

ANNUAL ACTIVITIES REPORT 2015

WORKING GROUP 4 CONTACTS BETWEEN PEOPLE

Brief overview situation in the 6 Eastern Partnership countries in the field of Education, Culture, Youth and Seniors in 2014-2015

The 2014-2015 was a year of progress in the integration of the majority of EaP countries in the European cultural and educational space. The Association Agreements with the EU were signed and ratified by Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova, economic cooperation was strengthening between these countries and the EU, significant progress was achieved in the visa liberalization regime between these three EaP countries as well as Armenia from one side and Schengen countries from the other, including the cancellation of the visa regime between Moldova and the EU in April 28, 2014.

On February 24 Georgia, on March 18 Moldova joined the EU programme Creative Europe, which made opened new opportunities for Georgia's and Moldova's artists, and provided a boost to the creative economy. Ukraine plans to sign the agreement to join the EU Creative Europe Programme around November 18-19 this year, when the European Commissioner for Education Tibor Navracsics will visit Ukraine. The Programme has a total budget of €1.46 billion over 6 years (2014-2020). Creative Europe aims to support European culture, audio-visual, performing and visual arts, publishing, film, television, music, interdisciplinary arts, cultural heritage and the videogame industry.

On May 14th, 2015, Belarus formally joined the Bologna Process and the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). The decision was made at the Yerevan Conference of Education Ministers of the EHEA and the Bologna Policy Forum. Nevertheless, now, Belarus must fulfill a number of obligations that are stipulated in the specially designed road map and which deals with the issues of academic freedom, student self-government, etc.

All the above became a good precondition for the accelerated rise in contacts between people of the EU and EaP countries, including in the sphere of culture, education, youth exchanges and contacts between peoples.

On the other hand, the last two years were a tragic time of war and bloodshed and humanitarian disasters on the territory of three of the 6 EaP countries, as well as the regions directly adjacent to the EU and EaP countries, i.e. Syria and Turkey. These were the years of tragedy for millions of

people which have resulted in enormous flows of refugees and internally displaced persons. Thus, due to the ongoing Russian aggression in Ukraine, hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian citizens were forced to leave their homes in the Donbass and Crimea. The war caused a collapse in all spheres, including in education and in the cultural life of the population. Moreover, the continuing skirmishes on the borders of Armenia and Azerbaijan, which destabilize the situation in nearby settlements on both sides of the border, are a cause for concern.

ANNUAL WORKING GROUP MEETING

June 16-17, 2015

On June 16-17th Working Group 4 “Contacts between People” with support of the Secretariat organized the conference “Communicating the Benefits of the Eastern Partnership: Opportunities for Policies and Instruments of the People-to-People Dimension” in Brussels. The event aimed at exploring the communication aspects of the Eastern Partnership and included the exchange with policy makers, capacity building and advocacy components.

The meeting brought together 40 working group participants and EU officials from the European Commission and EU organisations (European Seniors Union, Age Platform Europe, European Association for the Education of Adults).

The discussion with EU policy makers from EEAS (European External Action Service), DG NEAR (Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations) and DG EAC (Education and Culture) focuses on developing the communication agenda and establishing its local ownership from the perspective of the people-to-people dimension.

The coordinators from the National Platforms provide an update on national policies and projects, as well as the current actions within the EaP Platform 4 on contacts between people. The working group members shared information about project initiatives and identified common priorities until the Annual Assembly to be held in Kyiv on 20-21 November. The thematic sub-groups on culture, education, youth and contacts between seniors discussed the development of regional perspectives and joint support initiatives.

The objectives of the meeting were to:

- Provide an update on policies and projects/actions happening in EaP on Platform 4 areas;
- Encourage the development of regional perspectives and joint support initiatives;
- Explore the ownership and communication aspects of the EaP from the perspective of the people-to-people dimension;
- Share project initiatives and identify common actions until the Annual Assembly.

Full report of the Conference can be seen [here](#).

December 25, 2014

In accordance with the decision made during the meeting of the EaP CSF WG4 in Batumi in November 2014, coordinator of WG4 created a special platform for communication between members of the group as a Google-group. There is constant exchange of information, including documents and opportunities at this platform. Thanks to the active involvement of new organizations by the WG4 coordinator, the number of participants in the Google-group increased from December 2014 by 58 persons, reaching 163 in October 2015. Also the number of applications for participation in the Civil Society Forum in Kiev increased in comparing with 2014, including NGOs from the EU.

WG4 AND ITS PARTICIPATION IN THEMATIC PLATFORMS AND PANEL MEETINGS

November 13, 2015

The coordinator of the WG4, using suggestions received from WG4 members, prepared a consolidated input of the EaP CSF WG4 to the EaP Platform 4 Work Program mid-term review, which was sent to the Platform 4 chairman Adam Tyson by request.

