Partnership and in the ministerial meetings.

The Steering Committee of the NP is supported by the International Renaissance Foundation, carried out the project in support of the NP working group activities, preparation of a number of statements and positions of Ukrainian NP.

Any NGO the scope of which includes issues of concern to the Eastern Partnership policy can volunteer to be registered.

As of September 2013, 188 NGOs are NP registered members (increase by almost 20% as compared to the late 2012)

Registration form and other information about the national platform is placed on the portal page, «European Space» <http://eu.prostir.ua/themes/EaP.html>.

During the period after the Civil Society Forum in Stockholm (November 2012), Ukrainian NP carried out the following main activities:

EVENTS

A meeting of Working Group 3 "Environment, climate change and energy security" of Ukrainian National Platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum. On February 7, 2013 in Kyiv was held a meeting of the Working Group 3 "Environment, Climate Change and Energy Security" of Ukrainian National Platform of the EaP CSF, organized by the NGO "MAMA-86" with financial support of the European Program of the International Renaissance Foundation. The meeting of WG3 participants - representatives of leading Ukrainian NGOs in the field of environment, climate and energy was aimed to enhance collaboration within this association and dialogue with other stakeholders in the European integration process in the environmental and energy sector. During the meeting WG3 participants were able to learn more about each other's pro-European activities, previous joint work group, its current initiatives and those forms of work which WG3 could be particularly effective. Considering the importance of WG3 involvement in regional and international non-governmental processes, participants also learned about the priorities for the current year WG3 of the Eastern Partnership (WG3of EaP CSF), and enhance of international capabilities of the Ukrainian group which was presented by Coordinator of WG3 of EaP CSF, Chairman of the Coordinating Council of NGO "MAMA-86" Anna Golubovska-Onisimova.

Working Group 1 of the National Platform of Civil Society Forum of the Eastern Partnership held a meeting. On April 6, 2013 WG1 of National platform EaP CSF had a meeting during which the participants discussed position papers on topical issues of Eastern Partnership Roadmap. During the meeting Iryna Bekeshkina (Democratic Initiatives Foundation named after Ilko Kucheriv) presented the results of the survey "Ukrainian Democracy Barometer - 2013", and Iryna Sushko (Initiative "Europe without Barriers") - results of monitoring "Towards visa-free regime with EU: where is Ukraine today? ". According to the latter, Ukraine lacks a number of legislative steps to complete 1st phase of the Action Plan on visa liberalization, particularly in the area of combating corruption and discrimination.

The first meeting of the working group "Social Dialogue" National Platform of the EaP CSF took place. It is assumed that the activities of such a platform will focus on social policy and employment issues of the Eastern Partnership countries and will also involve the ministries of social policy, trade unions, employers and relevant government agencies. Working Group's work will seek to ensure compliance with fundamental workers' rights recognized by the Eastern Partnership countries. Following the meeting, it was decided to hold two panel discussions on "Activities of representatives of social dialogue in the context of work on the signing of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement", "The formation of social dialogue in modern terms: world experience and Ukrainian practice" and National Conference involving scientists and experts "Formation of social dialogue in Ukraine".

Participants of the Working Group 2 discussed the economic integration of Ukraine. On June 12, 2013 at the International Conference "Ukraine-Belarus: new opportunities for the development of cross-border cooperation" in Chernihiv was held the meeting of Working Group 2 "Economic integration and convergence with EU policies" of Ukrainian National Platform of the EaP CSF. At the beginning of the meeting, the participants were informed on the activities of the WG 2 in the first half of 2013. Particular attention was focused on the revision of the position paper of the WG 2 on SMEs in Eastern Partnership, which was presented at the meeting of the Platform on May 14, 2013. The participants believe that the Ukrainian authorities knowingly take negative decision on European integration of Ukraine. However, most participants expressed hope that Ukraine will sign an Association Agreement with the European Union already this year. Thus, besides several aspects of the current WP 2 were considered possible working formats in case of a positive or negative result of signing

the Agreement. Also at the event were presented project concepts of WG 2 for the second half of 2013 and was raised the question of the expediency of forming a positional WG 2 document before the Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius in November 2013.

Problems of volunteering and higher education were discussed at the meeting of the Working Group 4 “Contacts between people”. On June 6, 2013 WG 4 “Contacts between people” of Ukrainian National Platform of the EaP CSF had a meeting during which the participants discussed two themes. The first one was dedicated to youth and volunteers issues and the second one to educational issues. Another issue discussed at the meeting was about plans for further implementation of the project on the recognition of informal education in Ukraine. Participants agreed on the need to hold three public discussions on the meaning of the definition “informal education”, best practices that already exist in Ukraine, as well as recognition which we need at the moment. During the discussion of the volunteerism and youth issues, the main attention was focused on the problematic paragraphs of the Law on volunteering. In fact the law blocked and made impossible activity of projects and programs, which provide participation of foreign volunteers. There is a possibility to change the situation by amending the law. The participants also discussed possible joint actions and agreed on the first steps.

