



## EASTERN PARTNERSHIP Civil Society Forum

### **Steering Committee members:**

#### *Co-Chairs*

#### **Igor KOGUT**

Agency for Legislative Initiatives; Ukrainian School of Political Studies, Ukraine

[kohut@laboratory.kiev.ua](mailto:kohut@laboratory.kiev.ua)

#### **Jeff LOVITT**

PASOS (Policy Association for an Open Society)

[jefflovitt@pasos.org](mailto:jefflovitt@pasos.org)

#### *Eastern Partnership country members*

#### **Gubad Ibadoglu BAYRAMOV**

Economic Research Center, Azerbaijan

[gubad.ibadoglu@gmail.com](mailto:gubad.ibadoglu@gmail.com)

#### **Vugar BAYRAMOV**

Center for Economic and Social Development (CESD),

Azerbaijan

[vugarbayram@yahoo.com](mailto:vugarbayram@yahoo.com)

#### **Yaroslav BEKISH**

"Green Alliance", Belarus

[yaroslav.bel@gmail.com](mailto:yaroslav.bel@gmail.com)

#### **Victor COTRUTA**

Regional Environmental Centre Moldova

[victor.cotruta@rec.md](mailto:victor.cotruta@rec.md)

#### **Manana KOCHLADZE**

Association Green Alternative, Georgia

[mananak@greenalt.org](mailto:mananak@greenalt.org)

#### **Siarhei LISICHONAK**

Assembly of Pro-Democratic NGOs of Belarus

[s.lisichonak@gmail.com](mailto:s.lisichonak@gmail.com)

#### **Seyran MARTIROSYAN**

A.D. Sakharov Armenian Human Rights Centre

[star@gyumri.am](mailto:star@gyumri.am)

#### **Eduard MIHALAS**

National Youth Council of Moldova

[eduard.mihalas@cnrm.md](mailto:eduard.mihalas@cnrm.md)

#### **Ucha NANUASVHILI**

Human Rights Center, Georgia

[uchanania@yahoo.com](mailto:uchanania@yahoo.com)

#### *EU country members*

#### **Andrzej ADAMCZYK**

European Economic and Social Committee/

NSZZ Solidarnosc Trade Union, Poland

[anadamczyk@wp.pl](mailto:anadamczyk@wp.pl)

#### **Krzysztof BOBINSKI**

Unia a Polska Foundation, Poland

[bobinski@it.com.pl](mailto:bobinski@it.com.pl)

#### **Wojciech BORODZICZ-SMOLIŃSKI**

Center for International Relations, Poland

[borodzicz@csm.org.pl](mailto:borodzicz@csm.org.pl)

#### **Bettina BRAND**

Institute for International Cooperation of the German

Adult Education Association

[brand@dvv-international.de](mailto:brand@dvv-international.de)

#### **Amanda LÖVKVIST**

European Network of Political Foundations

(ENOP)/Swedish International Liberal Centre

[amanda.lovkvist@gmail.com](mailto:amanda.lovkvist@gmail.com)

#### **Olga STUZHINSKAYA**

Office for a Democratic Belarus, Belgium

[olga@democraticbelarus.eu](mailto:olga@democraticbelarus.eu)

**Catherine Ashton,  
Vice-President, European Commission,  
and High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, European  
Council  
B - 1049 Brussels, Belgium**

**Štefan Füle  
European Commissioner for Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policy  
B - 1049 Brussels, Belgium**

Prague, 5 March 2012

### ***Clear Benchmarks and Independent Monitoring Should Shape Future EU Support to Partner Governments and Civil Society Actors: Proposals of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum Steering Committee to the Roadmap for the Eastern Partnership***

Dear High Representative, Dear Commissioner,

The Steering Committee of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum (EaP CSF) welcomes the invitation to submit feedback to the concept note on the outline for the roadmap of the Eastern Partnership, and proposes that the roadmap should incorporate a set of clear benchmarks to guide bilateral relations between the EU and the respective Partner countries, and to strengthen the engagement of both the EU and the Partner countries with civil society actors who can take up the role as independent watchdogs, monitoring and evaluating the effective use of resources, and observance and strengthening of democratic reforms, human rights, and the rule of law.

A new level of relations should be established with the EaP Civil Society Forum, including:

- building on, and extending, the **permanent participant status** now achieved for civil society in the intergovernmental thematic platform meetings and expert panels, and continuing funding for the meetings of the Forum, its thematic working groups, and steering committee
- establishment in the Eastern Partner countries of **trilateral fora** for regular consultations with the respective Partner government, the EU delegation, and representatives of the national platforms of the Civil Society Forum to consider, assess, and monitor implementation of, policy developments in relations between the EU and the respective Partner countries, and to hold public consultations to reach out to all sectors of civil society and the wider public

- further development of grant mechanisms through the new neighbourhood civil society facility for **independent watchdog, analysis and monitoring activities** (including monitoring and evaluation of use of ENPI (European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument) and CIB (Comprehensive Institutional Building Programmes) funds allocated by the European Commission to Eastern Partner governments)
- establishment of the **European Endowment for Democracy** to support independent civil society actors in line with the proposals presented by the EEAS and EC in 2011.

The bilateral agreements between the EU and the Eastern Partner countries should be subject to clear, publicly available timetables for each stage in the process - so that civil society can exercise an effective watchdog function of monitoring the procedure of first policymaking, and then policy implementation. Access to policy documents should be made fully public at key stages of the decision-making process to ensure adequate time is provided for feedback from civil society actors and the wider public.

For the whole range of policy areas within each thematic platform, a set of benchmarks and indicators should be set out with the following headings:

(i) Reforms	(ii) Objectives	(iii) Needs assessment to shape EU assistance in (iv)	(iv) Instruments and support	(v) Public accountability mechanisms - policy dialogue with civil society, public hearings	(vi) Monitoring indicators (Quantitative and Qualitative), commissioned from independent experts/civil society watchdogs	(vii) Outcomes for future instruments/ funding - building on "more for more", providing incentives for further progress, and shaping EU financial support to both Partner governments and civil society

The monitoring of benchmarks should then be evaluated and presented in a European Integration Scorecard (building on the work by participants in the Civil Society Forum in producing a European integration index). Qualitative and quantitative indicators should be developed for all six Eastern Partner countries. The results could help shape EU funding decisions, building on the "more for more" principle laid out in the review of the European Neighbourhood Policy in June 2011.

One of the three main joint objectives set out in the concept note for the outline of the roadmap concerns enhanced mobility through progress towards visa-free travel between the EU and the Partner countries. The roadmap should give a high priority to visa-free travel, and as soon as a visa facilitation and readmission agreement is in place (already the case in three Partner countries), the visa fees should be waived, and priority should be given to the introduction of online application procedures for Schengen visas, and for visa-free travel to be introduced as soon as the technical criteria have been met in line with the respective Action Plans.

**Yours sincerely**

*on behalf of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum Steering Committee*



**Jeff Lovitt, co-Chair**