

## ANNUAL ACTIVITIES REPORT 2015

### UKRAINIAN NATIONAL PLATFORM

220 NGOs of UNP focused on visa liberalization, protection of free media, and security issues. Trying to implement reforms and keep Ukraine in a path of positive transformation, Ukrainian civil society sector bears responsibility of the current and future success of the country.



In March 2015, the European Commission announced joint consultations on the European Neighbourhood Policy review, by publishing a consultative document "Towards a New European Neighbourhood Policy".

The National Platform in other organisations conducted the event to respond to the consultation. During the event participants exchanged their expert views on the future of the Eastern Partnership, shared

expectations of updating and improvement of its instruments of AA implementation, it was also noted about the launch of a new practice of interaction between the civil society and authorities in preparation of strategic for our country policy initiatives.

[More detailed information](#)

### SECURITY DIMENSION OF THE EAP POLICY – TO BE OR NOT TO BE

The Eastern Partnership region, and in particular Ukraine, is currently at the centre of the conflict challenging the established global order. Since 2014 Russia has openly acted as aggressor against Ukraine by annexing the Crimea and waging the hybrid war in Eastern Ukraine as a response to Ukraine's European choice and decision to sign the Association Agreement. As a result of the conflict escalation, more than 1 million Ukrainian citizens have been internally displaced and more than 5 thousand people have been killed. European security system was incapable to react adequately to the full-scale military conflict in Ukraine. So far



EU sanctions are not efficient enough for Russia to take steps on scaling down the conflict, let alone to stop the aggressor.

Since the launch of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) in 2009, the Eastern Neighbours have been experiencing pressure by the Russian Federation challenging the closer cooperation of the EaP countries with the EU. Georgia, as a result of Russian aggression lost the control over Georgian regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Moldova feels the pressure due to the Russian influence on Transnistrian government, economic and trade wars are announced and conducted openly. Azerbaijan and Armenia are in a long-term territorial conflict frozen in its current status due to the Russian leverage. Belarus also continuously experiences economic pressure from Russia.

The main aim of the conference organised by the UNP and the EaP CSF was to conduct a wide-ranging expert discussion on strengthening the security dimension of EaP policy covering the spectrum of possible soft and hard means.

### Specific proposals - EaP Security Statement

#### Security Statement

## **TO EU AND BACK – RIGA SUMMIT EXPECTATIONS, VISIONS AND REALITIES**

EaP CSF members met DG NEAR Director-General Christian Danielsson to discuss civil society role in ENP review in the margins of EaP Civil Society Conference. European perspective, visa liberalisation, security, mobility and migration, as well as EU financial support to EaP countries were discussed during the meeting.

Particularly, UA NP representatives reminded about extremely challenging situation on the East of Ukraine and pressed on setting security dimension within annual EaP Forum.

As Christian Danielsson mentioned, EU perspective must be proved not only by “success stories”, but also in the narrative of values. Ukraine proves it by giving thousands of lives in a war for our right to choose geopolitical vector.



## UKRAINIAN ACTIVISTS SUBMITTED APPLICATION FOR EU MEMBERSHIP AT EASTERN PARTNERSHIP CIVIL SOCIETY CONFERENCE

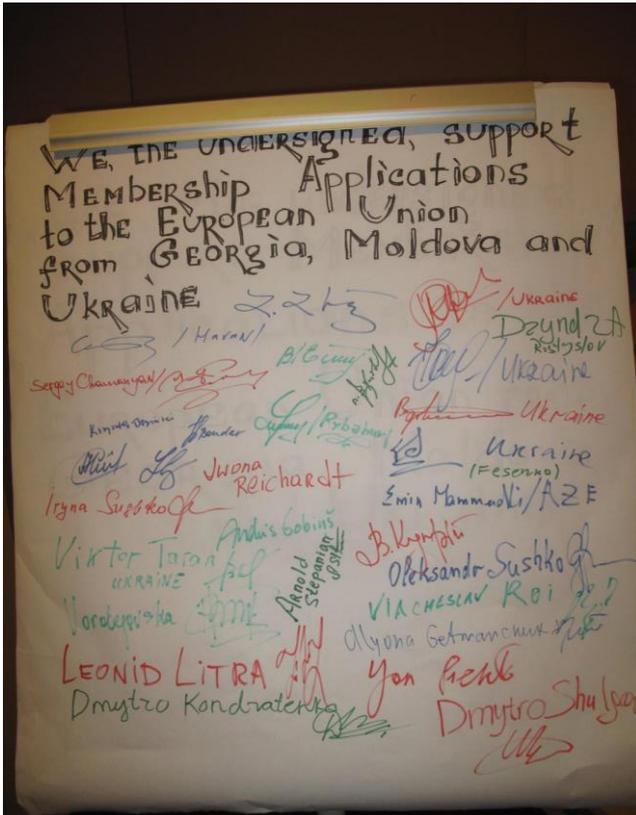
On 21 May 2015, representatives of Ukrainian, Georgian, and Moldovan civil society organizations submitted symbolic applications for EU membership prior to the Eastern Partnership Summit in Riga, Latvia. The applications were officially presented to Johannes Hahn, the Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy and Edgars Rinkēvičs, Latvian Foreign Minister and representative of the EU Presidency in the Council of the European Union.