Experts pointed out the disadvantages of anti-corruption policy in Ukraine. On May 15, 2012 Working Group 1 "Democracy, human rights, good governance and stability" of the Ukrainian National Platform the EaP CSF issued a statement regarding the law of Ukrainian Parliament № 2837 "On Amendments to certain legislative acts of Ukraine on implementation of the national anti-corruption policy" from May 14, 2013. Experts emphasized the support of a number of changes in the improvement of existing anti-corruption legislation concerning the refinement and expansion of legal terms "close person" and "conflict of interest", to improve monitoring of conflict of interest, open to the public free access to the data of a single register of persons who committed corruption offenses, establishment of the mechanism to control the accuracy of information on officers' declarations, distribution requirements and restrictions imposed by the Law of Ukraine "On Prevention and Combating Corruption" on local councils and anti-corruption expertise of existing regulations.

A meeting of the Working Group number 4 "Contacts between people" of the National Platform of the EaP CSF. On 6 June was held a meeting of the Working Group 4 "Contacts between people" of the Ukrainian National Platform the EaP CSF, chaired by the head of the WG 4 Andriy Kohut. During the meeting was discussed the WG's work for the past six months, the projects in the framework of the ENPI program initiatives in education and youth areas were presented. Also, the group discussed further activities for 2013-2014 in education, culture, youth and volunteering issues. The meeting provided an opportunity to discuss important issues regarding the implementation of the project "Creation of preconditions for the recognition of non-formal education in Ukraine", to share problems and experiences in volunteer and project activities with representatives of organizations from other Ukraine's regions and to decide the proposals from the WG 4 "Contacts between people" of the Ukrainian National Platform the EaP CSF, which would be presented at Working Group 4 "Contacts between people" Forum on 14 June 2013 in Brussels, Belgium.

Experts have developed a package of amendments to the Social Policy of Ukraine. On July 15, 2013 the Director of the Department of Social Services, Irene Tarabukina was given a package of amendments to the existing legislation in the field of social services, developed by experts of the All-Ukrainian charitable foundation "The Coalition of HIV-Service Organizations" and experts of the Center for Policy Research of the Ministry of Social Policy and Social Sciences of Ukraine. This package includes amendments to the following documents: the Budget Code of Ukraine, Laws of Ukraine "On Social Services", "On social

work with families, children and youth", "On Local State Administrations", "On Local Self-Government", "On Local administrations", "On self-organization". The comprehensive package of proposals for legislative changes was developed according to the suggestions of non-governmental and charitable organizations within the meetings and events held by Coordination Expert Council at the Center for Advanced Social Research during the last six months from December 2012 up to June 2013. The main purpose of these meetings was development of NGOs' common vision of the ultimate goal of reforming the social services system by 2016. Thus, a common vision of non-profit social service providers on the development of social services was developed "de facto" and framed "de jure" in the legislative proposal.

The Steering Committee discussed the monitoring of the Eastern Partnership Roadmap. On June 4, 2013 at the Institute for Euro-Atlantic Cooperation in Kyiv was held a meeting of the Steering Committee of the Ukrainian National Platform of the EaP CSF chaired by the Country Facilitator for Ukraine Oleksandr Sushko. During the meeting were discussed such questions as the selection of members for the fifth international meeting of the EaP CSF in Chisinau, on 4-5 October 2013; the action program of the Ukrainian National Platform for the second half of 2013; the EaP CSF events during Lithuania's presidency in the European Union and preparation of the Annual Conference of the National Platform of CSF. Committee members conducted a recommendation procedure on participants for the fifth annual meeting of the EaP CSF in Chisinau. To the main list were recommended 24 delegations and 22 organizations to the reserve list.

Deputies are urged to support the draft law on anti-discrimination. Consortium of organizations "Europe without Barriers" and the Ukrainian National Platform of EaP CSF of the appealed to the leaders of parliamentary factions to support the draft law № 2342 "On Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of Ukraine on Prevention and discrimination in Ukraine." The adoption of this document is a requirement of the 1st phase of the Visa Liberalization Action Plan (VLAP) that the EU granted Ukraine on November 22, 2010. According to the initiators of the appeal, the bill № 2342 is aimed primarily to ensure human rights and freedoms, in particular the principle of equality. At the same time the document is aimed at implementation in Ukraine of minimum EU standards in the relevant area as a requirement of a visa-free regime for citizens of Ukraine to the EU.

