

A STRATEGIC ROADMAP FOR CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP

Foreword: This background paper is a collection of perspectives on the Eastern Partnership and the role of the civil society forum and its future directions. It has been put together as food for thought for the participants at the Poznan forum meeting on 28-30 November, and to add some context to the debates around the future structures, priorities and overall strategy of the Forum.

It is not designed to be a consistent set of contributions, nor is it a document that the Forum will be asked to endorse, nor to adopt. Its purpose is to provide context for the debate and deliberations of the Forum participants.

Jeff Lovitt, EU co-ordinator, Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum Steering Committee

final version, 24 November 2011

A. Review of the Eastern Partnership

1. Where is the EaP in 2011, and to what extent has it achieved its aims/ made progress towards achieving its aims? (*Grzegorz Gromadzki*)2
2. Major geo-political challenges facing EU-Eastern Partner relations (*Boris Navasardyan*)4
3. What was the role envisaged of civil society, and what has the CSF achieved/ not achieved, and what should its priorities/key functions be? (*Andrei Yahorau*).....5

B. Democratic transition and European integration - prospects and challenges

1. Overview and comparison with other transition countries (CEE, Western Balkans, Central Asia) (*Iryna Solonenko*).....8
2. Country-by-country, including assessment of country progress reports, negotiations on Association Agreements, visa-free travel process, DCFTA (*Iryna Solonenko*) 10
3. Recommendations for Civil Society Facility and European Endowment for Democracy (*Věra Řiháčková*) 13

C. A Roadmap for the Civil Society Forum

1. Priority activities (*Boris Navasardyan*) 15
2. A civil society roadmap for democratic transition (*Andrei Yahorau*) 18

1. Where is the Eastern Partnership in 2011, and to what extent has it achieved its aims/ made progress towards achieving its aims?

by Grzegorz Gromadzki

The Eastern Partnership initiative aims to develop multilateral relations between the six partner countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Ukraine, and Moldova), and between the partner countries as a group and the European Union (EU), but it is the level of bilateral relations between the EU and individual partner country that feature as the most important. The Eastern Partnership (EaP) has the potential to make its mark as a good brand for bilateral relations between each given partner country and the EU.

The EaP, launched in 2009, cannot be perceived only through the four thematic platforms and flagship initiatives¹. They are only tools to assist attainment of the main goal of the EaP, namely partial integration of the partner countries with the EU. It should be underlined that the EaP is not only about co-operation. In fact, it is a political concept straddling both pure co-operation and accession process, in other words more than co-operation, but less than accession process.

It could be said that the EaP is the highest common denominator that could be accepted by all 27 member states and EU institutions, because the positions of different EU actors (member states and institutions) concerning the Eastern partners differ significantly, sometimes fundamentally. This diversity stems from three issues of fundamental importance. The first of them is the matter of possible EU membership for the EaP countries, supported by some EU member countries, but unacceptable for others. The second issue is that of Russia's place in EU relations with the countries of Eastern Europe. The third concerns the dispute over the extent of the EU's engagement to the east and to the south of its borders – that is, with Eastern Europe and the Southern Mediterranean.

Nonetheless, greater interest in the countries embraced within the EaP did not entail deciding whether the partner countries would have the opportunity to join the EU – or whether that possibility would forever be denied to them. But supporters within the EU of both options could accept the EaP in that it remains silent on the matter. For those EU countries supporting the possibility of EU membership (a minority), the EaP is a preparatory stage leading to membership, without mentioning that fact. For others, it signifies something other than membership, or at the very least puts off the decision to confer candidate status for the indefinite future.

Both sides of this debate agreed to include within the EaP a package of very important proposals, one part of which had already been proposed to Ukraine and Moldova before the creation of the EaP (for instance, negotiations with Ukraine concerning a new enhanced agreement (the Association Agreement) began in 2007,

¹ Platforms are the main tool of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) multilateral track. They reflect four main areas of co-operation between the Eastern Partner countries and the EU, namely:

- Democracy, good governance and stability (platform 1);
- Economic integration and convergence with EU policies (platform 2);
- Energy security (platform 3) and
- Contacts between people (platform 4).

The multilateral track of the Eastern Partnership includes flagship initiatives to mobilise multi-donor support, funding from different IFIs and investment from the private sector:

- Integrated Border Management Programme
- Small and Medium-size Enterprise (SME) Flagship Initiative
- Regional energy markets and energy efficiency
- Diversification of energy supply: the Southern Energy Corridor
- Prevention of, preparedness for, and response to natural and man-made disasters
- Flagship initiative to promote good environmental governance.

the same year that Ukraine and Moldova signed the Visa Facilitation Agreements which, as a long-term goal, mention establishing visa-free travel). While the EaP was being devised, these proposals became a coherent concept and an official package that was at least theoretically available for all six countries.

The most significant of these proposals are:

- the possibility of signing an Association Agreement, an integral part of which is to include accords on a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA);
- the proposal of membership in the Energy Community created in 2006 for the western Balkans, and whose objective has been to incorporate the Balkan countries into the EU electricity and gas market being created;
- the suspension of visa requirements.

The perception of the EaP in the partner countries has been ambiguous. Many Ukrainian politicians and experts have underlined that the EaP doesn't include new proposals for their country. However, at least officially, all countries have accepted the EaP as a constructive measure for their relations with the EU.

But, in reality, the ruling elites of partner countries – with the exception of Moldova – exhibit minor preparedness for genuine co-operation with the EU in the realm of democratisation and the reforms necessary for establishing the rule of law. Those in power in Azerbaijan and Belarus have unequivocally rejected the EU's efforts in this area, seeing them as a threat to their existence. They regard such efforts as an inadmissible interference in their internal affairs. Others (for instance, Armenia) are ready to talk with the EU about democratisation and the rule of law, although in fact they do not wish to alter the current situation. They are focused on keeping power for themselves, and rely on methods that are at stark variance with democratic standards. Such behaviour is of course to be expected in authoritarian countries, but it is also apparent in two of the more democratic countries – Ukraine and Georgia.

To one degree or another, all of the six are interested in economic co-operation (even though it is often grasped selectively) in areas where there are immediate effects. All are interested in the participation of the EU in modernising their countries, but this is typically understood as technological modernisation and EU financial assistance, e.g., in infrastructural investments and so on – and not in reforms leading to liberal democracy. Unfortunately, the internal situation in the partner countries (excepting Moldova) is worse than two years ago when the EaP was launched. It seems that the ruling elites of partner countries don't understand that even a partial integration with the EU is impossible without real democratisation.

