

Meeting of the Steering Committee of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum – the results and next steps leading to the gathering in Brussels on 16-17 November 2009

The Steering Committee of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) Civil Society Forum (CSF), chaired by the European Commission, met in Brussels on 23 September 2009. The Committee was composed of representatives of the Swedish Presidency of the European Union, of the Commission, of the European Economic and Social Committee and of the independent personalities.

Assessment of expressions of interest

Concluding a thorough examination of 439 expressions of interest received by the Commission from various Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), the Steering Committee made a recommendation to the Commission to **invite representatives of 220 organisations to participate in the first gathering of the EaP Civil Society Forum in Brussels on 16-17 November**. They will be mainly from EaP countries, but also from the EU Member States, international organisations and networks and from third countries.

The selection was made on the basis of the [Concept Paper](#) presented by the Commission, according to the following criteria:

- **Geographic origin/nationality** – a majority of CSF participants – i.e. 141 – will be from the CSOs from EaP partner countries. A significant number – i.e. 79 – will come from EU MS, international organisations/networks and third countries;
- **Diversity and proportionality** – participants selected represent all variety of civil society actors (grass roots organizations, trade unions, employers' organisations, professional associations, NGOs, think-tanks, non-profit foundations, national and international CSOs/networks and other relevant CS actors). They are expected to contribute to all thematic aspects of the EaP i.e.: 1) Democracy, good governance and stability; 2) Economic integration and convergence with EU policies; 3) Environment, climate change & energy security; 4) Contacts between people;
- **Experience in the EU/ENP/EaP matters** (taking into account past and current activities and results achieved).

09/10/2009

While applying these criteria, the Steering Committee took also into account the nature of the organisations and specific situation of each of the EaP countries.

The breakdown per country of CSOs proposed to be invited is the following:

Armenia	21
Azerbaijan	21
Belarus	27
Georgia	22
Republic of Moldova	20
Ukraine	30
International networks and organisations	27
EU Member States	47
Third countries	5

The Commission decided to follow the recommendations of the Steering Committee and approved the participation of all proposed CSOs.

Other matters

The list of selected organisations will not be made public however the list of participants will be available at the Forum meeting. Each selected organisation will receive a personal invitation for **only one representative** to the Forum meeting in Brussels on 16-17 November.

The Commission intends to cover the travel and hotel stay in Brussels of the invited participants from Eastern Partnership countries, unless they declared in their expression of interest that they are ready and willing to pay for themselves.

It will not be possible for the Commission to cover any expenses of CSOs from EU Member States, international organisations, networks or from a third country. That is why the Commission, while issuing invitations to those CSOs, will ask for confirmation of the participation

without delay. If such organisations decide not to attend, another CSO may be invited from those that expressed its interest in the CSF.

The Steering Committee suggested to the Commission to elaborate proposals as how to ensure the inclusiveness of the EaP CSF process by, for example, accepting more participants in the Forum activities after the launching meeting of 16-17 November, or by making use of written contributions provided by all CSOs, whether invited to the CSF or not.

The Commission informed the Steering Committee that it stands ready to support technically and financially the organisation of the next meeting of the EaP CSF in autumn 2010. Moreover the Commission is ready to support (technically and financially) the meetings in 2010 of each of four EaP CSF “working groups”, if they are created.

Finally the Steering Committee accepted the Commission proposal to nominate “facilitators” of the EaP CSF that will help participants in their deliberations in November. Selected were:

1. Mr. Eugeniusz Smolar, independent personality - Democracy, good governance and stability;
2. Mr. Ivan Voles, the EESC Member - Economic integration and convergence with EU policies;
3. Mr. Alexander Duleba, independent personality - Environment, climate change and energy security;
4. Ms. Heather Grabbe, independent personality - Contacts between people.

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