September 2015

The coordinator of the WG4 was invited by the leadership of the European Union and Eastern Partnership "Culture and Creativity" joint programme to nominate the representatives of the EaP 6 countries for membership in the Programme's Steering Committee. After consultation with the coordinator of the WG4 sub-group Culture Ihor Savchak, the WG4 coordinator presented to the "Culture and Creativity" programme 6 candidates from all EaP countries.

June 14-15, 2015

WG4 coordinator Hovsep Khurshudyan and WG4 Culture sub-group coordinator Ihor Savchak participated at the EaP Intergovernmental Platform 4 meeting.

- They met with the new head and the other leaders of the Platform 4. Hovsep Khurshudyan promoted the idea of increasing the transparency of the Platform's work through the organization of an online broadcasting of the Platform's meetings via the Internet.
- WG4 coordinator proposed cooperation between the working groups and national platforms of the EaP CSF on the one hand and Platform 4 and European Commission structures - on the other in lobbying and advocacy efforts in favour of the EaP countries joining various European conventions and programs and their practical implementation and enforcement.

December 4-5, 2014

WG4 coordinator participated in the EaP Intergovernmental Platform 4 annual meeting.

For the second year the coordinators of the WG4 of the EaP CSF are given the opportunity to participate in a meeting of Platform 4. Various projects that are carried out first of all by the state institutions of the EaP 6 countries were discussed at the meeting. But there is a special role given to civil society in those countries, as the controlling and monitoring institute. Another such meeting was held in Brussels on December 4-5. WG4 coordinator Hovsep Khurshudyan was invited to the meeting. After the establishment of appropriate contacts with some of the leaders / officials of the Platform of the European Commission, Hovsep Khurshudyan a few weeks after the meeting turned to them with a formal proposal for closer cooperation on the issue of examination of policy in areas corresponding to the thematic sub-group - youth, education, culture, and Seniors. In particular, on behalf of WG4 group he asked to contribute to raising funds for the involvement of representatives of the subgroups in the process of identifying and examination of the policies to the 6 EaP countries. He also proposed to the Platform's leadership to organize a live broadcast of the Platform 4 next meeting, which will enable civil society representatives from the EaP and Grassroots organizations become more aware of the priorities of the Platform, the reporting process and the formation of policy in the relevant departments of their countries present at the meeting of the Platform.

At the beginning of December 2014 the Working Group 4 was given an opportunity to delegate a representative of the group to the conference in Tbilisi on secondary education. After consultations with the two co-coordinators of the Education sub-group, WG4 coordinator Hovsep Khurshudyan nominated for this trip co-coordinator of the sub-group Oksana Polivchak.

WORKING GROUP 4 COUNCIL

May 20-21, 2015

EaP CSF WG4 Council members took part in the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Conference held in parallel with the EaP Summit in Riga.

March 23, 2015

Skype-conference of the Working Group 4 Council took place. During the Conference Economic Integration & Convergence with EU Policies was discussed.

The first part of the meeting was focused on brainstorming and planning the actions, project ideas and contributions of and expectations from WG4 in 2015. The policy and advocacy framework for 2015 was also presented.

In the second part of the meeting the brainstorming contribution from WG4 to the ENP Review and Riga Summit Identifying was held.

In the third part of the meeting the regranting concept for WG4 in 2015 was discussed, the regranting proposal and procedures were clarified.

By the next point WG4 Priorities and Actions in 2015 were discussed, drawing on National Platform and the EaP CSF. Also areas of action (subgroups and projects), results and advocacy needs and possible actions were identified.

At the end of the Skype-conference, WG4 meeting and expected outcomes were planned, as well as the participation of WG4 in EaP Platform 4 and related panels, seminars and events was discussed.

WG4 ADVOCACY ACTIVITIES

November 2-3, 2015

During the Black Sea NGO Forum, which Hovsep Khurshudyan participated in, he met with Romanian NGDO Platform (FOND) President Natalia Budescu and board member Shtefan Cibian, who are organisers of the Black Sea NGO Forum, as well as with Justin Kilculen, Co-Chair of the CSO Partnership - for Development Effectiveness (CPDE), to discuss possible way of cooperation between EaP CSF and those organisations, establishment of synergy of the mutual efforts in the development of civil society in both EaP and Black Sea regions.

July 3-5, 2015

As a result of the established cooperation with the European Seniors Union (ESU), and with the active participation of the WG4 Seniors sub-group's coordinator Tatiana Zelko, representatives of the Belarusian and Armenian Seniors organizations as well as the coordinator of the WG4 at the invitation of ESU leadership took part in the annual meeting of the ESU in Vienna.

The possibility of cooperation between ESU and EaP countries seniors' organizations was discussed.

March 23, 2015

WG4 coordinator accompanied by other WG4 representatives met with Tim Vicker, expert of the Swedish “SKL International” program, who conducted research for a project funded by the Swedish SIDA organization. Under the project a series of interviews were conducted with members of EaP Civil Society Forum.

