

EASTERN PARTNERSHIP CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM

(Brussels, 16-17 November 2009)

RECOMMENDATIONS

WORKING GROUP 3: ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENERGY SECURITY

1) Why the EaP CSF must deal with energy and environmental matters and how it should do so

Due to post-soviet legacy, underinvestment, and difficult socio-economic and political developments over the last two decades, energy infrastructure of EaP countries has become outdated. This makes EaP countries and their citizens even more vulnerable to climate change impacts and natural and man-made disasters. Energy security, climate change and environment are therefore important areas of cooperation within the EaP and the CSF can support civil society working on these issues through strengthening networking and information exchange and increasing CSOs access to relevant information. EaP CSF should also help identify and promote regional synergies in energy and environmental policies.

The EaP Civil Society Forum (CSF) working group 3 responsible for environment, climate change and energy security should have a Coordinator from an EaP country and a Deputy Coordinator from an EU Member State CSO or an international network. Both should be elected for a period of one year (rotation principle).

In addition, a specific EaP CSF sub-Group on Environment should be created to influence activities of EaP Platforms 2 and 3. Furthermore, there is a need for a Multilateral Environmental Panel to be established in support of EaP Platforms 2 and 3.

Draft documents being discussed within the EaP structures should be made public in due time before their adoption so that implications from the perspective of energy security, climate change and environmental protection can be assessed by civil society.

ENPI Regional Programme should be used to implement urgent projects related to energy security (e.g. joint storage capacities, two-way interconnections, energy conservation) as well as to climate change and environment

The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) welcomes the establishment of the EaP CSF and offers its active involvement as the EESC represents civil society organisations of the EU Member States.

2) EaP CSF in the field of energy security and climate change

Expectations towards EaP national governments

There is a need to rehabilitate and modernize existing energy infrastructure in EaP countries and invest in construction of new energy capacities. Heat supply networks should be rehabilitated with the help of financial mechanism (loans) for investments in new heating stations. With exception of Azerbaijan, EaP countries are challenged by their dependency on imported natural gas. Projects are needed to reduce this dependency, e.g. by diversifying both sources and transit route. CO₂ emissions are to be stabilised on the level of 2008 for the next 15 years.

To reach these goals, Energy Strategies of EaP countries should be revised to give priority to local renewable energy sources and energy efficiency as well as to effective policy tools aiming to manage demand for energy efficiently, rather than increasing supply (e.g. elimination of subsidised energy tariffs while addressing social impact via different measures). At the same time, greater transparency, access to information and public participation should be achieved in the process of strategic planning and deciding on tariffs, in particular concerning environmental impacts.

Energy security policies and legislation of EaP countries should gradually be adjusted to EU and international norms. In particular:

- Electricity and gas market legislation, including regulatory policy, is to be developed in accordance with the schedule of joining the Energy Community Treaty;
- Energy statistical systems need to become compatible with Eurostat methods;
- Targets and legislation for energy efficiency and renewable energy are to be harmonised with EU climate change policies;
- The EU emissions trading system should be joined while enhancing national control mechanisms; the Kyoto Protocol's flexible mechanisms are to be promoted;
- EU standards for energy using equipment should be adopted;
- National climate change adaptation plans are to be drafted.

Expectations concerning the regional policy framework and cooperation programmes

There is a need to shape a complex integrated sustainable energy policy for the EaP region, which takes into account national interests and aims to improve environmental protection, energy efficiency, as well as the capacity to face climate change, and to mitigate dependency on energy imports or on one energy carrier. Policies and measures for climate change mitigation and adaptation should not create new environmental challenges, in particular not have negative impact on biodiversity.

It is to be prevented that any market opening expected within the EaP can lead to “energy efficiency dumping”. Inefficient technologies banned in the EU should not be exported to the EaP countries.

The EaP should also provide a platform for debates on regional cooperation in nuclear safety and development of nuclear power generation.

Admission of EaP countries to the Energy Community Treaty needs to be given preference to Energy Memoranda of Understanding.

The administrative capacity, good governance, transparency, and protection of consumers should be given priority in the energy sector and be supported by the EaP Comprehensive Institution Building Programmes (CIBs). The Intelligent Energy Europe Programme should be extended to the EaP countries. Energy efficiency, best available technology (BAT) transfer and the use of renewable energy resources should be endorsed as one of the EaP Flagship Initiatives.

EU Member States and EaP countries should also work together towards higher security of energy transportation. The European Initiative on Gas Transparency (monitoring of physical gas flows in real time) should be promoted as a pilot project within the EaP, open to third countries. An Early Warning Mechanism for energy disruptions between the EU and EaP countries is to be established. EaP gas transit countries should be involved in the EU Gas Coordination Group and Oil Supply Group as well as the Energy Community Security of Supply Group.

The EU should create opportunities for EaP countries to be involved in international hydrocarbons transit projects, e.g. Southern Energy Corridor.

3) EaP CSF issues on environment, biodiversity, and agriculture

The overarching goal must be to support the integration of environmental aspects into all national policies of EaP countries (e.g. industry, transport, regional development, budget, agriculture, forestry, EU *acquis* compliance). As the application of the Strategic Environmental Assessment is an important tool for reaching this aim, respective national administrative capacities of EaP countries should be strengthened. Environmental protection and sustainable development should be incorporated as priority areas into Association Agreements. Regional cooperation and the implementation of multilateral environment agreements should be promoted. A regional environmental information system should be created that is shared by EaP countries and the EU. The EaP Flagship Initiative on Environmental Governance deserves support.

Waste management, including waste recycling and treatment, in EaP countries needs special attention. Best Available Technologies (BAT) transfer should be promoted more widely as one of the main tools promoting investments and SME in the environmental field. In the context of sustainable climate change adaptation, preference should be given to green infrastructure measures whenever possible. Management of protected areas should be strengthened as healthy ecosystems do only contribute to climate change mitigation (carbon sequestration) but also adaptation (e.g. forest and wetlands buffering the effects of climate change). Considering that organic agriculture also contributes to reducing CO₂ emissions, respective pilot projects by agriculture NGOs from EaP countries are to be supported and the Organic Agriculture Movement in all EaP countries is to be strengthened. As weather conditions have already started to change, overall agricultural production and agricultural and rural development should be adapted to climate change making best use of organic agriculture practices.

4) EaP CSF recommendations concerning Information, education, capacity building, and awareness raising

EaP countries should implement the principles of education for sustainable development in their educational systems by upgrading curricula and the creation of specific high school programmes (including international master programmes). Capacities for facilitating stakeholder involvement and conducting environmental impact assessment in EaP countries are to be strengthened.

Priority should be given to a transfer of knowledge and best practices from the EU to EaP countries with special focus on energy efficiency and renewable energy in order to bring EaP countries closer to EU norms and standards, to reduce adverse environmental impacts and facilitate the transition to sustainable development. The Aarhus Convention should be implemented in all EaP countries.

A broad public awareness raising campaign on energy efficiency and renewable energies is needed, making best use of EU practices. Also higher education programs (universities, institutes, high schools) have to be upgraded with respect to curricula on energy efficiency and renewable energy.

5) Final remarks

Above mentioned recommendations are not an exhaustive list of what can and should be done within Platform 3 of the Eastern Partnership. However, they reflect the consolidated view of experts participating in the Civil Society Forum and are to be regarded as the starting point for further activities in the areas of environment, climate change, and energy security.