

Working Group 1: Democracy, Human Rights, Good Governance & Stability

Introduction

EaP CSF Working Group “Democracy, Human Rights, Good Governance and Stability” deals with the main issues on the agenda of EaP Thematic Platform 1 on Democracy, Good Governance and Stability.

It works on areas identified by civil society as important within this platform. The group took the decision to add “human rights” to its title and suggested that the title of the Thematic Platform 1 also be changed.

Aims of WG1

The WG1 believes that the EaP provides an opportunity for the partner countries to integrate with the European Union

- a. by developing stable democratic structures
- b. by enabling stronger participation of civil society, in areas such as:
 1. human rights
 2. electoral standards
 3. media freedom
 4. combating corruption
 5. training
 6. networking of local authorities

With the level of work involved within this Working Group, the coordinators of the WG1 decided to divide the work of the group into the following subgroups, complete with their respective recommendations

1. Judiciary reform (based on the work program of the platform and other activities)
2. Public administration reform (based on the work program of the platform and other activities)
3. Fight against corruption (based on the work program of the platform and other activities)
4. VISA facilitation group (request from the participants of the Forum)
5. Media (request from the participants of the Forum)
6. Human Rights (request from the participants of the Forum)

Objectives of Sub-Groups

1. Judiciary Reform Sub-Group

The Judiciary Reform sub-group acknowledges that there are considerable differences within the member states of the EaP in the area of judicial reform. However, all partner countries agree to procedural recommendations for the EaP process. These include:

1. Increased transparency of EU funding of the justice sector for the EaP countries.
2. Create specific platforms for civil society engagement in the reforms planning and implementation from the side of the authorities.
3. Create a periodic system for the joint and inclusive follow-up with regard to the implementation of the recommendations to the government presented by the EU.
4. Support for diversification and increase in the level of the funding for the civil society organizations working in the area.
5. Provide specific recommendations with regard to the policy/legislation and practice in this area from the EU, in its action plans, reports, assessments.
6. Create expert groups for the assessment of the enforcement of the national legislation vis-a-vis International and European standards.

7. Increase the number of representatives (experts) from the civil society organizations in the activities under the EU support programs diverted towards the authorities.

2. Public Administration Reform Sub-Group

The Public Administration Reform sub-group has six objectives:

- a. Encourage governments of EaP countries to
 1. adopt and implement National Strategies for Local Self-Government and Public Administration Reform in consultation with civil society organizations
 2. decrease the administrative burden on taxpayers
 3. reduce administration bodies with overlapping functions
 4. disseminate information and raise awareness about reforms, good practices and country situations in the sphere of public administration reform
 5. implement the European Charter on Local Self-Government
6. Ensure independent monitoring of public administration reforms and European cooperation projects including those funded under budget support and CIB (Comprehensive Institution Building programmes).
- b. Encourage Belarus to join the European Charter on Local Self-Government.
- c. Involve civil society in the decision-making process whenever governments negotiate with EU for support or propose projects and strategies, including twinning programs, in the sphere of public administration reform.
- d. Create another track within twinning programs that will enable local civil society to manage quick, efficient, expert exchanges and training for local self-administration.
- e. Organize training and education of public officials and local self-government officials based on a set of values and training needs assessment.

3. Fight against Corruption Sub-Group

Three general objectives have been defined by the Fight Against Corruption sub-group:

- a. Joint and regular monitoring of anti-corruption policies and the state of corruption in the EaP countries as a form of civil society contribution to the EaP anti-corruption activities.
- b. Strengthening cooperation between EaP and EU CSOs. Develop common initiatives aimed at sharing expertise and experience between the EU CSOs and the EaP countries.
- c. Developing a dialogue with international donors to anti-corruption and in particular with European donors aiming at change of donor policies. In particular, EaP CSF will advocate for CSOs inclusion at the policy planning and implementation of foreign aid to AC.

4. Visa Facilitation Sub-Group

The CSOs of the EaP recognise that the biggest challenge remains the unwillingness of the governments and well as of the European Commission to share any visa related information. To work with the EaP countries and EU, the Visa Liberalisation sub-group has a number of aims:

- a. follow the work of others groups that deal with cross-thematic issues like academic exchange and migration but also human rights or anti-corruption.
- b. Differentiate the message when talking to different groups to highlight benefits for each group
- c. Convince both sides (EaP governments and the EU) that visa liberalization has the potential to become success story:
- d. Monitor the implementation of introduced or promised VF processes.
- e. Track the application of funds earmarked for VF/VL projects.
- f. Continual involvement in the Coalition for Visa-free travel meetings

5. Media Sub-Group

The media sub-group present their recommendations within three levels, realm of activities, forms of activities and proposed projects.

1. Realms of Activities
 - a. Adapt EaP national media laws to the EU standards.
 - b. Closely monitor the state-of-play of Public Broadcasting System functioning in the EaP countries focusing mainly at administration of the system and funding.
 - c. Develop expert recommendations based on the monitoring which will be shared with the national governments and the European Commission.
2. Forms of Activities
 - a. Create Media Sub-Groups at the national level within the EaP platforms.
 - b. Provide informational support by encouraging the national journalists to cover the Forum.
 - c. Pay particular attention to the possible threats made by digitalization of TV in EaP countries. Monopolization of media sphere and disappearing of small local TV broadcasters could seriously threaten media plurality and diversity.
3. Proposals of Particular Projects
 - a. Launch information campaigns promoting of the essence and goals of EaP at national levels.
 - b. Create an interactive web-portal aimed at the description of the media landscapes of EaP countries based on the common methodology and indicators.
 - c. Monitor civil society relations between the EU and EaP countries by means of in-depth journalistic investigation program based on multilateral media cooperation.

6. Human Rights Sub-Group

The human right sub-group will

- a. Lobbying the issue of human rights to be included in the agenda of the meetings
- b. Monitor how the issue of human rights is included in the agenda of the intergovernmental meetings and how it is taken into consideration while deciding on bi-lateral projects
- c. Monitor how governmental declarations on the progress with human rights actually look on the ground.
- d. Define criteria of progress, once we are considered a more relevant partner for the commission.

Contact

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