Therefore, the unfavourable situation in the partner countries should be assessed as the main obstacle to achieving the main goals of the EaP. Most worryingly, the Tymoshenko trial in Ukraine threatens to prevent the conclusion of the Association Agreement and a Deep Comprehensive Free Trade Area Agreement (DCFTA). Of course, the economic crisis in the EU and strong EU engagement in North Africa and Middle East following the Arab spring do not provide a favourable climate for EU engagement in Eastern Europe, but even those circumstances have not stopped the development of the EaP.

The results of the EaP between 2009 and 2011 can be seen rather as launching processes than solid achievements. The negotiations between Ukraine and the EU on the Association Agreement (and DCFTA) have accelerated, but without a final result so far. Moldova and the three countries of the South Caucasus have started negotiations on Association Agreements. Moldova and Georgia will probably start negotiations on DCFTA before the end of 2011. Ukraine and Moldova achieved action plans on moving towards a visa-free regime with the EU (it is a real revolution, but the process of abolishing visas will take several years). Both countries have also joined the Energy Community.

To sum up, the results are rather mediocre. The end of 2011 and then 2012 will be crucial for the EaP. Without Association Agreements including DCFTA (with Ukraine, Moldova), before the third EaP Summit in autumn 2013, integration process of partner countries will be frozen if not stopped. It means that the next two years will be decisive for the EaP. One cannot wait longer for real achievements.

2. Major geo-political challenges facing EU-Eastern Partner relations

Boris Navasardyan

The “more for more” formula of the updated European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) - reminiscent of the “governance facility”, essentially meaning that neighbourhood countries that implement more reforms and become more democratic thereby earn the right to receive more political and financial support - should be interpreted as an expectation that the partner countries will prove their commitment and ability to implement reforms and adopt European standards. Such a commitment, backed up by contribution of the partner country's own resources, should be a prerequisite for the provision of support and deepening relations from the side of the EU.

The Eastern Partnership (EaP) has the ambition to become the main factor promoting democratisation and reform in the partner countries. However, there are still many challenges and obstacles for which solutions need to be found, so that the expectations from the EaP are met:

- The economic crisis has diverted the EU's attention from the eastern neighbourhood, as the EU member countries are concentrated on their own problems, and the challenges facing the Eurozone.
- The lack of financial and other EU resources available to the EaP countries has become more acute with the shift of EU engagement towards the Middle East and North Africa pursuant to the Arab Spring.
- Many EU member states are inclined more to focusing on internal EU developments than to further EU expansion, a tendency further exacerbated by the lack of progress in fighting corruption in new EU members, such as Bulgaria and Romania.
- Russia favours engagement with the EU on its own terms, and views “Europeanisation” of its neighbours through the same perspective: that any integration should take place first between the EU and Russia. From the “customs union” with Belarus and Kazakhstan, and Vladimir Putin’s invitation to its “near abroad” to join an “Eurasian Union”.
- In their turn, certain EU countries consider Russia as a more attractive partner than other Eastern neighbours, not least as an energy supplier, and thus perceive the EaP as a project of “low importance”. Likewise, to date the multilateral component of the EaP, for instance regional co-operation, or the momentum to solve frozen territorial conflicts, is lacking.

At the same time, success stories in the EaP might provide new impetus for the EU project. The Civil Society Forum can make an important contribution to that, as it represents an environment where the priorities of democratisation and the need for reforms are fully shared and the multilateral track of the EaP is working.

Likewise, the lessons of the “Arab Spring” are extremely important for the EaP. The prioritisation of political stability over democracy and practical commitments to reform leads to the postponement of crisis, and deletes most of the previous gains of the partnership with authoritarian regimes.

The “deep democracy”, which was called for in the 2011 ENP review, should be the undisputed criteria for the EaP countries to be considered to be advancing within the framework of the Eastern Partnership process. Civil society must take up the role of an independent monitor of the consistency of the reform process in the partner countries, and must take a lead in proposing the “conditionality formulation”.

3. What was the role envisaged of civil society, and what has the CSF achieved/ not achieved, and what should its priorities/key functions be?

by Andrei Yahorau

1. The role of civil society in the structure of the Eastern Partnership

The role and functions of civil society in the structure of the Eastern Partnership derive from two basic sources: the formal (institutional) frameworks of the Eastern Partnership, defined by its official constituent documents, and the purposes, which civil society can and is able to set for itself independently as a self-organising institution. The formal frameworks of the EaP determine that civil society "play a crucial role, within their societies, in providing **policy input, following new initiatives and in holding governments accountable. They can be active actors in promoting democratic and market-oriented reforms** based on shared values, i.e. respect for democracy and human rights, the rule of law, good governance, principles of market economy and sustainable development"².

To implement these functions, as well as "**to promote contacts among CSOs and facilitate their dialogue with public authorities**"³, within the scope of the institutional structure of the Eastern Partnership, it was envisaged to create a special place for civil society - the Civil Society Forum of the Eastern Partnership. Thus, the institutional role of civil society is established. However, the performance of these formally set functions, in its turn, depends on civil society's possibilities, real competences, and its own objectives.

The European Commission's preliminary consultations⁴ with CSOs in the spring of 2009 revealed that even though there is a diversity of outlooks within civil society, it is nevertheless able to agree on common objectives and interests. The results of the consultations showed that civil society's vision as a whole coincides with its presupposed formal role within the scope of the Eastern Partnership. In the form of the Civil Society Forum of the Eastern Partnership, civil society organisations received an opportunity to self-organise and to act upon their own strategies and purposes of participation in the initiative. During the first Civil Society Forum (Brussels, 2009), the purposes and interests of civil society were given shape in four basic areas:

- 1) Expansion of the political influence of the Forum and civil society on the development of the Eastern Partnership, including a possibility to participate in the elaboration of policies in thematic areas, to comment on documents developed by platforms, to participate in the work of thematic platforms, to monitor and control bilateral interaction.
- 2) Strengthening and expansion of the political role of civil society at the level of the partner countries, including the creation of National Platforms of civil society, the beginning of a structural dialogue (national governments-EU-civil society) concerning bilateral rapprochement, lobbying for rapprochement of the country partners with EU, monitoring and control of joint projects of the national governments and EU.
- 3) Expansion of horizontal interaction between CSOs of the partner countries and CSOs in the EU, including implementation of joint multilateral projects, creation of common monitoring and expert groups, lobbying of general interests at the level of their governments.
- 4) Strengthening and institutionalisation of the Civil Society Forum, including questions of self-organisation, procedures of selection of participants, creation of a secretariat, increase in financing for civil society, formalisation of relations of the Forum with the component of bilateral interaction of the Eastern Partnership.

