



EASTERN PARTNERSHIP Civil Society Forum

Report on activities of EaP CSF Working Group 4

“Contacts between People” in 2011

After the Civil Society Forum (CSF) meeting in Berlin the co-coordinators have been working together only for about six months. Notwithstanding this comparatively short period, this was a very good experience, and I have to express my deepest appreciation for Ben Rattenbury for his help and support.

During the SCF meeting in Berlin a set of recommendations were proposed, the first one of which specifically noted: “Build a stronger link between the EaP Platform 4 and Working Group 4 (WG4) by enhancing on-going and regular communication, accessibility to information and feedback”. Recommendation has been duly followed, as very good working relations were established between the Chairman of Platform 4 Mr. Jordi Curell, and the coordinators of the WG4. An excellent evidence of the cooperation between the mentioned parties was the invitations to the WG4 to participate in the works of Platform 4 on May 5 and October 27. After both meetings all the information from the events was shared with the WG4 members. It is worth mentioning that the participants of the Civil Society Forum from previous years were also included in the communication, which allowed widening the circle of information distribution. It is also very important to note that the Chairman of Platform 4 Mr. Jordi Curell accepted the invitation to participate in the working meeting of the WG4 on September 16, and he personally shared the information on the progress of the Platform activities.

Another achievement of the past year is the initiative to establish 2 *sub-groups on Culture and Voluntarism/Youth*. There is a good chance that the 3rd *sub-group on Education and Research* will also eventually become a reality, and I hope that at the meeting in Poznan we will be able to finalize the discussions over this issue. These developments are a real proof that the WG4 is moving from a general list of recommendations towards more practical activities in the areas of interest for the WG4. The co-chairs of the groups are already in communication with people that have expressed their interest for participation in particular subgroups.

A third achievement I would like to highlight was the prompt process of initiation and [appeal letter in defense of Ales Bialacki](#). It is truly a noteworthy achievement to crown a team work, as within a very short time in August, which is the prime vacation time, all the WG4 members were able to join together to express their solidarity and initiate an appeal letter addressed to Commissioner Fule, who in [his turn expressed his full support to the cause and promised to use all available mechanisms to establish justice for Mr. Bialacki](#).

On September 16 the working meeting of WG4 took place. The participants of CSF in Berlin, as well as 10 new participants of CSF from Brussels were present at the meeting in Brussels. One of the critical achievements of the meeting was the networking component, when about 15 EU Networks and Brussels-based EU NGOs attended the event and a link between CSF and major European NGOs was established. Thus, there is hope that the EU NGOs and networks will become more active in participation in the CSF activities in future.

The Co-ordinators for the group are:

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