Mr. Hahn and Mr. Rinkēvičs received posters with signatures of activists backing the “application,” which Mr. Hahn is willing to take to Brussels together with the formal document.

The authors of the initiative reminded that 1,5 years ago at the previous Civil Society Forum in Vilnius despite the official position of former Ukrainian President Yanukovich they initiated a public signing of the Ukraine-EU Association Agreement. It was precisely the delay in the signing of the Association agreement that sparked the beginning of Euromaidan protests in Kyiv, Ukraine in November 2013 and four months later led to the ousting of Yanukovich. At present, the Ukraine-EU Association Agreement is being ratified by EU member states.



*The submitted application for the membership in the European Union.*



[Full text of the Application](#)



**EaP CSF organised** a demonstration outside of the National Library of Latvia where Riga Summit took place. Protesters urged the Heads of States and Governments to mention the right



of EaP to apply for the EU Membership, to remind about visa liberalisation and Crimea annexation.

The campaign has been organized by CSF representatives from Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine.

## RESOLUTIONS AND STATEMENTS ADOPTED BY THE UKRAINIAN NATIONAL PLATFORM IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE CURRENT WORKING PERIOD



### ON VISA LIBERALIZATION FOR UKRAINE AND GEORGIA

**The Steering Committee (SC) of the Civil Society Forum (CSF) of the Eastern Partnership strongly supports calls by the Visa-free Europe Coalition and the CSF visa sub group for a speedy conclusion of the visa liberalization process by the European Union in respect of Georgia and Ukraine. The SC urges the forthcoming Eastern Partnership Summit in Riga to propose a visa free regime**

**for these countries from January 1, 2016**

A visa-free regime will facilitate travel to the EU by citizens of these two countries enabling them to see for themselves the false nature of anti EU propaganda and to enhance business ties with the EU. Visa liberalisation is the most visible sign of European integration for Georgia and Ukraine. It will also be a tangible success for the Eastern Partnership programme and an important argument for these countries to stay on the pro-European path.

In order to receive a visa-free regime, both Georgia and Ukraine, like Moldova, which already has visa abolition, have had to implement a number of systemic reforms, making their countries safer, better governed and closer to the EU in many areas. Measures for tackling corruption, discrimination, trafficking in human beings have been introduced. Most of all, modern and efficient border and migration management systems have been elaborated, reducing the risk of unwelcome migration from Georgia and Ukraine. Both countries have fulfilled their obligations under visa liberalisation action plans and are now ready for the lifting of visa requirements. The conflict in Eastern Ukraine should not be considered an obstacle as the reforms already put in place by Ukraine have contributed to the resolution of many of the country's security problems

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The example of Moldova, which brought in similar reforms and where since 28<sup>th</sup> April 2014 its citizens have enjoyed visa-free travel shows that visa liberalisation in no way exacerbates migration problems.

It is time for the EU to act and express its solidarity with these two partner countries under threat from Russia, by waiving visa requirements for them. The legal procedures needed to achieve this should be accelerated and the respective decisions should be made at the Eastern Partnership Summit in Riga. These should be followed by a European Council vote at the earliest possible opportunity.

## **EASTERN PARTNERSHIP CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM UKRAINIAN NATIONAL PLATFORM STATEMENT ON RECOGNIZING THE EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE FOR THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP STATES**

Since gaining independence, the Eastern partnership countries have gone a long, complicated and challenging way. The last achievement on this way has been the Association Agreement with EU signed by Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. These Agreements including arrangements on a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area represent in fact the plan of modernization of these countries according to the European model and practically bringing them closer to their ultimate aim to become members of the European Union.