2. The Civil Society Forum: evaluation of first two years of activity

After two years of its activity, the Civil Society Forum of the Eastern Partnership has managed to move ahead in the direction of implementation of its purposes and role; however, it is impossible to call this advancement considerable. The minimal progress can be explained by the difficult conditions facing the activities of civil society at the national level of the countries of the Eastern Partnership, including the resistance of national governments,

² Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum Concept paper

³ Eastern partnership: Communication from the European Commission to the European Parliament and the Council, COM(2008) 823, 3 December 2008

⁴ Results of the implementation of consultations with CSOs and NGOs concerning the creation of the CSF within the scope of the EaP.

bureaucratic complexities of relations with the European Commission, and other factors. Nevertheless, there have been drawbacks to the activity of the Civil Society Forum, in particular the weak intensity of the work of thematic working groups and sub-groups in the period between the Forums, the lack of a consistently strategic line of actions of the Forum and its steering committee, the low dynamics of development of the National Platforms, and the insufficient use of expert potential.

The most considerable successes of the Forum concerned processes of self-organisation and institutionalisation. The participants of the CSF have managed to establish their own regulatory bodies, to define an independent role in the selection of participants, to expand the national component of participation, and to generate national platforms. The question of the establishment of a permanent secretariat of the Forum is almost solved, and the launch of the ENP Civil Society Facility will create a special tool for supporting civil society. At the same time, questions of institutional interaction of the Forum with the work of multilateral thematic platforms, i.e. the flagship initiatives of the Eastern Partnership, are not solved yet.

Representatives of the Forum still have no status of participants in the work of platforms, meetings of ministers, or their own representation at the Summit; the official documentation and drafts of decisions that are developed by platforms and political bodies of the EaP are not available for the Forum; recommendations, statements, and monitoring of the Forum have only a symbolical character.

The Civil Society Forum contributed to the expansion of horizontal interaction of civil society of the partner countries among themselves and the EU countries. A number of thematic groups and sub-groups of the Forum managed to form joint monitoring and expert projects (visa liberalisation, environmental policy, local government development, media, culture, youth policy, etc.). National platforms, working groups, and the steering committee of the Forum began to pay more attention to the conditions and position of civil society in the partner countries. Instances of infringements of human rights and democratic procedures in the different countries become the subject of reaction on the part of national platforms of civil society of other countries, and of the Civil Society Forum of the EaP. However, despite the positive dynamics in some directions, the component of regional interaction remains rather weak and has a low visibility at the public level.

The creation of national platforms in all the partner countries can be regarded as considerable progress for the Civil Society Forum. National platforms provide more legitimisation and support for the Civil Society Forum, which, in its turn, plays a role of representation (*sui generis* "parliament") for CSOs of the partner countries. National platforms can potentially act as an additional legitimate channel of communication with the societies of the partner countries for the official structures of the EU. The beginning of a structural dialogue between civil society, national governments, and EU about the questions around expansion of bilateral co-operation could mark the first step to such a role⁵. At the same time, it is necessary to recognise a number of internal problems in the activity of national platforms. In all countries, national platforms include in their work only an insignificant number (if compared with all organisations in the country) of pro-European oriented CSOs. Almost all platforms have internal problems and contradictions in the course of co-ordination and development of consolidated decisions. For the majority of platforms (except for, perhaps, Moldova), the level of interaction with national governments remains extremely low, and in the case of Belarus - relations develop in a state of confrontation with the state. In its turn, it essentially weakens civil society's monitoring and control functions.

The achievements of the Civil Society Forum have been limited due to its political role and influence on the elaboration of policies within the scope of the Eastern Partnership. At the level of declarations, the Civil Society Forum has a place in the elaboration of policies⁶, but formal mechanisms for this purpose were not created as a matter of fact. The introduction of the Open Co-ordination Method (OCM) to manage the process of rapprochement with EU standards in thematic areas seems promising here. In particular, the fourth multilateral thematic platform (Contacts between People) accepted the OCM as a regulatory rule of its activity. The method assumes the presence of independent expert appraisals, comments, monitoring, and evaluation at all stages of decision-making - which entirely corresponds to the role of civil society in the Eastern Partnership. However, even in this case, the

⁵ The first such consultations with national platforms and governments of all partner countries (except for Belarus) were carried out by offices of the European Commission on the threshold of the second Summit of heads of the countries of the EaP.

⁶ Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum Concept paper, Opening speech to the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum, Berlin - by Štefan Füle, European Commissioner for Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policy

Civil Society Forum remained outside the process.

Today, the diplomatic work of the steering committee covers only contacts with the European Commission and External Action Service, but devotes less attention to work with the EU member states. It does not allow the Forum to make any essential impact on the agenda of the main political events of the Eastern Partnership (the Summit of heads of states, meetings of ministers). In the majority of cases, the Forum appears not to be able to work out implementable, specific, and well-targeted recommendations. Due to the absence of substantive work by the joint working groups in the period between the Forums (except for a few positive examples), the general platform of the CSF is full of quite abstract, empty, and difficult-to-implement wishes.

3. In the direction of greater efficiency: the priority purposes and functions of the Civil Society Forum of the Eastern Partnership

It would be expedient to split the tasks of the Forum into short-term (2011-2012) and medium-term (2012-2015) tasks, as well as tasks on the national level and those of the level of the Eastern Partnership. In a general view, in the short-term period, the Forum should concentrate on the questions of finalising its institutionalisation, forming a legal and strategic basis for its activity, building relations of strategic partnership with the EU institutions (European Commission, External Action Service, EU member states, European Parliament), institutions of the Eastern Partnership (thematic platforms, EuroNest, Congress of local and regional authorities) and international organisations (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), Council of Europe). In the medium-term period, the priority problems should be optimisation of work of working groups at the level of the Forum and national platforms, full inclusion of structures of the Forum in the elaboration of concrete and executable political recommendations, monitoring and control of multilateral projects, inclusion of national platforms and of the Forum in the elaboration of the strategy of democratic transformations in the partner countries, and launch of a valid tripartite structural dialogue on questions of bilateral rapprochement with the EU (including consultations within the scope of the Action Plans and Associations Agreements).

	CSF level	National/regional level
Short-term objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Formation of the Secretariat - Lobbying of effective mechanisms of financing (through CS Facility) - Acceptance of strategic documents, establishment of legal procedures of activity - Signing of agreements and memoranda of mutual understanding with institutional structures of the EaP and EU, international organisations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creation of working groups within the scope of national platforms to work out "roadmaps" on rapprochement with EU in concrete thematic directions - Launch of processes of monitoring multilateral co-operation - Creation of joint (inter-platform) expert and working groups to work out concrete proposals in thematic directions for EaP
Mid-term objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To recognise the Forum as a full participant of EaP with a possibility to influence the definition of the agenda of the initiative - Working out, lobbying, and advocating of specific proposals for the EaP thematic platforms - Participation in common with the EU structures in the definition of "roadmaps" on democratisation - Fixing of formal procedures of participation of the Forum in monitoring and control of multilateral interaction at the level of EaP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Launch of a valid tripartite structural dialogue concerning bilateral rapprochement with EU; - Participation in the definition of agendas, "roadmaps", democratisation strategies in the partner countries; - Deepening and widening of connections of national platforms with national structures of civil society and society of the countries as a whole.