March 17-18, 2015

On March 16 within the framework of the Ordinary Session of the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly under the auspices of Euronest PA Co-Presidents Heidi Hautala and Boris Tarasyuk a joint discussion of the Euronest PA and representatives of EaP CSF was held with the cooperation of the Open Society Foundations, the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum and the European Foundation of Democracy. The representatives of civil society of the EaP Region and the MPs of partner countries discussed the achievements and challenges of the Eastern Partnership. The rapporteurs touched upon the new strategic situation in the region, the aspirations of some



countries, the successes and failures recorded in the advancement of democratic reforms. They also referred to the European Neighbourhood Policy and EU regional policy, the recommendations and views of the representatives of the civil society on the revision of its instruments.

Member of the EaP CSF Steering Committee and WG4 coordinator Hovsep Khurshudyan participated in the meeting among other members of SC of the Forum.

Hovsep Khurshudyan, presented the new publication of the European Integration Index for the EaP countries that measures the annual trajectory of the EaP countries towards European integration. He highlighted how Armenia has lost track in the reform process, especially after having joined the Eurasian Economic Union. Since then, many good initiatives have been left unfinished. Khurshudyan then presented the situation on Human rights and Democracy in Armenia. In other session he addressed a few questions to the Minister of Culture of the Republic of Armenia, criticizing the state institutions for their inactivity in the conservation of cultural heritage.

January 15, 2015

WG4 coordinator sent a formal proposal to the leaders of the Ministerial Platform 4 to include the thematic area "Seniors / elderly people problems" in the agenda of the upcoming meetings of the Platform 4. The problem is that the EaP countries have no relevant state agencies that would be dealing with the problems of elderly people in terms of not only social security and services, but in terms of the organization of their cultural activities, recreation, retraining and additional training.

On behalf of WG4, the coordinator of the group contacted to the biggest senior network organizations in Europe with a proposal for cooperation and joint development of a strategy for the development of the seniors' organizations both in EaP countries in general and WG4 members particularly.

WG4 CAPACITY-BUILDING ACTIVITIES

September 23, 2015

Taking into consideration, that we are due to hold a WG4 Council meeting in April not in Brussels but in on-line mode, thus saving some funds that the Secretariat has promised to spend on the needs of WG4, WG4 coordinator requested the Secretariat to organize an additional working day with Capacity Building sessions immediately after the Forum in Kiev, especially for Forum delegates-members of WG4 with the following sessions:

1. Civil / public control over public expenditure of the EaP 6 countries in the fields of culture, education, youth and pensioners, and
2. Capacity building in writing grants.

The Secretariat confirmed the organization of additional sessions for members of WG4 on 22 November 2015.

WG4 PRIORITIES FOR SMALL PROJECTS

February 28, 2015

Suggestions to the Steering Committee and Secretariat of the Forum on regranting priorities and other issues sent by the Coordinator of WG4. The full text of the suggestions can be seen in Annex1.

Provisional List of Selected Projects and Lead Organisations from Working Group 4

19 June 2015

In the framework of the **re-granting scheme** the EaP CSF Secretariat received **41 proposals, out of which 32 passed the eligibility screening**. The majority of the proposals were submitted under the priorities of the **Working Group 1** “Democracy, Human Rights, Good Governance & Stability” and **Working Group 4** “Contacts between People”.

1. Elaboration of concepts and roadmaps for national cultural policies in Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, and Georgia (**Center for Cultural Management**, Ukraine) ;
2. Monitoring of public participation in higher education governance in EaP countries (Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova) (**Agency for social and political expertise/Belarusian Independent Bologna Committee** (Lithuania, Belarus)) ;
3. Closer Cooperation between EaP countries on ensuring accessibility to credit mobility (**Institute for Public Policy**, Moldova) ;
4. Youth Index (**National Youth Council of Moldova (CNTM)**, Moldova).

STATEMENTS

November 7, 2015

Coordinator of the WG4 initiated the adoption by EaP CSF Armenian National Platform Statement on the necessity of Armenia's joining the EU “Creative Europe” programme.

September 17, 2015

Coordinator of the WG4 initiated the adoption by EaP CSF Armenian National Platform Statement on the Initiative of Constitutional Changes. The text of the statement can be found [here](#).

June 24, 2015

Coordinator of the WG4 initiated the adoption by EaP CSF Armenian National Platform of the Statement on the Increasing of the electricity price in Armenia. The text of the statement can be found [here](#).

February 8, 2015

WG4 Coordinator initiated the adoption by the EaP CSF Steering Committee of the Statement ON THE ESCALATION OF VIOLENCE IN THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP COUNTRIES. The proposed text, after the addition of other members, was adopted unanimously. The text of the statement can be found [here](#).

WG4 SUB-GROUPS

November 28, 2014

WG4 coordinator Hovsep Khurshudyan, during his visit to Minsk, met with representatives of Seniors subgroup from Belarus. The priorities of the subgroup and providing of the possible synergies with 3 other subgroups of the WG4 were discussed. It was decided:

- a. To organize networking of the seniors' organizations of the Eastern Partnership countries, and if the needed funds will be raised - to organize a conference with the participation of their respective organizations from EU and EaP countries;
- b. As a long-term priority of the sub-group was identified also the creation of a network of universities of the 3rd generation in the 6 EaP countries based on the relevant experience of Poland and Sweden. Establishment of such Universities - a project that can involve also the organization - represented all the other three sub-groups of the WG4 - Culture, Education and Youth.