We realize that there still is a long and challenging way ahead that implies carrying out important reforms in all spheres of public life. We underline that people in our countries, and in some cases, through national referendums, made a firm choice to become the EU members – the choice, which does not have any reasonable alternative.

The latest events in Ukraine, and before that, the Russian aggression towards Georgia in August 2008 make an impression that these countries, in terms of the declared European perspective turn out to be hostages of the situation, built by the territorial problems and frozen conflicts resulted from the external aggression; and we think this situation stimulates the Russian aggression further.

The Russian Federation takes advantage from the mentioned status quo and by launching an aggressive informational campaign tries to strengthen the belief among the populations of Eastern Partnership countries that we do not have any chance to join EU, which makes the integration with Russia the only realistic option left.

We underline that we, the member organizations of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum Georgian National Platform are waiting for the clear message from the members of the Riga Summit confirming that notwithstanding aggression waged against our countries, our European perspective is universally recognized and as European states, we cannot be deprived the right to become the full-fledged members of the unified Europe.

We call on the European Union and its member states to explicitly recognize at the Riga Summit the European perspective for Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine!

[Full text of Joint AA-countries Statement](#)

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## STEERING COMMITTEE OF THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM SUPPORTED THE STATEMENT TO PREVENT POLITICAL PRESSURE ON THE CHIEF OMBUDSMAN IN UKRAINE

The Commissioner`s annual report, created in close cooperation with Ukrainian community and international organizations, is about numerous instances of gross violations against human rights last year, and draws attention of society and parliamentarians to the number of legal acts of government, adopted last year, or is inconsistent with international standards of human rights, or significantly restricts the rights and freedoms, as repeatedly emphasized in the reports of international organizations, including the records of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

It should be noted that this is not the first attempt to press the independent position of the Ombudsman Office. So in the last convocation of the Parliament already registered a similar draft resolution, which caused a wave of outrage from the human rights community. Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights, realizing the importance of ensuring the independence of national human rights institutions, decided to reject the draft resolution "On recognition as the one without legal force, the Resolution of 24 April, 2012" On appointment of V. Lutkovska Commissioner BP Human Rights "(№4231)".

## UNP MAIN EVENTS: LEARN AND INVESTIGATE, INFORM AND TEACH

### Eastern Partnership School in Ukraine: visions, missions, values

On March 12-14, a remarkable event took place in the framework of Ukrainian National Platform activity- Eastern Partnership School, organized by Ukrainian National Platform of the EaP Civil Society Forum in conjunction with the Ukrainian School of Political Studies, with the support of the European Commission and International Fund "Renaissance". The **main aim** of this School was to increase the awareness of project participants on policy features pursued by the Eastern Partnership, its goals, objectives and instruments. During three days, our experts executed workshops about the joint prospects for Ukraine in the EU and the role of Ukrainian civil society.



CS activists, UNP NGO representatives and working groups` members from all regions of Ukraine took part in this training course.

In results, Eastern Partnership School participants outlined the main vision of the Eastern Partnership, in particular, in compliance with new social and international challenges, transformation of the role of national platforms in terms of control over the implementation of the Association Agreement. Also, the following priorities on development of bilateral cooperation Ukraine – EU have been outlined:

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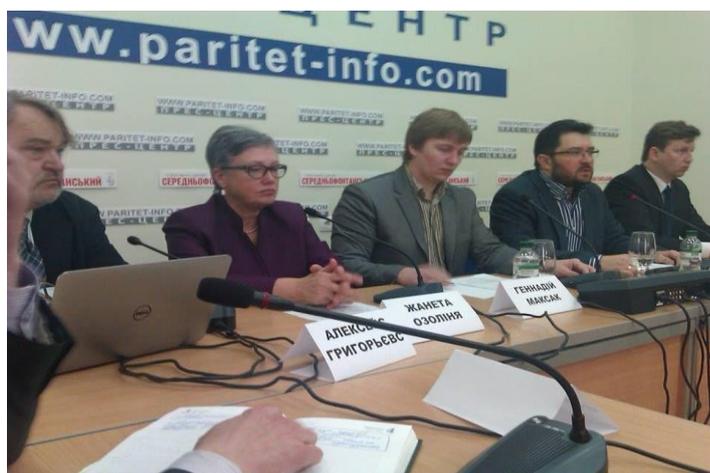


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- Security
- Energy
- Reform of public administration
- Visa liberalization

Thus, civil society day by day becomes more inclusive and effective in solving social, national and international issues.