B. Democratic transition and European integration - prospects and challenges

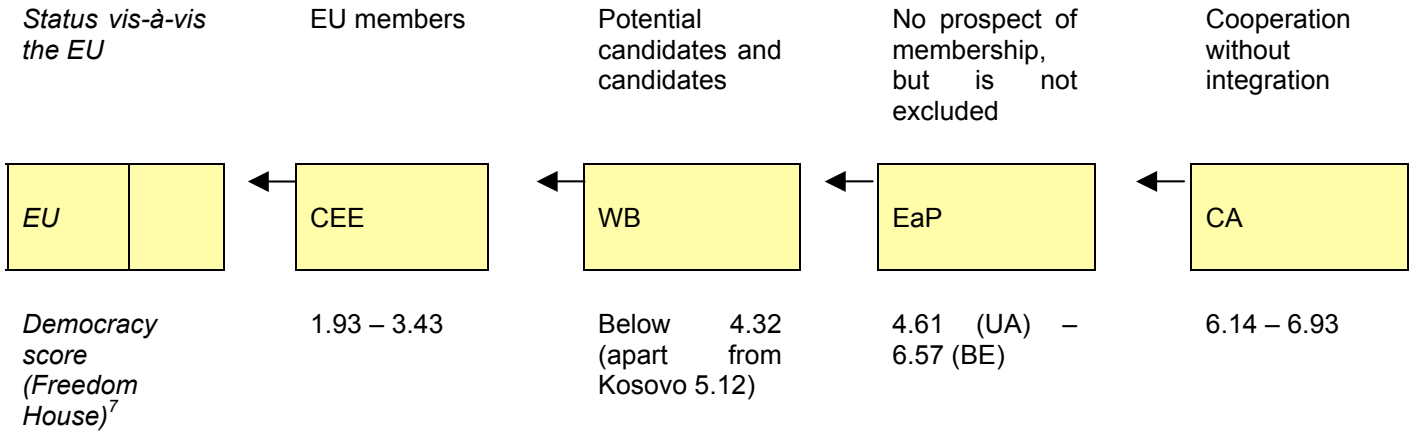
1. Overview and comparison with other transition countries (CEE, Western Balkans, Central Asia)

by Iryna Solonenko

The Eastern Partnership countries in the comparative perspective of other post-Communist countries and in terms of their relationship with the EU stand somewhere between the Central and East European Countries (new EU member states) and the Western Balkans (that have the prospect of membership, e.g. Croatia and Macedonia having the candidate status), on the one hand, and the Central Asian countries, on the other hand. The EaP countries have no prospect of EU membership, although some of them (namely, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine) are aspiring to membership in the EU. Due to the European Neighborhood Policy and later on the Eastern Partnership Initiative, they have been offered an enhanced level of co-operation with the EU, incentives of integration at different levels, and instruments of supporting their transformation process. In many ways, these instruments resemble the instruments the EU developed for, and tested on, the post-Communist accession countries. Due to these instruments, the EaP countries are more advanced in their relationship with the EU than the Central Asian countries. The EU's relationship with the Central Asian countries is based on the strategy adopted by the EU in 2007, which covers a number of areas for co-operation and assistance.

Interestingly, there is a correlation between the geographical proximity of each of the four regions with the EU, the degree of rapprochement with the EU, and the state of their democratic transition. The closer the countries stand to the EU geographically, the more advanced state of relationship they enjoy with the EU and the better their democracy score is. Thus, the CEE countries, which are now EU members, are on average more democratic than the Western Balkans. The Western Balkans are potential candidates for membership (with Croatia, Macedonia and Montenegro already candidates, and on 12 October 2011, the European Commission recommended that Serbia become a candidate as well), and are doing better in terms of democracy. The EaP countries lag behind – they have no membership prospect, although it is not excluded, and are doing worse in terms of democracy. The Central Asian countries are the least advanced both in terms of rapprochement with the EU and their democracy scores.

The table below summarises these findings. One has to note also that the prospect of membership or lack of it is not an abstract concept, but it has implications for the level of intensity of relationship with the EU and the level of the EU's commitment and involvement. Thus, the Western Balkans countries that stand closest to membership enjoy stronger involvement of the EU politically, but also in terms of assistance and people-to-people opportunities. For instance, with the exception of Kosovo, citizens of all of the Western Balkans countries now enjoy visa-free travel to the EU. The EaP countries have started moving towards DCFTAs and visa-free travel only recently, and even then not all of them. This is the highest degree of integration with the EU these countries can achieve in the foreseeable future, and achieving DCFTAs and visa-free travel will be a long process for years to come. The Central Asian countries (CA) are not in a relationship with the EU, which can be labeled as integration. It is a partnership relationship.



The EaP countries present a bigger challenge for the EU than the CEEs and the WBs, for three reasons. Firstly, in many ways the EaP countries lack the sense of direction in terms of breaking away from the communist legacy and returning to Europe. The notion of ‘return to Europe’ was the driving force behind the CEE countries’ post-communist transformation and European integration after 1989. With the help of the EU, these countries have undertaken tremendous reforms and advanced a lot. Political will was there. This is less so with the Western Balkans, but nevertheless they have progressed with their reforms and even managed to cope with such sensitive issues as detainment of former war criminals under the EU’s pressure. This is not the case with the EaP countries that are ‘stuck’ in the post-Communist transformation process.

Secondly, during the period since the Soviet Union collapsed, in the six EaP countries neo-patrimonial regimes (privatised states) were established. These regimes have taken a firm hold of the countries’ resources and institutions during the past two decades. The political elites that represent the regimes in these countries are interested in preserving the *status quo* (preserving rent-seeking opportunities). Any reforms demanded by the EU would disrupt this *status quo*. Additionally, the demand for reforms in these countries on the part of the societies is too weak. It is therefore no surprise that little progress has been achieved in terms of democratisation in this region. Thirdly and finally, Russia serves as an important intervening factor where the reform process is concerned in the EaP countries. It is interested in maintaining the *status quo* and in this way keeping the EaP countries within its sphere of influence. These three factors explain why the EaP countries are reluctant reformers, especially where democratisation is concerned, and why the EU’s impact has been limited.

Under these conditions, the special role of civil societies of the EaP countries has to be recognised. The prospects for emergence of political will among the political elites to move the countries towards the EU is very bleak. Increasing the pressure and demand for reforms from within – among societies - would be the way to go. This means that a critical mass of people in these countries has to emerge that would challenge the system. This is a long terms process and it requires that reform-minded civil society groups work in partnership with the EU. Domestic pressure coupled with external pressure can bear fruits. The concept of ‘partnership with societies’ offered by the EU in May 2011 is thinking in the right direction. It means that the EU will pay more attention to empowering civil societies in the EaP. This concept still needs to be elaborated, while civil societies in the EaP countries still have to comprehend the role they are expected to play to transform their countries.