October-November 2015

Hovsep Khurshudyan and the EaP CSF Ukrainian National Platform's WG4 and its coordinator Oksana Bondar organized in close collaboration the Photo Contest "Youth Creates Contacts between People!" in the framework of the priorities of the EaP CSF. The contest was organized for people from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine who participated or are part of a youth project with partners from EaP countries within the Youth in Action Programme (2007-2013), Eastern Partnership Youth Window (2012-2013) or Erasmus+ Programme (2014-2020) as well as for Civil society organizations from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine who are implementing or had implemented/participated in a project with partners from EaP countries within the Youth in Action Programme (2007-2013), Eastern Partnership Youth Window (2012-2013) or Erasmus+ Programme (2014-2020).

The main objectives of the photo contest "Youth Creates Contacts Between People!" was to promote contacts between people through presentation of the youth projects' experience of civil society organizations in EaP countries within the Youth in Action Programme (2007-2013), Eastern Partnership Youth Window (2012-2013) and Erasmus+ Programme (2014-2020); to raise visibility and awareness of the ERASMUS+ Youth opportunities in the field of youth for the Eastern Partnership countries; to promote non-formal learning approach and international cooperation of youth within the EaP countries.

The partner of the contest is SALTO Eastern Europe and Caucasus Resource Centre (<http://www.salto-youth.net/eeca/>).

The photographs were published on the [Facebook group](#) of the EaP CSF Working Group 4 and available for public voting. The winners of the contest were defined by juries taking into consideration the results of e-voting. The winners were named and the best photos were presented in a photo exhibition at the 7th Annual Assembly of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum in Kiev in November 19-21, 2015.

The winners were awarded special prizes provided by SALTO Eastern Europe and Caucasus Resource Centre. One of them is participation in an international youth event in 2016.

October 31, 2015

By Hovsep Khurshudyan's initiative, EaP CSF Armenian National Platform WG4 Culture sub-group members, other representatives of the EaP CSF Armenian National Platform attended an off the record working meeting with the deputy minister of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Armenia. The process and problems of Armenia's joining the EU "Creative Europe" programme as well as the possible framework of collaboration between EaP CSF Armenian National platform and its Working Group 4 from one side and Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Armenia from the other side was discussed.

December 8-10, 2014

WG4 coordinator had a working meeting with WG4 Culture subgroup coordinator and WG4 Education sub-group co-coordinator during the Black Sea NGO Forum in Kiev. The priorities of the Working Group and the related subgroups for the current year were discussed. It was decided to focus on lobbying and advocacy in EaP countries, on creation of the Cultural Foundations, whose activities should be controlled by CS organizations, working on issues of culture of appropriate EaP countries and which would be financed the priority directions of cultural development in the EaP region in view of the latest achievements in this field in the developed countries and especially in Europe (in accordance with WG4 amendment 4.3 to the EaP CSF 2015-2017 strategy).

Another issue discussed was the creation of the so-called EU Ambassadors Schools in the EaP countries. The realization of the project is expected through the establishment of a broad coalition of organizations - WG4 members. Due to the scale of the project the further discussion and finalization of the project idea are required.

INVOLVING NEW CSOs IN THE WORK OF THE FORUM

December 2014 - April 2015

The joint efforts were made and work was done by the WG4 and WG4 Seniors sub-group coordinators in the period of December 2014 - April 2015 on involving the CS organizations from the EU and the 6 EaP countries dealing with the seniors' issues in the work of the Civil Society Forum and towards the full formation of a Seniors sub-group. The result – WG4 Seniors sub-group with member organisations from at least 4 countries will be formed during the Civil Society Forum in Kiev on November 19-21, 2015.

February 9-11, 2015

Results of WG4 participation in the EaP 2nd Youth Forum in Riga.

At the request of the organizers of the Youth Forum, members of the WG4 Youth subgroup completed the questionnaire on the basis of which adjustments to the calculation of the final agenda of the Forum have been made.

WG4 coordinator Hovsep Khurshudyan and the Youth Sub-group co-coordinator Ludmila Bertosh took a direct part in the Youth Forum. As it turned out, the majority of the Forum participants were not aware of or have been very superficially aware of the EaP Civil Society Forum. Hovsep Khurshudyan participated in the panel intended to discuss the proposals to the EP upcoming summit in Riga to give a speech and briefly present EaP CSF as well as the activities and priorities of the Working Group 4 in particular. Khurshudyan also established ties with both the organizers of the Forum and representatives of many organizations from the EU and the EaP countries. Many of them are interested in participation in the EaP CS Forum in Kiev on 19-21 November 2015. As is known, increasing of interest in participating in the Forum especially among organizations from the EU countries is one of the priorities of the EaP CSF, identified in the EaP CSF Strategy adopted during the last Forum in Batumi.

