

**Capacity building meeting of Working Group 3:
Policies and actions in Eastern Partnership on Environment, Climate Change and Energy Security
Annual Meeting Report
Brussels, 5 June 2015**

On 5 June 2015 the Working Group 3 meeting took place in Brussels, gathering **16 working group members** and EU officials from EU institutions (DG Energy, DG Environment, DG NEAR). The one-day meeting focused on learning and exchange in the three main policy areas of the WG: environment, climate change, and energy security.

Specific objectives include

1. Provide an update on policies and projects/actions happening in EaP on environment, climate change and energy security
2. Encourage the development of regional perspectives and joint support initiatives
3. Build capacity on use of policy monitoring frameworks such as ISO, SEA and EIA
4. Identify common actions until the Annual Assembly.

The meeting was chaired by Murman Margvelashvili (Coordinator of WG3, World Experience for Georgia) and Plamena Borissova (Coordinator of WG3, Institute for Environmental Strategies). In his introduction, **Murman Margvelashvili** stressed the importance of finding better ways of cooperating, which would benefit the Eastern Partnership countries and organisations, most of all the interaction with the EU and the Eastern Partnership process. A WG3 brainstorming session was organised, in order to think of how to further develop the directions of the group. **Fikret Jafarov** (EaP CSF) gave a presentation on monitoring tools on environmental projects, and how best to implement these in different contexts and **Plamena Borissova** presented the situation with environmental policy in Bulgaria before and after accession to the EU as a case study. The meeting then concluded on planning cooperation projects during 2015, and how best to adapt the selected projects in terms of the funding assigned. **Inga Zarafyan** and **Manana Tsulaia**, who attended the biodiversity week shared some highlights and learning points from this event that took place during the EU sustainable development week, which was the reason to hold the WG 3 meeting in Brussels.

1. Energy Security: Challenges and Priorities for EaP countries

Marion Schiller-Probst:

“Riga summit confirmed that energy is an important issue in cooperation. Within European Neighbourhood review process, energy should be an important priority. Everyone agrees; this is really an issue and it is important to look at how to diversify”

Murman Margvelashvili:

“A more conscious attitude towards our energy sector is needed; less grey areas in terms of our politicians’ actions and internal corruption aligns interest of the whole society in the right direction.”

The chair of this session **Murman Margvelashvili** (EaP CSF) mentioned the differences between EaP countries, especially after the Riga Summit, but that the Eastern Partnership should still remain an inclusive process. He encouraged the CSOs of Eastern Partnership countries to take a more active role in negotiations with the European Commission, not just setting demands, but also implementing change themselves. The main topics that were discussed were the dependence of the Eastern Partnership and the EU on Russia in terms of energy, and how best to tackle this issue and diversify the resources. **Marion Schiller-Probst** (DG Energy, International Relations) started the panel with an update of the EaP Platform 3 (energy security) activities in 2015. Since 2014 there is a new strand in the programme, which is work on conventional and unconventional oil and gas resources. The EaP Flagship Initiative is also part of the Programme since 2010 which aims to facilitate gas and electricity trade between EaP countries and the EU. It is mainly aimed at governmental structures, including small and medium sized enterprises, and implemented mainly through INOGATE and the Eastern Europe Energy Efficiency and Environment Partnership (E5P).

The speaker discussed the most important past and upcoming Platform 3 events. She expressed hope that these projects would encourage future common projects on the regional level in the area of infrastructure and interconnections. The next important event for the WG3 will be 14th platform meeting (planned around November).

Bilateral work with all EaP countries is ongoing, as well as the flagship initiative. We have to think of how to diversify and have a more tailor-made approach to the different countries. The multilateral track in the platform will remain, and there are possibilities for the Working Groups to take on more responsibility. The bilateral cooperation might seem more dominant than the multilateral one, but this is understandable seeing as some countries have signed Association Agreements and have to fulfil the acquis of the energy community. There are more interests and different priorities in these countries, but we will continue work on regional level with the other countries, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Belarus (sustainable energy, nuclear safety, etc).

For further reading on Platform 3 work in the area of Energy Security, please follow these links:

Eastern Partnership Platform 3 activities:

<https://ec.europa.eu/energy/en/topics/international-cooperation> - on this page you will find also a section on the EaP

<https://ec.europa.eu/energy/node/1589> - this page links to all former events of Platform 3 and related documents.