⁷ <http://www.freedomhouse.org/images/File/nit/2011/NIT-2011-Tables.pdf>

2. Country-by-country, including assessment of country progress reports, negotiations on Association Agreements, visa-free travel process, DCFTA

by Iryna Solonenko

	Armenia	Azerbaijan	Belarus	Georgia	Moldova	Ukraine
Association Agreement	Negotiations started in July 2010	Negotiations started in July 2010 (only conceptual dialogue; no DCFTA negotiations (AZ is not a member of the WTO))	No	Negotiations started in July 2010	Negotiations started in January 2010	Negotiations launched in March 2007, DCFTA in March 2008
Action Plan/ Association Agenda	Adopted in November 2006 (5 years)	Adopted in November 2006 (5 years)	No	Adopted in November 2006 (5 years)	Adopted in February 2005 (3 years)	AP adopted in February 2005 (3 years) Association Agenda adopted in November 2009
Visa facilitation agreement	No EU -Armenia Mobility Partnership signed in October 2011	No	No	Visa facilitation and readmission agreements entered into force in March 2011	Visa facilitation and readmission agreements entered into force in January 2008 and a wider Mobility Partnership was signed in June 2008	Visa facilitation agreement entered into force in January 2008 and readmission agreement on January 2010.
Visa Liberalisation Action Plan	No	No	No	No	Action Plan delivered (January 2011)	Action Plan delivered (November 2010)
European Energy Community	Armenia is an observer member of European energy community since October 2011	Memorandum of Understanding aimed at establishing a partnership in the field on energy (signed in November 2006). A common declaration on the Southern Corridor, according to which Azerbaijan will supply its gas to Europe was signed in January 2011.	No	Georgia is an observer member of European energy community since December 2007	Full member of the Energy Community Treaty since May 2010	Full member of the Energy Community Treaty since February 2011. Memorandum of Understanding on energy signed in 2005 (aimed at Ukraine's convergence and gradual integration into the EU energy market)).
European Common Aviation Area	No	Negotiations to be started	No	Agreement was signed in December 2010	Negotiations were completed in October 2011, signing and ratification process are on the way	Negotiations in the process since 2007

After two years since the EaP was launched, the participant countries have demonstrated uneven progress in their European integration. Three factors seem to play an important role – the membership aspirations of the EaP countries, the political will in these countries, and the EU's offer. In fact, those countries that aspire to EU membership – Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine - have been more advanced in terms of benefiting from various EU instruments, as evident from the table⁸ above. Since 2005, Ukraine has been the front-runner in terms of the offer from the EU and the model for the development of the EU's relations with the

⁸ I would like to thank Natalia Shapovalova for her comments on the table.

other countries in the group. This was the case in 2005-2007 – the early years of the ENP implementation. Now, the situation is somewhat different. In some areas, the front-runners are those countries that have demonstrated stronger political will. For instance, Georgia and Moldova have shown better results than Ukraine in some areas, such as rule of law or market economy/business climate. Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Belarus do not have membership aspirations, show less political will, but also have enjoyed a smaller offer from the EU.

Today, all the EaP countries have the same offer (the May 2011 Communication of the EU). Although the offer has still to be turned into instruments of co-operation/integration (for instance, only Ukraine and Moldova were offered the visa liberalisation action plans, even though theoretically all the EaP countries are entitled to receive those in due time), it is by and large up to each of the EaP countries whether they will be able to make use of the incentives and instruments offered by the EU.

The table above demonstrates where each of the countries stands in terms of benefiting from some important EU instruments.

As of today, Ukraine has almost completed negotiations on the Association Agreement, which started back in February 2007, with the DCFTA talks launched a year later after Ukraine joined the WTO. All the other EaP countries have been negotiating Association Agreements too, with DCFTA talks underway only in Moldova. Armenia and Georgia might launch DCFTA talks by the end of 2011, while Azerbaijan has to join the WTO before such talks can be opened.

Ukraine and Moldova have been implementing Visa Liberalisation Action Plan since January 2011 and November 2010 respectively. These two countries and Georgia have had Visa facilitation and Readmission Agreements with the EU, since January 2008 and March 2011 respectively. The latter simplifies the procedures for issuing Schengen visas. In September 2011, the European Commission offered Armenia and Azerbaijan the launch of visa facilitation talks. Belarus has not so far been offered the Visa facilitation agreement and therefore the Visa Liberalization Action Plan, which is the next step, is not so far in sight. Interestingly, Belarus receives the highest number of visas per capita as compared with the other EaP countries. This means that the absence of a Visa Facilitation Agreement is not the obstacle for increased travel if the EU member states decide to facilitate contacts with a given country.

Moldova and Ukraine are members of the European Energy Community (EEC) and have negotiated accession to European Common Aviation Area (ECAA); Georgia and Armenia are the observer members of the EEC; Georgia is the only EaP country that signed the agreement on ECAA. The importance of EEC and ECAA has to do with the fact that they both represent the common institutional and legal arrangements undertaken by the EU and non-EU countries. Through participation in these arrangements the EaP countries de facto become the members of the EU market in those areas.

The findings of the European Integration Index for EaP Countries implemented by a group of over 30 experts from the EU and EaP countries⁹ show that Moldova and Georgia are the frontrunners. Ukraine follows them. Next comes Armenia followed by Azerbaijan, while Belarus closes the list. The study has looked at political, economic and social ties between each of the six EaP countries and the EU (Linkage dimension); the extent to which structures and institutions in the EaP countries are converging towards EU standards and in line with EU requirements (Approximation dimension); and management structures for European integration in EaP countries (Management dimension). These findings mean that Ukraine, the country that was once seen as the flagship country of the Eastern Partnership, comes only third after Moldova and Georgia that have demonstrated stronger political will. The findings also mean that Belarus, despite its geographical proximity to the EU, has been lagging behind other EaP countries due to political problems.

The study has found that increased linkages and approximation with the EU mutually reinforce each other. In other words, countries that enjoy more intensive cooperation with the EU at different levels seem to perform

⁹ Project "European Integration Index for Eastern Partnership Countries". See http://www.irf.ua/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=273&Itemid=519 for more details.

better domestically. There are exceptions though. For instance, although Ukraine has enjoyed more intensive political dialogue with the EU than other EaP countries, it could have done better where democracy and rule of law are concerned. Also, although Ukraine is more advanced in terms of trade and economic integration with the EU and already concluded DCFTA negotiations, its business climate is among the worst in the EaP. This suggests that Ukraine has not made the best use of its stronger record and more advanced level of cooperation with the EU compared to the other countries. By contrast, Armenia performed well in approximation in different sectors, despite being disadvantaged in terms of intensiveness of cooperation with the EU.