## SERIES OF ROUND TABLES IN REGIONS OF UKRAINE IN ORDER TO PROMOTE EAP



Ukrainian National Platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum, with the support of partner organizations, conducted a number of expert meetings in Kharkiv and Odessa cities - open round tables "Ukraine towards European integration: the role of civil society".

Project purpose: to highlight the urgent challenges facing by civil society in narrative of Ukraine's

European integration, defining the role of civil society organizations, including the Eastern Partnership, to overcome the social crisis in terms of external aggression.

To participation in these events were invited: representatives of the European Union to Ukraine, Ambassador of the Republic of Latvia in Ukraine Arhita Daudze, representatives of AA countries Embassies, leaders of the Eastern Partnership in Ukraine, experts on implementation of democratic standards and priority policies in accordance with the Association Agreement.

### Video

## WG1

**The Working Group №1 (WG 1) "Democracy, human rights, good governance and stability" has identified a list of priority vectors in 2015.**



As the members of WG1 mentioned, current realities in Ukraine encourage us to take a very active and principled position on human rights, including civil society dialogue with the government, constructive and expert participation of civil society in the process of reformation of our country.



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WG1 principle priorities:

- Association Agreement - a new format of relations between Ukraine and the EU; the strategic benchmark systematic socio-economic reforms in Ukraine.
- Ensuring human rights and legal capacity
- Defending freedom of expression and belief
- Reforming the sector of management in Education
- Updating content and role of vocational education
- Democratic control of the armed forces and security structures in Ukraine

As the WG1 coordinator Iryna Sushko mentioned, "areas of work are outlined above require the systematic implementation, representation in all regions of Ukraine and at all levels. Only under these circumstances we will be able to implement real changes in our society, revive it and give the impetus to the further development!"

### WG3

**Within the framework of the Working Group №3 "Environment, climate change and energy security" an investigation of the situation in the energy market of Ukraine and analysis policies of the European Union's energy security.**

2-8 March 2015

In this issue:

- How Western countries are moving their policy of sanctions against Russia. What are the sanctions and for whom weakened the EU;
- Why prices for gas on the European market are falling;
- How we see the gas preparation for winter in Ukraine and in EU and what they agreed at a meeting with Russia;
- How tariffs on gas and heating for the population in Ukraine have been changed and why;
- What policies are leading by Ukrainian regulator for "green" tariffs and how it perceives the industry;
- What reforms Ukrainian Government is preparing on gas and electricity markets;
- How has been changed the rate of rent for the use of Earth to gas distributors and gas in Ukraine and how business will react;
- What does the Ministry of Energy do to address issues with the supplying of electricity and coal. What reforms are prepared in coal industry;
- What standoff continues on the Ukrainian oil and oil products market

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## WG4

### Report of the WG4 meeting



On March 12, 2015 WG4 meeting has been held, which was attended by 9 representatives of NGO WG4 members. The current issues of WG4, EaP CSF priorities and plans were on agenda:

- Informal studying and mobility
- Strengthening the role of culture in the awareness of identity and conflict resolution
- Increasing the level of media literacy and promote the image of Ukraine
- Promotion of Civic Education

## WG5

### Meeting of the Working Group 5 "Social and labor policy, social dialogue" Ukrainian National Platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum

Within the WG5 meeting the working plan for 2015, ways and means to popularize the Eastern Partnership Forum in Ukraine have been discussed.

Under defined priorities, WG5 members agreed on following:

- creation of the Expert Council in the framework of Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine for Social and Labour Policy;
- ensuring participation in the meetings of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine for non-governmental organizations and, if it is based on industry issues, the presence of representatives of industry organizations, associations;
- ensuring an open and transparent discussion of the draft Labour Code of Ukraine with the participation of the civil society;
- reforming the system of social security and the social dialogue similar to the model of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESS): trade unions, employers, NGOs;

By decision of the WP 5 it is scheduled to execute the Expert roundtable "The goal, objectives and tasks of social dialogue: world practice and Ukrainian realities".