Eastern Partnership Energy Flagship Initiative:

http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/neighbourhood/pdf/riga/20150518_flagship_energy.pdf

Energy Union:

http://ec.europa.eu/priorities/energy-union/index_en.htm

The Eastern Partnership:

<https://ec.europa.eu/energy/en/events/eastern-partnership-platform-energy-security>

The Eastern Partnership Platform on Energy Security:

<https://ec.europa.eu/energy/en/topics/international-cooperation>

Andriy Chubyk (EaP CSF) then continued the panel with his presentation on European energy market security of supplies. He presented the opposition of European Energy Security divided between South (problems related to uncontrolled military activities) and East, where energy is used as a tool of political pressure. The confrontation with Russia has been one of the main issues in the EaP region, particularly in Ukraine. Environmentally, the Donbass region has been particularly affected (infrastructure, coal mines). Andriy also discussed how best to counter Russian aggression in terms of energy by conducting monitoring and relying on the European energy acquis. Energy is used for bribery and corruption, and Ukraine and EaP countries are aware of the problem created by internal politics and businessmen. A more proactive position towards Russia should be developed, as well as a request for transit through Central Asia. EU request for the de-monopolisation of the Russian oil and gas market could lead to a more open market. Solutions like shale gas are being discussed in Ukraine, but the issue should be solved sustainably. The general trend is to look at local sources, such as biomass and renewables, but energy efficiency and energy saving are even better solutions.

Please see the full presentation here: http://eap-csf.eu/assets/images/Reshaping_European_energy_security.pdf

Gaspar Demur (DG Energy) went on to discuss the Energy Security framework, as well as the security of supply issue. The numerous gas crises show how pressing it is to secure the broad concept of energy security. Diversification and energy efficiency are crucial. This can be achieved through the free flow of supply once it enters the respective country, in order to avoid being dependent on a single supplier. Renewable energy and new technologies should also be a high priority. Most member states view energy as a national priority, but the EU wants to encourage this to be seen as a regional or European issue. Long term actions by the Commission include the recent creation of the Energy Union. The Energy Security pillar should ensure the security of gas provision. There would be options to increase the link between EU and member states in terms of gas supply, as well as developing alternative routes. Turkey will also play a key role as a future partner. In terms of trade agreements, there should be a fair distribution of energy throughout Europe.

2.Environment and Climate Change Policies in EaP Countries: the 2015 agenda

In this session moderated by **Plamena Borissova, Victor Cotruta (Moldova NP, EaP CSF)** spoke about challenges with implementing the environment acquis in Moldova (Environmental Strategy 2014-2023). Implementing institutional reform and capacity building to promote environmental protection and sustainable use of natural resources were also mentioned. Recently, the minister of environment decided to re-establish the Council of Environment Protection, involving civil society. Civil society will have a new task to monitor harmonization of Moldovan legislation to EU law.

Link to the presentation: http://eap-csf.eu/assets/images/AA_environment.pdf

Laura Giappichelli (DG NEAR) presented the cooperation between the EU and EaP countries in relation to environment and climate change and civil society engagement. Ms. Giappichelli is in charge of water policy and management projects, and is encouraging NGO's from EaP countries to participate in these projects. Emerald Network II is critical for transboundary cooperation for endangered species protection. Another key project is Air Quality- which works on air pollution within an institutional framework.

Link to presentation: http://eap-csf.eu/assets/images/Env_civil_society_5June2015.pdf

Andreja Skerl (DG Environment) mentioned the need for capacity building of NGO's, as well as giving environmental policies a more prominent role in the EaP agenda. DG Environment cooperates with civil society organizations, and take them as an important source of information. CSOs are an objective source of information, and also provide constructive criticism of the DG Environment's work. A small grant programme for NGOs was implemented revealing capacity building needs related to proposal-writing. The lack of public awareness and cooperation from certain EaP governments makes implementation of projects difficult.

Useful links on Environment and Climate Change

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/international_issues/eu_neighbourhood_en.htm

<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/>

<http://capacity4dev.ec.europa.eu/env-east/dashboard>

3. Brainstorming on how to improve the work of WG3, and strengthening joint actions in EaP countries

With **Murman Margvelashvili** as facilitator, the Working Group 3 participants identified the group's main strengths and weaknesses, and what could be done to improve in the future. This was structured into a SWOT table. The lack of cooperation of CSOs following different policy areas of WG3 was mentioned as one of the main challenges. **Victor Cotruta** mentioned that a possible solution would be to organise more goal-orientated activities. **Murman** proposed that the group remind itself of its common goal and purpose. **Fikret Jafarov** mentioned the lack of activity of EaP NGOs because ecological discussions are considered as a dangerous area, and a need for distance from the political process. Finally, **Anna Golubovska-Onisimova** mentioned the need for a proper selection process, and that quotas were needed for all 3 pillars, not just environment.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interest in Environmental improvement in all countries • Developed network of high level experts. • Good human resources already involved in WG3. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weak cooperation • Broad area – not focused on concrete themes • Insufficient depth of specialization • Selection process (of Platform meetings)