The results of the study also show that all the EaP countries have rather liberal trade regimes with the EU. Over 80% of the EaP countries' products de facto enter the EU market without import tariffs. This means that major barriers to trade are non-tariff, and their removal will require domestic adoption to EU standards. This is where the DCFTA will play an important role.

The way the EaP countries organise the policies and institutions to deal with European integration is an important indication of political will. Hence, Georgia and Moldova show better results here than Ukraine and other EaP countries. Notably, all the EaP countries demonstrate a discrepancy between the national reform plans/strategies and the bilateral agenda of co-operation with the EU. In other words, the objectives of the bilateral Action Plans the EU has with the EaP countries (Association Agenda where Ukraine is concerned; Belarus has no Action Plan) are not integrated in the national reform plans. This means that European integration is not yet perceived as a part of the domestic reform strategy, but rather a parallel process.

The way the EaP countries organise the policies and institutions to deal with European integration is an important indication of political will. Hence, Georgia and Moldova show better results here than Ukraine and other EaP countries. Notably, all the EaP countries demonstrate a discrepancy between the national reform plans/strategies and the bilateral agenda of co-operation with the EU. In other words, the objectives of the bilateral Action Plans the EU has with the EaP countries (Association Agenda where Ukraine is concerned; Belarus has no Action Plan) are not integrated in the national reform plans. This means that European integration is not yet perceived as a part of the domestic reform strategy, but rather a parallel process.

3. Recommendations for Civil Society Facility and European Endowment for Democracy

Věra Řiháčková

The widely welcomed review (Communication) of the European Neighbourhood Policy presented by the European Commission and the European External Action Services on 25 May 2011 contains new ambitious policy concepts (“deep democracy”, “mutual accountability”, etc.), but also proposals for new funding instruments targeting primarily civil , as it is seen indispensable for democratic changes initiated from within the EU partner countries.

ENPI Civil Society Facility

The incentive for the new facility from which civil society would be funded, and that would work within the ENPI, emerged within the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum, and was taken on board by the EEAS and the European Commission when preparing the ENP review. The facility should run in 2011-2013 on a preliminary allocation of € 60 million (€ 20 million distributed each year of the cycle) with no *a priori* geographic distribution of the funding between East and South.

There are three proposed components; the Component 1 (Strengthen non-state actors (NSA) capacities to promote reform and increase public accountability) that is to be implemented in 2011 most likely aims at the ENP South, as it mainly focuses on the trainings and capacity building. A “comprehensive analysis” of the needs in every ENP country done by the European Commission and EEAS should precede the programming of the call under the Component 1. Given the still understaffed EU delegations in most of the countries and a lack of strategy on how to involve the local actors into the preparations of the comprehensive analysis, the quality of the outputs and the timeline of delivery remain unclear.

Component 2 (Strengthening NSAs through support to regional or country projects) should run on the course of the whole programming cycle, and provide funding for projects related to ENP implementation (mostly monitoring projects), Eastern Partnership and Union for Mediterranean based on regular calls for proposals under still unspecified terms, regulated, however, by the existing Financial Regulations and Implementing Rules, and thus not appropriately flexible (only EIDHR calls have specific conditions). A specific call for regional flagship project can be launched, most likely on the issue of improving the environment for NSAs, which is generally a well-selected priority in relation to the EaP region. Component 3 (implementation in 2012 and 2013) should aim at encouraging partner governments to propose and implement bilateral programmws aiming at reinforcing civil society.

Recommendations:

- *Maximum flexibility of funding should be employed within the new facility, using the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) template and some of its specificities (funding of non-registered NGOs); the financial decision that is to be taken in October 2011 could contain the elements of enhanced flexibility;*
- *Allocate part of the resources, with regard to the outcome of the real spending of the 2011 budget line, to the structural support to selected organisations, following the features of the framework used by the EACEA for the intra-EU calls for structural support of selected parts of the EU civil society;*
- *abolish the Component 3 in relation to the EaP countries, possibly with the exception of Moldova and Georgia, as it is quite clear it would deliver undesired outcome (funding of GONGOs);*
- *The elaboration of a comprehensive analysis of needs that will provide the basis for allocation of funds under Component 1 of the facility should be scrutinised by the EaP CSF.*

European Endowment for Democracy (EED)

One of the new ideas is the proposal to establish the European Endowment for Democracy. The concept has been already promoted by Poland and it is one of the flagship initiatives of its Presidency of the European Council. However, no clear concept describing organisation, funding, priority areas and work of the EED has been presented so far. and there are several competing ideas. Most likely, the EED will not materialise during the Polish EU Presidency.

Recommendations:

- *The EED should not emerge on the expense of terminating the EIDHR as it is hardly imaginable similar budget line would be allocated to the newly established body from the Community budget as the Commission would not be keen on giving up control over such spending; the overall result could be diminished, not increased support to human rights and democracy support. The Commission already tested ground for abolishing EIDHR in 2013-2020 and the launch of EED could serve as further argument.*
- *The EED should be autonomous, flexible and non-partisan tool*
- *Building on existing organisations when designing the EED could provoke negative backlash for the whole project; there are many competing actors and further lobbying from the EaP CSF will be needed to contribute to the emergence of the EED as autonomous, flexible and non-partisan tool.*
- *As direct and indirect funding to political parties is excluded under existing EU instruments, the EED could provide a room for innovative ways of working with political parties, which acknowledge their crucial role in the consolidation of democracy.*
- *With regard to both instruments (ENPI Civil Society Facility and European Endowment for Democracy), the EU must ensure that those instruments are coordinated with the new EIDHR to ensure maximum impact and complementarity, avoiding double funding, while creating desired synergies; the EaP CSF should contribute to this process by providing feedback and impact analyses.*

C. A Roadmap for the Civil Society Forum

1. Priority activities

by Boris Navasardyan

Priority activities

(i) Monitoring progress in reaching and implementing bilateral agreements with EU, and monitoring work in different thematic platform areas,

a) General decision on the status of CSF monitoring results should be made by the EC and governments of the partner countries. Respective mechanisms of announcement and inclusion of those results in the official agenda of EaP should be developed.

b) Special multilateral unit, including representatives of CSOs of both EU and EaP countries, has to be established in the structure of CSF, with the mission to develop methodologies, as well as to select monitoring groups and to check the quality of each monitoring report. The monitoring reports claiming to be announced on behalf of CSF should be approved by this unit. The unit should also have subdivisions specialised on respective thematic and profile studies.

c) The monitoring of the progress in reaching bilateral agreements (AA, DCFTA, Visa facilitation, etc.) should include assessment of how the areas of importance were identified for the negotiations; what were the initial situation and improvements in these areas in the process of negotiations; in what extent the interest by the negotiating parties to achieve the result was displayed by each of the parties; how consistent are the results of the negotiations; in what extent the civil societies were involved.

ii) Provision of expert policy analysis and recommendations

a) Another unit on expert policy analysis and recommendations should be established in the structure of CSF. Its work should be based both on the results of the monitoring studies, and on other analytical methods (including "indexation", forecast, etc.) research areas geopolitical, market, social, environmental trends, etc).

b) The findings of this unit should also have certain status and mechanisms of announcement, submission to the official level of EaP.

