

**Election procedures for the annual event of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum, Batumi, Georgia 20-21 November 2014**

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**The elections of the Steering Committee of the EaP CSF is taking place on an annual basis during the annual event of the EaP CSF.** At the annual event, the Forum participants selected from interested civil society organisations of Eastern Partner countries and the EU member states (only those coming with voting rights) elect **19** members of the Steering Committee of the Forum:

- 6 country facilitators, one from each Eastern Partner country (elected by the respective country delegation)
- 5 working group coordinators – one for each working group from an Eastern Partner country (elected by the participants of the respective Working Group)
- 5 working group coordinators - one for each working group from the EU member states (elected by the participants of the respective Working Group)
- 3 coordinators from the EU member states (elected in a plenary by all Forum participants)

## **1. Election procedures**

### **(i) Criteria for eligibility of candidates**

Participants from the Forum comprise:

- (a) representatives of CSOs from the Eastern Partner countries
- (b) representatives of CSOs from EU member states

Only participants with voting rights in the annual Forum are eligible as candidates for elections to the Steering Committee, or eligible to nominate candidates for elections to the Steering Committee. Candidacy requires nomination by another participant in the Forum with voting rights (as outlined below) for the corresponding position on the Steering Committee.

**Candidacy for any position can be submitted to the Steering Committee in advance of the Forum (to be sent to [steeringcommittee@eap-csf.eu](mailto:steeringcommittee@eap-csf.eu) by midnight, Central European Time, on 18 November 2014) or during the Forum. A final call for nominations will be issued by the chair of the relevant session (working group, national delegation, or Forum plenary session for election of EU Coordinators) immediately before the presentation of the candidates. All nominations should indicate the name of the candidate, the organisation selected to participate in the CSF that he/she represents and its approval for his/her candidacy in case that he/she is not the statutory representative of the organisation. In addition, the name and organisation of the nominating party should be indicated.**

Each participant joins one of the five thematic working groups, and is eligible for nomination as a candidate for election as a working group coordinator (with the election of one participant from category (a) and one from category (b) in each working group). In addition, participants from category (a) are eligible for nomination as candidates for their respective country facilitator.

Representatives from category (b) of participants are eligible for nomination as EU coordinators.

Once elected for a position on the Steering Committee, the elected individual must withdraw from any candidacy for other positions on the Steering Committee. Lists of candidates for the partner countries' working group coordinators will be submitted in advance to all participants, so that the national

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delegations can be encouraged to make nominations to enable a balanced representation of the partner countries as working group coordinators.

Membership of the Steering Committee is limited to two consecutive one—year terms both on an individual and organisational basis (neither the individual nor her/his organization can serve on the Steering Committee for more than two consecutive terms). A Steering Committee member who has served two consecutive one - year terms on the Steering Committee will be eligible to be nominated as a candidate for election again one year after the completion of his/her second consecutive one - year term.

An organisation whose representative has served two consecutive one - year terms on the Steering Committee will be eligible for its representative to be nominated as a candidate for election again one year after the completion of his/her second consecutive one - year term.

**(ii) Voting rights**

Each voting member holds one vote; no proxy votes are allowed. Voting members can vote in only one national delegation (the national delegation for which they are registered - this category applies only to participants from the partner countries), and in only one working group (the working group for which they are registered).

In the elections for the working group coordinators, all registered participants in the working group have voting rights in the election of both the working group coordinator from the partner countries, and of the working group coordinator from the EU member states.

In the elections for the three EU Coordinators, all Forum participants have voting rights, and the vote will be held in a plenary of all participants.

**(iii) Voting procedures and electoral system**

Prior to the elections, the CSF in plenary appoints 12 assessors to supervise elections for each of the above - mentioned posts. The assessors will be assigned to supervise the elections in each of the working groups (at least two per working group) and the elections of the national coordinators (two per national delegation), and three of them will supervise the election of EU coordinators. The assessors will ensure that the electoral procedures are observed, will arbitrate in the event of any disputes about interpretation of the procedures, and in the event of any dispute about the results of the elections. The assessors will also act as vote - counters.

**The assessors will be observers of the CSF, should not be related to any candidates, nor serve as an employee of, or a Director of the Board or other governing organ of any of the organizations whose candidates have been nominated for election.** If during the course of the Forum such a conflict of interest arises, the assessor should declare it immediately and withdraw from the position of assessor.

**The following procedures will be applied to the elections for Steering Committee positions:**

1. The election procedure will be supervised by the appointed assessors.
2. Each candidate will have the chance to present her/himself to the participants who will elect her/him.

