

## Minutes of the Steering Committee (SC) Meeting

23 September 2015, Tbilisi

**In attendance:** Steering Committee members - Krzysztof Bobinski, Andrei Yahorau, Lasha Tughushi, Plamena Borisova, Oleg Shatberashvili, Hovsep Khurshudyan, Mikayel Hovhanisyan, Sabit Bagirov

**Absent:** Ion Guzun, Viktor Taran, Daiva Kvedaraite

Iryna Sushko from the Ukrainian National Platform was replacing Viktor Taran; Victoria Bucataru was replacing Ion Guzun.

Secretariat: Natalia Yerashevich (ex officio member of the SC) and Darya Mustafayeva.

## Decisions and summary of the discussion

During a half-day meeting the SC has taken the following decisions:

### 1. Procedure for re-election of National Platform Coordinators

It was agreed by the members of the SC to add to the regulations of the Forum that the representatives of National Platforms to the Steering Committee (National Facilitators) can be re-elected between the annual meetings by the delegates of the respective annual meeting if the National Facilitator cannot perform his/her duties or the National Platform members find the work of the National Facilitator unsatisfactory. The Working Groups can also re-elect their Working Group Coordinator at the annual Working Group meeting. This change will be offered for voting to the general assembly.

### 2. Forum's advocacy in EU member states

The need to conduct advocacy in the EU members states was emphasised and the decision to hold more SC meetings in 2016 in the EU MSs was taken. Efforts will be made to meet with relevant EU CSOs during these meetings.

### 3. The EaP CSF annual meeting in Kyiv

The organisation of the annual meeting to take place on 20-21 November was discussed. The ideas for interactive, more targeted sessions initiated by the participants were discussed. Potential speakers for the panel sessions have been identified.

### 4. Funding

The difficult **funding situation of the National Platforms** was discussed, as only one (the Armenian NP) of the 6 is currently being supported by the EU Delegation. All the others have no funding for their activities. It was decided to find ways to have funding available for NPs.

## 5. Short updates from National Platforms

**Armenian NP** has produced a statement reacting to Government's Initiative for Constitutional Reforms. The statement can be found here <http://eap-csf.eu/en/news-events/news/armenian-national-platform-issues-statement-on-the-initiative-for-constitutional-reforms/> The issue of secrecy of the text of the new agreement negotiated by the EU and Armenia was brought. This does not allow the civil society to meaningfully participate in the process and perform its watchdog function.

**Azerbaijani NP** continues to find itself in a very difficult operating environment. In response to the EP resolution on Azerbaijan, the Azeri authorities have threatened to step out of EURONEST and EaP. No matter what decisions are taken by the authorities, the Azeri civil society will stay in the EaP CSF.

**Belarusian NP** in the light of recent revival of EU-Belarus relations produced a statement on its vision for the future EU-Belarus cooperation. The text can be found here <http://eap-csf.eu/en/news-events/news/belarusian-national-platform-expresses-position-on-possible-resumption-of-eu-belarus-cooperation/> It was agreed at the meeting to held a debate on the EU-Belarus relations in the European Parliament. The report from the event can be found here <http://eap-csf.eu/en/news-events/news/eu-belarus-relations-a-new-round-of-engagement-in-the-new-geopolitical-situation/>

Bologna process was identified as a promising area for introducing changes into the Belarusian system of higher education.

**For Georgian NP** visa liberalisation remains high on the agenda. Several discussions were organised with the Government and the Parliament on the VLAP implementation.

**Moldovan NP** representative drew attention to the political crisis and development of the protest actions, as well as reported on the situation with the bilateral platforms under the Association Agreement.

**Ukrainian NP representative** drew attention to the reforms conducted in the country, including public administration, judicial and anti-corruption reforms and updated on the actions of the NP in preparation for the annual meeting.

**Joint activities of National Platforms:** On 23-25 September more than 60 representatives of 6 National Platforms took part the EaP CSF seminar on the National Platforms' participation in Association Agreements (AAs)/Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) implementation. More info here <http://eap-csf.eu/en/news-events/news/association-agreements-and-dcfta-lessons-learnt-and-ways-ahead/>

**6. Next SC meeting** will be held on 19 November in Kyiv.

***Adopted on 26 October 2015***