(iii) Watchdog on democracy and human rights

a) The CSF should produce annual reports on the progress of reforms, and on the situation with democracy and human rights. The reports should include both comparative review of the whole EaP region and separate section on each of the six countries. The report should be based on submissions from the sub-working groups and filed together by an editorial team consisting of representatives assigned by the Forum through special procedures. The release of the report on behalf of CSF should be a duty of the CSF Steering Committee.

b) The annual reports should reflect the international commitments taken by the respective countries; technical/institutional developments (adopted legislation, establishment of institutions); practical functioning of the latter; reflection of those changes on real life of the society, people; the role/engagement of civil society in the above-mentioned processes.

c) Through the reports the political conditionality principle and implementation of "more for more" formula could be ensured in the context of EU-partner countries relations. Development of specific indexes on the situation in specific areas should be considered (fighting corruption, freedom of media, human rights, etc.) in line with the increased competence of specific SWGs.

d) A special attention should be given by the CSF to the identification of real "agents of changes" in every EaP country. These could be state officials, political parties and individual politicians, experts and first of all CSOs. Given very controversial developments in the 3rd sector of the partner countries clear distinction between those who simply announce their commitment to the European values and reformation and those who consistently and courageously contribute efforts to that, should be made. The EU through its instruments provides support, funding not relying too much on the merits of organisations, but mostly based on the content of the proposal (technical assessment). And this approach can hardly be disputed in general. But in the specific context of CSF the history

and proved dedication of the organisations should become the key factors. Otherwise the CSF will just become another huge grants consumer, rather than an engine for real and sustained reforms, thus providing added value as an institutional part of the EaP process. An "Audit" of CSOs in the EaP countries is a complicated and challenging task, which hardly can be achieved within a short period of time. However, development of its mechanisms should be seriously addressed.

(iv) Convening/showcasing/promoting and publicising projects

a) In addition to what was described on that above, a well elaborated system of publication of all CSF reports and their promotion in the EU countries/institutions and in EaP countries should be developed.

(v) leading lobby for closer political and economic integration of the partner countries with the EU, and for trilateral dialogue at the national level concerning bilateral agreements.

a) National platforms on behalf of CSF should be participants of trilateral dialogue concerning trilateral agreements. At the same time, NPs in their approaches should reflect the general approaches of the CSF and do not differ from each other in principal issues depending on country. Combination of certain autonomy and status of CSF representative in each respective should be ensured. Absence of formulated specific rules and procedures for the establishment of NPs lead to tensions and conflicts among CSOs in the national level. Better later than never such rules should be developed.

They should include:

1. Inclusiveness and involvement of all those NGOs who expressed their interest in the EaP process. Their right to be aware of all developments in the CSF process should be secured. Their suggestions, ideas, initiatives should be considered and appreciated.

2. The rotation of CSF delegates and widening of CSF "community" should be reflected in the participants' selection rules and procedure.

3. National facilitators elected by the national delegations in each Forum should be the main channel ensuring the linkage between CSF and national platforms.

4. The delegates of each current Forum are the ones before who the National facilitator is primarily accountable.

5. The ownership of CSF delegates of different years on the CSF and national platforms should be ensured.

The CSF and the European Commission

Civil society is and should be unruly. But in the EaP it is unruly in two senses: in one, like any genuine civil society. In another, because its fake part uses its genuine unruliness principle to add chaos and achieve its aims in the darkness of chaos.

In order to address these issues, I recommend:

1. that the EU continue to tightly manage civil society and EaP, based on clear and transparent criteria

2. In order to work out these criteria, to introduce a serious civil society annual audit for EaP, similar to corruption, human rights and freedom of expression global audits conducted by the most stringent independent (not directly associated with EU institutions in fact).

Thus, democracy assistance should be channelled fully under the supervision of civil society (but the one which is left after the two recommendations above are implemented).

Civil society should be further built and supported independently of state structures (and the Civil Society Facility may be a tool for that). Civil society should undergo a very tough audit periodically, and only those who pass that audit with high marks should be supported. It should be the first check when considering eligibility to be awarded a grant.

A similar system of assistance should be designed for Russia, and in strategic and communication unity with the EaP system. Russian civil society, today significantly marginalised, should be supported. Russia-EaP civil society projects should be supported, and the departmental deadlock inside the EU or EC on this issue should be overcome fast and decisively.

It is clear that until the conflicts in the region are resolved, or at least prospects for their resolution are in sight, no final sustainable progress can be registered, apart, perhaps, for Ukraine and Belarus. Moldova and the entire South Caucasus are a hostage to their conflicts, and thus a permanent source of instability.

The political will of the EU, combined with thinking out of the box and a paradigm shift of inclusion of civil society, can play a decisive role. Just like the inclusion of civil society in the EaP process has been done, if not against the will of EaP governments, but at least without asking permission from them, the same should be done with the engagement of remnants or embryos of civil society from non-recognised entities (and the displaced populations).

It is these people, especially youth, who, in the medium run, will become a resource of increasing stability, if they change their perspective from a 'tunnel vision' and 'looking, from a tranche, into a snipers' binocular, on the enemy' to looking for options for peace and coexistence. No support to governments, and particularly no support to bilateral governmental negotiations processes, will ever be so strategically important, as support to civil societies from the states battered because of wars, and non-recognised entities, to come together and tackle jointly issues, such as human rights, corruption, etc. in multilateral setting.

Here, the European multilateralism and federalism systems, such as Europe of regions, the Ireland example, the Tyrol example and even the Cyprus example (so far), etc., are a key. In parallel, inside the societies the hatred-cultivation and intolerance-building policies should be continually challenged, with no excuses, and the opposite explicitly supported on a significant scale, particularly via grants, and particularly paying attention to the media messages and educational systems, as well as cultural messages.

When we are talking about conditionality, however, we cannot have a one-size-fits-all approach. This is a fact that has to be recognised but not just accepted: we should find ways around the fact that, given that Belarus and Azerbaijan are far down on freedoms and human rights scale, freedom and rights violations in Armenia or Ukraine should be tolerated more.

Moreover: if we come now to the question of implementation of the 'more for more, less for less' scheme, we should devise a system of pendula which counterbalances the geopolitical pendulum.