Due to the situation, connected with the EaP Youth Forum, when EaP CSF profiling working group was not involved in the organization of the Forum, furthermore, the organization of the Forum was not coordinated with EaP CSF WG4, WG4 coordinator sent a proposal to the EaP CSF Steering Committee with a proposal to include in the agenda of the forthcoming meeting the issue of establishing / founding mechanisms of synergy between all the specialized conferences of the

EaP with relevant working groups of the EaP CSF, up to the provision of certain quotas for the delegating to such events as many members of the relevant sub-groups as possible.

Based on an online consultation prior to the 2nd Eastern Partnership Youth Forum and the discussions held in the Forum's workshops, the participants in the 2nd Eastern Partnership Youth Forum made an input to the ENP Review and to the Riga Summit. The recommendations of the EaP Youth Forum can be seen in Annex2.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

October 14, 2015

Meeting with Terry Sandell OBE, Head of the EU «Culture and Creativity» programme in Kiev

Hovsep Khurshudyan met Terry Sandell OBE, Head of the EU «Culture and Creativity» programme in Kiev. The issues of the possible increasing of the effectiveness of the EU funded cultural projects were discussed as well as the possibility of creation of synergy between EU-EaP Culture and Creativity Programme and EaP CS Forum's activities in light of EaP CS upcoming Forum in Kiev from 19 to 22 November 2015.

September 21, 2015, Yerevan

Participation in Youth Social Forum in Armenia

Hovsep Khurshudyan, as a EaP CSF Working Group 4 coordinator was a speaker in one of the panels of the Youth Social Forum in Armenia, in Yerevan. He presented to the young leaders the risks to Democracy posed by the constitutional reforms, offered by the Armenian Government.

September 4-6, 2015, Dilijan

WG4 coordinator made a presentation entitled «Deepening of the contacts between people in the framework of the EU-Armenia relationship» during the seminar under the theme, “The Role of the CSOs in the Armenia-EU relations.”

August 3, 2015, Kiev

Participation in the workshop for Ukrainian Roma, organized by Erasmus Mundus Students and Alumni Association

Hovsep Khurshudyan presented the work of EaP CSF, its educational agenda and the opportunities for cooperation with Roma organisations during the workshop for Ukrainian Roma, organized by Erasmus Mundus Students and Alumni Association. The workshop was organised in partnership with EMA and International Charitable Organization Roma Women's Fund "Chiricli". The EU Delegation to Ukraine supported the event and hosted us on its premises. The workshop was

attended by some 20 young Ukrainian Roma and young activists of partner organisations, representing several regions of Ukraine.

<http://www.em-a.eu/en/home/rss-feed-detail/erasmus-mundus-workshop-for-ukrainian-roma-1799.html>

June 10, 2015

Working meeting with participation of prominent Armenian expert on education was organised by WG4 coordinator Hovsep Khurshudyan in Armenia, during which the development of perspectives on e-learning and online education in Armenia and all EaP countries was discussed. The meeting was mentioned also during the EaP CSF WG4 Conference in Brussels, on 16-17 June 2015, where Marta Touykova, then vice-chair of Platform 4 suggested to organise a learning event or a seminar under Platform 4 on that topic. Hovsep Khurshudyan also mentioned the recent idea of president Obama to spend 200mln\$ on opening up online libraries and asked how the EaP can join such projects. Marta Touykova mentioned the EaP Connect project and promised to follow up on this idea.

Several weeks after the meeting, the WG4 coordinator Hovsep Khurshudyan met Minister of Education of the Republic of Armenia Armen Ashotyan and discussed with him the possibility of establishing broad coalition of the proper Armenian stakeholders to start the work on joint online platform in e-learning and online education field in Armenia.

HOVSEP KHURSHUDYAN INTERVIEWS AS A EaP CSF WORKING GROUP 4 COORDINATOR, STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBER AND MEDIA COVERAGE OF ITS ACTIVITIES

44 INTERVIEWS AND COVERAGES:

In Ukraine:

<http://www.em-a.eu/en/home/rss-feed-detail/erasmus-mundus-workshop-for-ukrainian-roma-1799.html>

In Belarus:

<http://en.eurobelarus.info/news/world/2015/06/25/hovsep-khurshudyan-actions-of-armenian-authorities-can.html> (in English)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r96MUfp3PvU> (Programm on situation in Armenia on Russian TVC TV, where was cited my interview given to the “Evrobелorus” on-line edition)

<http://belprauda.org/tarifnye-protesty-v-armenii-pererastut-v-politicheskije/>

<http://lzinios.lt/lzinios/Pasaulis/armenai-nenori-kartoti-ukrainieciu-ir-gruzinu-klaidu/204777>