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3. The names of the candidates will be written on the screen (or flip chart) in alphabetic order of surname (using the Latin alphabet). Each name will be assigned a number (starting from 1 for the first name in alphabetical order).
4. The assessors will establish if there is a quorum present (where a quorum will be two - thirds of the participants registered for the corresponding session (working group, national delegation, or plenary session of all participants)
5. The voting will be by a secret ballot on a ballot paper distributed by the assessors to each voting participant in the appropriate working group, national delegation, or to the plenary forum for the election of EU coordinators.
6. The participant will write the number of the chosen candidate on the ballot paper and hand it to the assessors.
7. In a secret ballot, each voter can mark the ballot paper with the number corresponding to the name of their chosen candidate (in the case of the 3 EU coordinators, participants should mark the ballot paper with up to and including three numbers corresponding to the names of their chosen candidates. If more than the number of candidates corresponding to the number of vacant positions are selected, the ballot paper is spoilt.
8. After each ballot, the assessors will count the votes, will announce the number of valid ballots cast, confirm if a quorum has been reached, and announce the number of votes cast for each candidate.
9. For the election to be valid, ballot papers must be completed by at least the number of voting members that constitutes a quorum, as defined in (4) above.
10. Those candidates with the most votes are duly elected until the number of vacant positions has been filled.
11. In the event of a tie between two or more candidates for the final vacant position, a new ballot will be issued for votes to be cast for those candidates. When the votes are counted, those candidates with the most votes are duly elected until the number of vacant positions has been filled.
12. In the event of a tie again, a new ballot paper will be issued, and votes will be cast for those candidates who tied. The process will be repeated until the vacant position has been filled.
13. In the event that the ballots do not result in the election of candidates to fill all the vacant positions, there will be a call for new nominations to fill the remaining positions. The ballot for the remaining positions will then be run according to the same procedures as in the first ballot as set out above.

**(iv) Election of Chair of Steering Committee**

The Steering Committee will elect a Chair from its members at the first meeting of the new-elected Steering Committee. The Steering Committee can elect two co-Chairs from its members – one from the Eastern Partner countries and one more from EU member states.

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### 3. Glossary of terms

*Assessors* – Assessors approved by the CSF at its session to supervise the election procedure at the level of national delegations, working groups, and EU coordinators of the Steering Committee.

*Chair* – He/she chairs and facilitates the Steering Committee Meetings and represents the CSF in public fora and events.

*Civil Society Forum* – Multi - country platform of the civil society organisations (CSOs) from EU member states, partner countries, established as the tool for the involvement of the civil society in the elaboration, implementation and evaluation of the multilateral dimension of the Eastern Partnership programme of the EU. CSF receives financial and organizational support of the European Commission but remains independent, self - governing, democratic, transparent and inclusive. Composition of the CSF is renewed annually at its plenary sessions.

*Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)* – Organisations independent from the government that represent interests of the social partners (employers, business representatives and trade unions), non - governmental organizations (representing vast variety of organizations that care about democracy, human rights, free media, local democracy, rule of law, protection of environment, consumer rights, women rights, handicapped, youth and family issues, health protection, culture, education, SMEs, heritage etc.) their networks and think tanks (including academia, research institutes), and foundations. The list above is not exhaustive.

*Election procedures* – The rules approved by the CSF to be followed at the CSF annual forum meeting.

*EU coordinators* - 3 representatives of EU CSOs elected by the Forum CSF at its annual plenary session to represent the European civil society in the CSF. Their role is to strengthen the lobbying action towards European stakeholders and EU institutions.

*National delegation* – The delegation (one from each of the six partner countries) that meets to elect the country facilitator of the respective partner country.

*Country facilitator* – The participant of the national delegation of the partner country that was elected to this function by the national delegation at the CSF session for the period of one year. The national facilitator's main task is to coordinate the activities of the members of the national delegation in the framework of the CSF and to represent them in the SC.

*Observers* – As well as participants, non - voting attendees from CSOs who were not selected, or in some cases a second attendee from one of the registered organisations, are present at the Forum in the capacity of Observers. The Observers category also includes representatives of intergovernmental organisations, and government officials from EU members states and Eastern Partner countries. Observers are not eligible for election to the Steering Committee.

*Plenary session of the CSF* – Gathering of the participants selected by a transparent, fair and democratic procedure among the interested civil society organizations of the EU member states, Eastern Partner countries, and European and international CSOs networks that fulfil the criteria agreed by the SC.

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*Steering Committee* – Ruling body of the CSF during the period between its annual plenary sessions. Its main task is to follow up the implementation of the CSF recommendations, to lobby for the interests of the CSF, to maintain contacts with the EU institutions, and to support the establishment of the national platforms or EaP - oriented networks.

*Working group coordinator* – The participant from the partner country or from the EU member state or European and international network elected by the members of the WG at the CSF session for the period of one year. The working group coordinator's main task is to coordinate the activities of the members of the WG, to represent the CSF at the thematic platforms and panels, and to represent the WG in the SC. There are two coordinators for each of the 4 WGs - one from a partner country and one from an EU member state or European and international networks.

*Working group meeting:* Each working group established during the CSF meets between the two sessions of the Civil Society Forum to further discuss the matters and monitor the development of the EaP process. They elaborate strategies and prepare new recommendations for the successive CSF session.

*Working groups of the CSF* – The CSF is divided into 5 working thematic platforms called working groups that reflect the official thematic platforms of the Eastern Partnership. The CSOs that were selected to participate in the CSF can choose in which WG they want to participate.