Its essence is the following: if there is more democracy and proven positive reform implemented and visibly bearing fruit in any of the EaP states, support to them should increase, both financially and otherwise: opportunities, support to their initiatives in the international arena (such as, say, the Unesco 'Year of the book' in Armenia in 2012) etc.

If, however, the state fails to demonstrate credible advance, particularly in the reform of its elections and juridical systems, then the support should be withdrawn from the state to a visible and recognizable degree, and this message should be widely declared (such as the Millennium Challenge Corporation final withdrawal of a € USD 50m tranche from the grant to Armenia because it failed to deal seriously with its 1 March 2008 events).

Here again, civil society comes into picture as the only credible lever to be used to avoid this effect: it should be explicitly declared that all the reform money which is withdrawn from the state for its failings to reform is channelled back through civil society.

The example of the Soviet Union (support of dissidents in early years as well as the Soros 'onslaught' immediately with the advent of perestroika) is one of the biggest examples that demonstrates what can correctly directed money and opportunity do to get rid of authoritarianism without any hard power application, but there are also many other examples.

2. A civil society roadmap for democratic transition

by Andrei Yahorau

2. A civil society roadmap for democratic transition

The Eastern Partnership and the European Neighborhood Policy are aimed at building a zone of stability, well-being, and democracy on the borders of the EU. Offering the countries its help to complete the processes of institutional building and reforming a wide spectrum of areas from economy to culture, the EU counts on these countries' steps towards democratisation and recognition of the EU basic values and standards (conditionality approach and "more for more" principle).

The contradictions of the situation are in the unwillingness of national governments of the majority of the EaP countries to follow this logic. The transition to democracy in the partner countries poses a threat of change to the ruling elite, and this price seems for them too high. Thus, democratisation of the partner countries can be not so much a condition for rapprochement with the EU, but the result of such rapprochement. The EaP in this sense can (and should) be considered by civil society as a tool to complete the processes of de-Sovietisation, nation-building in the partner countries, and, finally, their Europeanisation and democratisation. Only such a sequence can provide stability of democratic transformations in the long-term period.

Unlike the governments, civil society of the EaP countries is broadly pro-EU as the basic agent of democratic changes. Civil society's role is in advancement of the European vector of development in the partner countries, pressure upon their own national governments, prevention of mere imitation of reforms by the governments, and a wide dissemination of European values in society. Today, civil society in the partner countries has no forces to influence significantly democratic changes, but, nevertheless, it is the only actor able to guarantee movement in this direction. Civil society's performance of such a role is possible only if it is supported by the EU and if the latter recognises civil society as an independent and legitimate subject of relations along with the national governments.

The framework tool of such relations can be a structural dialogue of the national governments, EU, and civil society concerning democratisation, actualisation of human rights, bilateral rapprochement with EU, and implementation of European standards in the partner countries. The co-ordination of the "roadmap" of democratic changes in the partner countries can be a subject to start the structural dialogue.

The specific situation, which develops in different countries of the Eastern Partnership, does not assume a possibility of working out a united "roadmap" for all six countries. A unique plan should be elaborated for each country within the scope of the structural dialogue at the national level. Thus, the EU standards will act as the general target frameworks for the "roadmaps". Besides their participation in the elaboration and tripartite coordination of the "road maps", the structures of civil society play a significant role in the materialisation, monitoring, and evaluation of the advancement of the accepted plans of action.

The OMC can be a prototype for the creation of a mechanism of civil society's participation in working out and implementing the "roadmaps". The Open Method of Coordination (OMC) is widely used in the EU and has already shown its efficiency as a means of co-ordinated movement of various actors to common social and political standards and reference points without unification.

The idea of this method is in regulating and directing the process of solving joint social and political problems (unemployment, poverty reduction, harmonisation of education systems, etc.) not via strict and centralised requirements, but through creating a joint monitoring system.

This method consists of the following procedures:

1. Definition of framework principles, aims, and strategies to overcome some particular problem common for all participating countries.

2. Development and setting of quantitative and qualitative indicators, which are adapted to contexts of participating countries. These indicators allow comparison of countries, as well as to evaluate the progress of each country according to common reference points.
3. Providing research and expert evaluation (both governmental and independent ones) of the situation in some particular field according to the developed indicators; evaluation of common and individual progress within EaP programme; identification of leaders and outsiders in solving particular targeted problems, presenting the best practices.
4. On the basis of this type of research and evaluations, “white spots”, and a slow movement towards the solution of problems are determined, creating “roadmaps” and recommendations for each country for the coming period of time. These recommendations are presented to national governments for their adjustment to national implementation programmes.
5. After the period of carrying out national implementation programmes (usually once a year), research studies and reports on each country are set. Comparative reports are presented to the public and disseminated via media that creates public control and control by the public opinion.
6. New “roadmaps” for national programmes are developed on the basis of evaluation that takes into account individual progress within the framework of a common programme and aims.

Open method of coordination:

- Carries out “soft” management (via programme monitoring) based not on sanctions, but on expert surveys, descriptions of best practices, and publicity;
- Does not unify the strategy and actions, and provides opportunities for each country to solve the most relevant problems and to move forward in accordance with their own context;
- Provides an opportunity for wide and open participation in reflecting and forming both directions of activities and their results.

For introducing this method into EaP practice, it is necessary:

1. To develop frame principles and criteria of evaluation of approaching EaP countries to European space that may be used as evaluation tool for EaP programme as a whole.
2. To set legitimately expert examination and evaluation procedures (creating comparative and country reports) for assessing the democratising progress of EaP countries. These procedures should be based on obligatory inclusion of civil society (CSF and National Platforms' shadow reports) and parallel or joint evaluation done by national or external experts.
3. To identify (within the frames of platforms' meetings) place and time for presenting reports and recommendations (“roadmaps” for each country).
4. To provide ability of wide publicity presenting and discussing reports, expert conclusions and evaluation reports on EaP progress.

When forming indicators of progress to these reference points, the following contexts should be taken into account:

- Social and historical context: evaluation system should be based on deep knowledge of current situation with de-Sovietisation and democratisation processes in the partner countries. Using formal criteria, which are often used for evaluation of development in countries with another social and historical context, may lead to non-adequate understanding and assessment.
- Regional context: evaluation system should be oriented at forming new European region via setting common system of indicator and communication about methods and ways of development.

- European context: system of indicators and criteria should be in line with European tendencies and processes.

Taking into account these contexts supposes the obligatory inclusion of civil society in the development of a common system of indicators of EaP progress as well as direct participation in programme monitoring system. Only civil society of partner and EU countries could keep attention in all three contexts. It has necessary knowledge of unique situations in their countries, it is included into CSF communication in regional dimension and has clear pro-European orientation.