<http://sputnik.by/politics/20150625/1015894752.html#ixzz3eJBuArjy>

<http://www.t-styl.info/by/118/overview/14296/>

<http://www.pensionerby.org/1oktyabrya1.htm>

<http://www.nv-online.info/by/550/opinions/97464/%D0%9E%D0%B2%D1%81%D0%B5%D0%BF-%D0%A5%D1%83%D1%80%D1%88%D1%83%D0%B4%D1%8F%D0%BD-%C2%AB%D0%A1%D1%82%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%BD%D0%BE%D1%81%D1%82%D0>

[%B8%C2%BB-%D0%B2-%D0%93%D1%8E%D0%BC%D1%80%D0%B8-%D0%B7%D0%B0%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B0%D0%B2%D0%BB%D1%8F%D1%8E%D1%82-%D0%B7%D0%B0%D0%B4%D1%83%D0%BC%D0%B0%D1%82%D1%8C%D1%81%D1%8F-%D0%BE-%D1%81%D1%80%D0%B5%D0%B6%D0%B8%D1%81%D1%81%D0%B8%D1%80%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%BD%D0%BE%D0%BC-%D0%BF%D1%80%D0%B5%D1%81%D1%82%D1%83%D0%BF%D0%BB%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%B8.htm](#)

In Georgia:

<https://soundcloud.com/aliqmedia/obsjfjhlwax>

In Russia:

<http://www.russianinsight.com/european-commission-probably-to-give-new-mandate-to-eu-countries-to-start-new-negotiations-with-armenia-hovsep-khurshudyan/>

<http://www.regnum.ru/news/polit/1925728.html>

In Armenia:

<http://armenpress.am/eng/news/805006/evrahandznazhoxovy-havanabar-nor-mandat-ktramadri-em-erknerin.html> (in English)

http://www.armenianow.com/news/61474/armenia_euronest_parliamentary_assembly_armenia_eu (in English)

<http://www.tert.am/en/news/2015/05/11/hovsep-khurshudyan/1671527> (in English)

<http://www.osf.am/2015/03/joint-session-of-the-euronest-parliamentary-assembly-and-civil-society/> (in English)

<http://en.aravot.am/2015/03/16/169270/> (in English)

<http://en.a1plus.am/1208110.html> (in English)

<http://euronest2015.am/en/blog/archives/372> (in English)

<http://www.1in.am/1600246.html>

<http://armlur.am/321743/>

<http://www.tert.am/am/news/2015/05/11/hovsep-khurshudyan/1671527>

<http://galatv.am/hy/news/118361/>

<http://galatv.am/hy/news/104800/>

<http://galatv.am/hy/news/104629/>

<http://galatv.am/hy/news/102853/>

<http://galatv.am/hy/news/102124/>

<http://galatv.am/hy/news/ashtonakan-rewann-arayjhm-lur-e-nddimadir-u-hasarakakan-shrjanaknern-ardaganqum-en-emcovi-spanutyany/>

<http://www.aravot.am/2015/05/11/570436/>

<http://www.aravot.am/2015/05/11/570424/>

<http://www.aravot.am/2015/04/15/561405/>

<http://www.aravot.am/2015/04/15/561371/>

<http://www.aravot.am/2014/11/21/517889/>

<http://www.aravot.am/2015/08/16/600327/>
<http://www.aravot.am/2015/08/16/600327/>
<http://operativ.am/?p=109556&l=am>
http://irakan.info/full_news.php?id=26375
<http://galatv.am/hy/news/127101/>
<http://www.armenianreport.com/pubs/112611/>
<http://ru.1in.am/1109299.html>
<http://www.azatutyun.am/content/article/27010239.html> <http://rus.azatutyun.mobi/a/27010420.html>
<http://ru.a1plus.am/1285783.html>

Project Funded by the
European Union



**National Endowment
for Democracy**
Supporting freedom around the world

WG4 Suggestions to the Steering Committee

Adhering to the principle that the general priorities of the Working Group 4 should include top issues of its 4 subgroups, amendments to the EaP CSF strategy for 2015-2017 were made during the WG4 meeting in Batumi.

The priorities for the regranting Working Group 4 projects should be based on the key thematic directions outlined in the EaP CSF strategy for 2015-2017, including amendments, adopted during the WG4 meeting in Batumi. EaP CSF Working Group “Contacts Between People” deals with top 4 priorities which are defined below.

Top issue 1 - Culture;

Launch of regular monitoring on the implementation of regular monitoring of the UNESCO Convention On the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions of Cultural Diversity in the EaP countries;

- Collaboration and promotion in the area of new cultural policy standards, best practices, reform experiences/tools applied by civil society actors, public institutions, experts, policymakers of all the EaP countries and EU member states and European/international institutions;
- Encouraging the EU member states CS organizations in participation the EaP CSF and, in particular, in the WG4 Culture subgroup.