	<p>is not diversified and should be improved. We need people from all specialties</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distinction of interests of participants • In country differences of NGOs “Environment” is not a separate platform in EaP process • Weak professional level of CSOs • Weak institutional memory of the Group (no succession of results)
Opportunity	Threat
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing funding from different sources (On-granting, REC Moldova) • More focus on common interests • Be more result oriented produce concrete results • Nonpolitical themes may allow closer cooperation of NGOs from all Eap Countries • Using common interests and cross-border issues - ecosystem approach • Sustainable development is a common ground • Common projects on capacity building of regional organizations • Networking with EU NGOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensitivity and specifics of political environment in different countries • Further political diversification of our countries • Dissipation of experience generated by previous group activities

4) Capacity building on monitoring frameworks and tools: ISO Governance and Bulgaria case study

Fikret Jafarov (Eap CSF) presented environmental monitoring frameworks and tools in Azerbaijan, and how these could be applied in other contexts. ISO 14000 is a series of environmental standards developed by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). ISO 14000 provides a guideline to improve environmental management efforts. The methodology is based on the four-step ‘Plan-Do-Check-Act’ management method. International Financial Institutions, such as the World Bank, use similar procedures. The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline was used as a case study for environmental impact assessment on the area. The Shahdag Mountain resort in Azerbaijan was another case study where this monitoring tool was applied. Fikret highlighted the importance of capacity in the monitoring group and clear application of the monitoring and feedback procedure. The implementation process itself helped correct many issues during the construction process, hence limiting damaging effects on the ecosystems through which the pipeline would run.

Link to the presentations

<http://eap-csf.eu/assets/images/Брыцель2015.pdf>

<http://eap-csf.eu/assets/images/Презентациябишкек.pdf>

Plamena Borissova (EaP CSF) presented the case study of how Bulgaria's environment policy changed prior to EU accession and after, and the challenges that were faced by the country. This was meant as a useful example for EaP countries. Natura 2000 was mentioned as important policy from the EU side in terms of nature protection. She described Horizon 2020 and Bulgaria's target for 2020. In terms of prevention of environmental damage Plamena highlighted the following tools: the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), Environmental Assessment (EA), and Integrated pollution prevention and control (IPPC).

<http://eap-csf.eu/assets/images/Slides EU BG Environment Plamena.pdf>

5) EU Green Week 2015: highlights by Inga Zarafyan and Manana Tsulaya

Inga Zarafyan and Manana Tsulaya both attended the EU biodiversity week, and they presented the main highlights of the various presentations.

Inga Zarafyan introduced the EU Biodiversity Strategy and EU objectives. Myriam Dumortier DG ENV spoke of invasive alien species regulation Inga highlighted the need of monitoring as a crucial instrument for conservation. The Emerald Network would be useful to look at regarding ecological conservation. The Green Week 2015 (30 May-5 June) is a moment to draw attention to everything dealing with sustainable development, biodiversity and nature protection. It is a multifaceted and comprehensive programme and the EU Week is an umbrella for similar activities happening in parallel in several countries of the EU. Inga found particularly Birdlife Europe stand as very creative, with all information possible on birds, their habitat and situation in Europe.

Manana Tsulaya attended the seminar on biodiversity and nature protection. She outlined the EU Biodiversity strategy, Habitats Directive, and Birds directive. The Structure of the EU 2020 Biodiversity strategy was of interest to Ms Tsulaya's organisation, especially the target on biodiversity and agriculture. The project-Life Ella-Creating Green was a social project interesting for all. At Green Week 2015 there was a panel on farming diversity and CAP for nature based tourism. They work on the landscape and look at soil fertility. The 'Slow food' organisation gave a presentation on trying to encourage people to eat healthy. Ms Tsulaya then gave a short presentation on her organisation, the Biological Farming Association Elkana, which supports Georgian agricultural Biodiversity Conservation. The project aims to develop a replicable model of agricultural biodiversity protection for selected local varieties in one region of Georgia.

<http://eap-csf.eu/assets/images/Seminar follow up 05.06.2015.pdf>

Links to EU Sustainable Development Week presentations which Inga and Manana shared

http://eap-csf.eu/assets/images/FP_Birds_and_Habitats_Directives_Natura_2000.pdf

http://eap-csf.eu/assets/images/GJ_LIFE_Elia_project_Seminar_on_biodiversity_and_nature_protection_Eastern_v2.0.pdf

http://eap-csf.eu/assets/images/IO_EU_EmeraldNetwork_legalframework_JP_Iva_Obretenova.pdf

http://eap-csf.eu/assets/images/KZ_The_EU_Biodiversity_Strategy.pdf

http://eap-csf.eu/assets/images/MD- Invasive_Alien_Species.pdf

http://eap-csf.eu/assets/images/Nature_Protection_EU-Ukraine.pdf

Annex including agenda and participants list

<http://eap-csf.eu/assets/images/AgendaWG3.pdf>

http://eap-csf.eu/assets/images/WG3_attendance_sheet.pdf