



In this Newsletter

In April, the Steering Committee (SC) held its second meeting of the year to finalise the list of the Annual Assembly attendees (now pending approval of the European Commission), discuss the joint civil society event in October and the new strategy of the Forum. Freedom of assembly in Belarus remained in the focus of the EaP CSF, while the final monitoring mission report was published. The Forum also joined a coalition of 55 NGOs calling for an investigation into the corruption claims related to the work of PACE on Azerbaijan. Moreover, the EaP CSF SC urged the EU to use its authority and support academic freedom in Hungary. In another statement the EaP CSF called on Ukrainian government to repeal amendments to e-declaration law. In this issue you can also find the re-granting projects' reports on rights and needs of people with disabilities, as well as calls for applications for the civil society.

Steering Committee

Steering Committee held meetings in Tallinn and Helsinki

The EaP CSF Steering Committee held meetings in **Tallinn** and **Helsinki** on **24-25 April** to discuss the 9th EaP CSF **Annual Assembly** and the **EaP Civil Society Conference** with the Estonian partners from the Estonian Center of Eastern Partnership.



In **Tallinn**, the SC met with representatives of Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs **Paul Teesalu** and **Ambassador Reinhold**, as well as with several **Estonian NGOs** and also worked on finalising the list of the **Annual Assembly participants**. In **Helsinki**, the SC discussed the **re-granting 2017**, as well as held meetings with the **EaP Ambassador Ari Heikkinen**, and the **Grand Committee** of the Finnish Parliament.

[Read more](#)

Topics in Focus

Human Rights

Freedom of Assembly and Social Rights in Belarus

Report



Civil society engagement and respect of fundamental rights should be at the core of EU-Belarus dialogue

Following the wave of protests in late February-March 2017, the **EaP CSF Monitoring Mission** visited Belarus during the period of 28 March-1 April 2017 and developed a set of **recommendations** towards the EU, Belarusian authorities and civil society. The recommendations to the EU institutions and member states highlight the importance of a partnership strategy based on a **conditionality approach**, where political and economic reforms are interdependent and civil society is engaged as an institutional

partner.

For its part, the **EaP CSF** commits to provide continued support to the Belarusian civil society, strengthen **capacity building** among its members, as well as to adopt a mechanism of monitoring missions as a regular working tool.

[Read more](#)

[Academic freedom in Hungary](#)

Statement

[EaP CSF called on the EU to use its authority and support independence of academia in Hungary](#)



In reaction to the amendments to

Hungary's higher education law, which are specifically targeting the **Central European University (CEU)**, the **Steering Committee** expressed its deep concern. CEU has played a **fundamental role in fostering the reform process** in Central and Eastern Europe, as well as post-Soviet countries, by promoting **innovative ideas** and preparing a new generation of **progressive leaders**.

The Steering Committee issued a **set of recommendations**, calling upon the **EU Institutions** and the leadership of the **European People's Party** to use all possible means available to the EU to **reverse the decision** of the Hungarian government and to openly **reject the autocratic turn of the Hungarian leadership**.

[Read more](#)

[Anti-corruption activities](#)

PACE work on Azerbaijan

Open letter



[PACE and Azerbaijan: 56 NGOs Appeal to Investigate Corruption Allegations against MPs](#)

On 20 April 2017, the EaP CSF has co-signed an **appeal** together with other prominent **human rights and**

civil society organizations, to conduct a thorough and fair **investigation** on the **corruption claims** related to the work of PACE on Azerbaijan.

The concern arose mainly from a report of European Stability Initiative issued in December 2016, denouncing the **bribes** offered by representatives of the Azerbaijani government to several **PACE members**. However, the inappropriate conduct of PACE members had already been pointed out by **Mehman Huseynov**, who is now facing serious consequences for denouncing corruption among PACE members. As a consequence, the group of civil society organisations called for a **fair, accurate and independent investigation**, appealing to the **PACE Bureau**, all **members of the Assembly** and the **Secretary General of the Council of Europe**.

[Read more](#)

[Amendments to Ukraine's e-declaration law](#)

Statement

[EaP CSF Called on Ukrainian Government to Repeal Amendments to E- Declaration Law](#)



The Steering Committee of the EaP CSF released a statement expressing disappointment for the approval of the **amendments to the Ukrainian law on electronic declaration of assets**, according to which individuals engaged in anti-corruption activities have to submit e-declarations for their assets on an equal basis with civil servants.

The EaP CSF manifested its support to civic activists, lawyers and representatives of the Ukraine's international partners and denounced the **discriminatory, selective and manipulative approach to legal norms**, in contrast to openness in society, accountability of the authorities, democracy and freedom. Therefore, the Steering Committee has urged

the Ukrainian government to **repeal this legislation** in order to avoid considerable restrictions on the activities of anti-corruption organisations and activists, and civil society as a whole.

[Read more](#)

[Rights and Needs of People with Disabilities](#)

[Reports](#)



[EaP CSF Re-granting projects on the inclusion of people with disabilities](#)

The **5th May 2017** marked the celebration of the fourth **European Independent Living Day**, established to **raise awareness about the right to**

Independent Living. Within the **re-granting programme** of the EaP CSF, in 2016 two projects were granted funding on issues related to **inclusion**.

The project [*Index of participation of persons with disabilities at decision-making - Armenia, Georgia and Moldova*](#) was implemented by the Armenian NGO Unison and aimed at increasing the **participation of Persons With Disabilities (PWDs) in decision-making processes** in the three countries, through a study on the key factors, issues and challenges hindering their inclusion. The HealthProm NGO worked on the [*Communities, Classrooms and Civil Society: Sharing Experience and Developing Regional Approaches to Addressing the Rights and Needs of Children with Disabilities in Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine*](#) project. Its focus is on the promotion of **regional exchange amongst multi-sector professionals working in the area of child disability** from three target countries.

[Members Corner](#)

[Opportunities](#)

B | S | T The Black Sea Trust
for Regional Cooperation
A PROJECT OF THE GERMAN MARSHALL FUND

[Confiden](#)
[ce](#)
[Building](#)

[– a joint initiative of the Robert Bosch Stiftung and the Black Sea Trust](#)

The Robert Bosch Stiftung and the Black Sea Trust for Regional Cooperation continue to support confidence building activities in the South Caucasus, Ukraine and Moldova, and the neighboring countries. Believing that **civil society can make a valuable contribution to the process of confidence building, mutual understanding and reconciliation** between populations in territories recently involved in (armed) conflicts, the initiative aims at investigating new ways, methods and approaches for fostering mutual understanding. Two different application deadlines are offered in the '17-'18 [call](#): **May 26** and **September 29, 2017**.

[Upcoming Meetings](#)

22 May: 2nd Meeting of the EU-Moldova Civil Society Platform, Chisinau

22-23 May: 5th Panel on Statistics on Innovation and R&D, Tbilisi

29-30 May: Working Group 3 meeting, Brussels

29-30 May: 16th Panel on Integrated Border Management, Vilnius

7 June: WG2 Meeting in Chişinău

20 June: WG4 Meeting in Warsaw

23 June: EaP 17th Platform 3 on Energy Security

Eastern Partnership Civil Society

Forum

Secretariat of the EaP CSF Steering
Committee

Rue de l'Industrie 10
1000 Brussels
Belgium

[FORWARD](#)

You received this email because you signed up on our
website.

[Unsubscribe](#)