Top issue 2 - Youth;

- Strengthening interactions among young people, youth organizations and youth initiatives of the Eastern Partnership countries and Europe as a whole by increasing joint exchanges, information-sharing;
- Promoting capacity building of youth organizations and youth initiatives;
- Increasing the participation of young people in the decision-making process and designing youth policies, monitoring and evaluating of the strategy implementation;
- Increasing the interest of the CS youth organizations in EU member states in participation in the EaP CSF and, in particular, in the WG4 Youth subgroup.

Top issue 3 - Education;

- Promotion of Civic Education, including media literacy, legal education, the development of the student governing bodies, engaging students in decision-making (at all levels) for the proper organization of the educational process and training programs;
- Increasing of the interest of the EU member states' CS organizations, in dealing with the educational issues and supporting the EaP CSF and, in particular, in the WG4 Education subgroup.

Top issue 4 - Seniors;

- Revitalization of the work, aimed at the cultural and educational needs of the elderly in the Eastern Partnership countries.
- Realizing the potential of older people (seniors), retirees and identifying their role in the dissemination of European values, standards of life in the Eastern Partnership countries;
- Increasing of the interest of the seniors organizations of the EaP countries and EU member states in participation in the EaP CSF and, in particular, in the WG4 Seniors subgroup.

Some corrections can be made in these priorities after discussing them in the WG4 (through the Google-group) before upcoming SC meeting.

As to top issues/themes on which the Forum can focus collectively in 2015, I will ask all members of the WG4 for ideas, opinions and suggestions. But from my perspective, those priorities could be classified in the following order:

1. Increasing of the interest of the EU member states' CSOs in participation in the EaP CSF.
2. Combating not only Russian-induced but all kind of xenophobic and aggressive propaganda and hate speech in EaP countries, conflict prevention should become one of the key priorities of the Forum.
3. Providing of the maximum possible transparency of all activities and procedures of SC, Secretariat, WGs and NPs.

Here are some of my ideas on options proposed by Secretariat.

- Supporting joint projects and activities of the WGs through re-granting. As far as I am concerned, reduction of the lower threshold of the grants from 10,000 to 5,000 will get us more flexibility during selection process.

- Organizing capacity development activities for Working Groups in the frames of WG meetings or other events.

From my perspective this option should focus on thematic sub-groups capacity development. We should also use on-line tools, e.g. Skype, Google-groups for organizing on-line lectures and seminars for working groups and thematic sub-groups of the National Platforms.

- Supporting the (regional) activities of National Platforms to ensure better linkages between them.

Organizing Skype-conferences between NP's more active members on actual issues or incidents, encouraging mutual visits of National Platforms' delegations, composed of the most active members.

- Annual WG meetings (how we can increase the value of it; maybe reformat it).

It'll be more efficient, if special sessions will be organized for thematic subgroups during WG meetings.

- New body of WG Councils (a number of the SC members are the members of those; the concrete results that are expected from them).

I believe that the authors of the idea of WG Councils should describe themselves what functions they meant for that body.

I would like to spread some of the documents you have shared with us, particularly [“Procedure for nomination for EaP platforms”](#); [“Work Programme of the project Support to the activities of the EaP CSF”](#), [“Calendar of events 2015”](#), [“Secretariat’s Work Regulations, responsibilities of the SC members”](#) among WG4 members. Taking into consideration the Note at the end of Natalia's letter, «Privileged/Confidential information may be contained in this message and may be subject to legal privilege. Access to this e-mail by anyone other than the intended is unauthorized.», I’d like to ask if there are any procedures, restricting the distribution of the above-mentioned documents among our colleagues from Working Groups and National Platforms. And even if there are none, I wonder if you are concerned with the distribution of the documents. If there are no objections, let’s spread all these documents among Forum's participants. I think the transparency of our activity will help us gather more ideas and use the creativity of all our WGs' and NPs' members in the EaP CS Forum's further development.

I would suggest Steering Committee to discuss the ways of increasing the transparency of the Multilateral Platforms’ work during its upcoming meeting. For example, we can decide to offer to all 4 Platforms to provide an on-line broadcasting of the Platforms’ meetings through Internet. This will help to raise the awareness not only among EaP SC Forum participants, WGs’ and NPs’ members but also among much more amount of stakeholders in the national governments and public servants, interested in the activity of EaP bodies. For this reason, up to me, it will be also useful, if Multilateral Platforms will share all data, of all their meetings via **open** web-sources.



ANNEX 2

The 2nd Eastern Partnership Youth Forum 9th to 12th February 2015 Riga, Latvia

Recommendations

The 2nd Eastern Partnership Youth Forum was organised by the Agency of International Programs for Youth, which is the Latvian National Agency of the Erasmus+ Youth in Action Programme, in cooperation with the European Commission and other stakeholders.

The Forum took place in Riga, Latvia from 9th -12th February 2015, in the framework of Latvia's Presidency of the Council of the EU and the Eastern Partnership Platform 4 'Contacts between people'. The Forum brought together more than 250 participants from over 30 different countries. These included all the Eastern Partnership countries and representatives from most of the Erasmus+ Programme countries. The participants were made up of major relevant sectors, including young people, youth workers and representatives of the labour market, formal education and research, Ministries, the European Commission and other international institutions.