NP Annual Conference. On 16 September - 17 September an annual conference of Ukrainian NP of EaP Civil Society Forum was held in Kyiv The main topic of the event was the future of Association Agreement between Ukraine and the EU, prospects of the Eastern Partnership and the role of civil society in European integration processes.

The conference was opened by National facilitator of the Ukrainian National Platform of the EaP CSF Oleksandr Sushko. Honorary guests of the conference official opening were Ambassador of the European Union to Ukraine Jan Tombiński, Ambassador of Lithuania in Ukraine Petras Vaitiekūnas, Director of the EU Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine Vsevolod Chentsov, Co-chairman of the Parliamentary Assembly EuroNest Borys Tarasyuk and Chairman of the Committee of European integration of Verkhovna Rada Hryhoriy Nemyria. Also the event was attended the representatives of the Presidential Administration, the Committee of European Integration of Verkhovna Rada, mass-media and regional NGOs' representatives and independent experts.

The next day at the plenary session of the conference participants discussed the consolidated position of Ukrainian civil society to the next event on European integration, which will be presented this year at the Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius and forum in Chisinau. The second issue was the plenary session plans and priorities of the Ukrainian National Platform in 2014. Also, in the event were held five thematic working groups meeting Ukrainian national platform of the Civil Society Forum of the Eastern Partnership , in which members of working

groups identified the agenda in key areas of cooperation between Ukraine and the EU in 2014.

Conference re-elected Oleksandr Sushko as a National facilitator for the 2nd year and elected its Steering Committee for the next year.

DOCUMENTS ADOPTED

Appeal of Ukrainian National Platform of Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum

In the appeal members of the Platform demand to ensure transparency of decision making on the issues of strategic importance. Considering the high social significance for future political decisions in the context of the official visit of the President of Ukraine to the Russian Federation, which is planned for the first half of 2013, civic activists propose to launch a broad public dialogue about the content of documents to be signed: in the field of energy cooperation and trade relations. Also they emphasize the inadmissibility of Ukraine's accession to the Customs Union of Russia, Kazakhstan and Belarus as it would mean abandoning of European integration of Ukraine and withdrawal from the commitments already fixed in the initialed Association Agreement between Ukraine and the EU. It's also emphasized the need to establish an effective mechanism for coordination of public authorities for European integration and related reforms, identifying relevant bodies and persons. At the end, the signatories continue to argue for the cooperation of the authorities and civil society, stressing that the National Platform of Eastern Partnership Civil Society is a legitimate public entity, which has effective communication channels with the EU and sufficient institutional and expert potential.

Statement of Working Group 1 "Democracy, human rights, good governance and stability" of Ukrainian National Platform of Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum

concerning the Law of Ukraine № 2837

"On Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of Ukraine on implementation of the state anti-corruption policy" from 14.05.2011

WG 1 participants believe that the proposed in the law mechanism of financial control over the accuracy of information on officers' declarations is inefficient and biased because controllers of the authorized units that will operate within the structure of the same ministries and departments will be entitled to inspect their superiors and colleagues. Instead, experts suggest a specialized anti-corruption institution that will carry out financial control over the accuracy of information on officers' declarations officials and employees and which will not depend on the ministries and departments, as proposed under the bill declined "On the National Anti-Corruption Bureau» (№ 2218 from 02.07.2013). WG 1 experts find it necessary to extend the mechanism of anti-corruption expertise with the active involvement of civil society and the development of clear, understandable and public mechanisms and procedures to promote civil society anti-corruption expertise and transparent examination and consideration of its results. An important element is the widespread practice of corruption expertise of draft legal acts for regional and local levels. In the opinion of WG 1 the mechanism of publication of declarations of officials must be changed in the relevant official web sites, because according to the law, the disclosure of the declarations on the Internet is optional. Alternatively, it is possible disclosure declarations in official publications that don't ensure openness and accessibility and it complicates public participation in activities for preventing and combating corruption.

Statement on the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement

Ukraine is at a crossroad on the eve of the historical moment, which will define its future. The Association Agreement between Ukraine and the EU may be signed in Vilnius at the Eastern Partnership Summit in November this year and it will create the foundation for sustainable democracy and economic development of Ukraine for many years to come.

Recognizing the importance of the historical moment we urge all involved parties to pass whole necessary way for signing, ratification and establishment of effective institutions to ensure its quality implementation. As of today sign of the agreement in Vilnius is far from guaranteed and very little time is left.

At the same time we call on the EU institutions, member-states' governments to demonstrate strategic wisdom, understanding that the signed Association Agreement will provide EU more positive leverage even with the present shortage of reforms in Ukraine. And it will provide Ukrainian society much greater push for reforms and an occasion for the efforts mobilization than delay of agreement signing till better times.

As representatives of civil society organizations united in the Ukrainian national platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum are ready to work on the implementation of the Agreement and to promote common values it is based on.