The main aim of the Forum was to foster greater cooperation between the countries of the Eastern Partnership and the Erasmus+ Programme Countries.

The Forum provided space to discuss and recommend steps to be taken as regards young people's employability / employment, with a focus on:

- Young people's mobility and programmes supported e.g. by the European Commission, the Council of Europe and the United Nations;
- Cross-sectorial cooperation in the field of youth;
- Exchange of good practices (innovative ideas);
- Youth policy development.

Based on an online consultation prior to the 2nd Eastern Partnership Youth Forum and the discussions held in the Forum's workshops, the participants in the 2nd Eastern Partnership Youth Forum recommend the following:

Cross-Sectorial Cooperation

All stakeholders – private and public sectors, civil society organisations, particularly youth NGOs, trade unions, business representatives, employment services, and international actors – should team up in fostering young people's employability and employment.

They are invited to cooperate more closely, recognising the contribution that each actor brings, in:

- Defining, implementing and evaluating employment policies through cross-sectorial cooperation;
- Identifying current and future skills needs of the labour market;
- Providing career guidance;
- Encouraging the development and recognition of skills and competences through non-formal learning;
- Setting up mobility programmes;
- Informing the employment sector (employment agencies, career guidance workers, employers' associations etc.) about the value of mobility programmes in relation to the labour market;
- Providing opportunities for youth structured dialogue, including at local level.

The dialogue should result in identifying clear roles and responsibilities among the different stakeholders.

The related progress needs to be monitored and regular reports to be provided to all stakeholders - particularly the youth sector.

Local government should develop, implement and strengthen youth policy at local level, e.g. also by involving all stakeholders with a special accent on rural youth.

Governments, notably also local ones, are invited to develop and implement cross-sectorial strategies related to youth unemployment and fostering young people's employability. Through a series of consultations with youth organisations, each Government should set up a committee responsible for the employment and employability of young people – with a specific focus on young people with fewer opportunities. The committees would be responsible for setting up indicators for the monitoring of the ongoing youth employment situation and ensuring appropriate follow-up.

Education

Governments are invited to:

- Facilitate synergies between the formal and non-formal education sectors. This could be achieved, for example, by introducing non-formal educational activities, such as volunteering, in formal education courses. At the level of higher education the value of this engagement would be recognised through the receiving of European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) points.

- Include the business sector and non-formal education providers in the design of formal education curricula,

for example, as regards the development of youth creativity and entrepreneurship education courses. To support this, entrepreneurs should be invited to schools and universities to give motivational speeches, lessons and to share experience.

- Encourage higher education institutions to open cooperation with the private sector to set up an education financing model in which companies would sponsor tuition fees with a view to later employing graduates who benefitted from this sponsoring.

Volunteering

Governments are invited to support volunteering, defining it through legislation and making finances available to support it. Different forms of volunteering are to be promoted among young people. The public and private sector need to be encouraged to recognise volunteering as a means of acquiring competencies which have value to the labour market.

Incentives

Governments are invited to set up and implement a system of incentives for the private sector to attract and hire young people. This could, for example, consist of benefits for providing work places, financial contribution to hire international trainees and interns, tax reduction for companies engaging in youth related social work and charity.

Support Systems

Governments are invited to:

- Establish support mechanisms for the assessment, recognition and validation of competences acquired through non-formal learning activities;

- Promote and encourage better use of available tools to disseminate information about youth entrepreneurship, youth employment and examples of transferable practice, for example, through Eurodesk, the SALTO Youth Resource Centres and the European Youth Portal;
- Provide coherent quality support systems for mobility programmes for youth organisations, project managers, mentors, tutors and other stakeholders directly dealing with young people, through on-going training and the providing of up-to-date information;
- Establish cross-sectorial mentoring programmes to strengthen preparation, implementation and followup support in mobility projects, to guide young people in applying the acquired competences as a part of their transition to the labour market.

Funding

The European Commission is invited to re-open a programme dedicated to young people in Eastern Partnership countries.

The European Commission and Governments are invited to provide resources for capacity building of youth NGOs, and to create support systems for young people to foster youth entrepreneurship, for example through grants, risk capital, co-working spaces or mentoring programmes.

Transparency of Funding and Monitoring

The European Commission is invited to ensure the maximum transparency in the granting of its funds and appropriate monitoring at all levels.

Youth Work

Governments are invited to support the process of integrating labour market understanding into the youth work sector, recognising that this forms a part of the role of youth work. Youth workers need to receive support to access such understanding and to integrate it into their work dedicated to the personal, social and professional development of young people. Youth workers supporting young people need to explore how young people's competences developed through non-formal education can relate to their future employability.

Participation of Young People with Fewer Opportunities

Governments are invited to ensure that decision-makers include broader youth involvement in policy making, especially related to young people not "Not in Education, Employment or Training" (NEETs) and Youth Guarantee related measures, and policy implementation, involving young people with fewer opportunities.

