

**Civil Society Forum for the Eastern Partnership initiative**

*Recommendations for operations, activities, and objectives of the Forum submitted to the European Commission, DG RELEX, by PASOS (Policy Association for an Open Society), 31 October 2009*

**THE CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM SHOULD HOLD SESSIONS DEDICATED TO DISCUSS SUPPORT TO STRENGTHEN POLICY ANALYSIS BY EASTERN PARTNERSHIP COUNTRY THINK-TANKS AND FOR AN EASTERN PARTNERSHIP WEB PORTAL**

The Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum meeting, to be held in Brussels on 16-17 November 2009, should timetable a session on Support to Strengthen Independent Monitoring and Policy Analysis by Eastern Partnership Country Think-Tanks and a session on the Establishment of an Eastern Partnership Web Portal, with content driven by civil society from the Eastern Partnership members.

**SUPPORT TO STRENGTHEN INDEPENDENT MONITORING AND POLICY ANALYSIS BY EASTERN PARTNERSHIP COUNTRY THINK-TANKS**

The session on support for think-tanks should focus on the capacity needed by think-tanks to implement effective policy analysis and monitoring of agreements between the EU and the respective Eastern Partnership countries, and should include:

- Consideration of policy analysis requirements pertaining to agreements in the respective thematic platforms
- Formulation of external support needs to better equip independent think-tanks in the Eastern Partnership countries to prepare needs assessments, to review and critique early drafts of agreements between the EU and the respective countries, and to monitor implementation of the agreements
- A call for clear budget allocation for the Forum's monitoring activities, in particular monitoring of implementation of partnership agreements and for civil society input into the drafting of agreements at an early stage, and capacity-building to think-tanks to support these activities.

*PASOS (Policy Association for an Open Society) is a network of 40 independent, non-governmental, non-partisan policy centres spanning 25 countries in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia. As well as 18 member institutes in 11 EU member states, PASOS includes 11 member institutes from the Eastern Partnership countries.*

*PASOS supports evidence-based policy research and public participation in policy dialogue. Due to its geographic coverage, PASOS serves as an interface between old and new EU members, and the countries of the EU's eastern neighbourhood, in pursuing its mission to support human rights, democracy and the rule of law, and economic and social development.*

*PASOS promotes and protects open society values, including democracy, the rule of law, good governance, respect for and protection of human rights, and economic and social development, by supporting entities that individually and jointly foster public participation in public policy issues at the European Union level, in other European structures, and in the wider neighbourhood of Europe and Central Asia.*

**Chair:** George Tarkhan-Mouravi **Executive Director:** Jeff Lovitt

*PASOS is a not-for-profit association registered in the Czech Republic*

*Sdružení pro podporu otevřené společnosti – PASOS, registrováno Ministerstvem vnitra ČR pod č.j. VS/1-1/58 438/04-R*

*sidlo: Prokopova 197/9, 130 00 Praha 3, IČ: 26 67 54 04*

**The session on support to policy analysis should identify and address the priority needs of the Eastern Partnership countries in the following ways:**

- Invitation of regional and national civil society actors to participate in the mid-term review of key EC programmes, in particular ENPI and EIDHR.
- Enhancement of EC support to both the capacity-building of civil society actors in the partner countries, and for encouraging multi-country projects with a strong focus on core challenges facing the region (regional conflicts, energy policy, democracy, rule of law, human rights, media freedom, migration, etc) within the framework of the four thematic platforms.
- Support for capacity, training, and projects involving the media, in order to deepen and widen debate and dissemination about national and regional challenges, and the engagement of the EC and the partner countries in tackling these challenges.
- Support for civil society similar to the EACAE grants on active citizenship (for EU members plus Croatia) should also be considered. The intention would be to create more regional co-operation, crucial to most of the partner countries if they are to settle persistent problems.
- Organisation of in-country debates between civil society actors, national governments, and EC and EU member representatives, that should precede priority-setting for Action Plans/New Partnership Instruments.
- Assessment of the legal framework and administrative conditions facing civil society, and the freedom of civil society to act in accordance with international human rights accords, and commission recommendations for reforms and monitoring of the reform process.
- Engagement of civil society, in particular policy centres, in the Comprehensive Institution-Building plans (negotiated bilaterally between the EU and each Eastern Partner government)
- Address, with the active participation of policy centres and grassroots organisations, regional development strategies.

**EASTERN PARTNERSHIP WEB PORTAL**

Budget allocation should be secured, and a tender should be issued for a network or consortium to launch and manage a web portal designed to maximise transparency concerning the Eastern Partnership, and to serve as a first-point-of-call information service for civil society concerning the Eastern Partnership initiative.

***The website should provide clear information about country priority-setting procedures, the commitments and obligations of the participating parties (partner governments and EC), progress reports, and independent monitoring.*** As much information as possible should be made available in local languages.

Core elements of the web portal should include:

- Original content, including assessments and monitoring of Eastern Partnership agreements at all stages.
- Locally generated content, especially independent policy analysis commissioned by expert editors.
- A multi-lingual service directly targeted at civil society, setting out the ways civil society can participate in the civil society forum, and providing information on funding opportunities.
- Secure funding for provision of the above, including funding for expert analysis and editorial oversight for country pages for all six Eastern Partnership countries.

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Social Policy and Development Center, Yerevan, Armenia (SPDC)

<http://www.cspda.org>

Center for Economic and Social Development, Baku, Azerbaijan (CESD)

<http://www.cesd.az>

Center for Economic Development, Sofia, Bulgaria (CED)

<http://www.ced.bg>

European Institute, Sofia, Bulgaria (EI)

<http://www.europe.bg>

EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy, Prague, Czech Republic (EUROPEUM)

<http://www.europeum.org>

Association for International Affairs, Prague, Czech Republic (AMO)

<http://www.amo.cz>

Institute for Policy Studies, Tbilisi, Georgia (IPS)

<http://www.ips.ge>

Caucasus Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development, Tbilisi, Georgia (CIPDD)

<http://www.cipdd.org>

Institute for Development and Social Initiatives (IDIS) "Viitorul", Chisinau, Moldova

(IDIS "Viitorul")

<http://www.viitorul.org>

Institute for Public Policy, Chisinau, Moldova (IPP)

<http://www.ipp.md>

Expert-Grup, Chisinau, Moldova

<http://www.expert-grup.org>

Institute of Public Affairs, Warsaw, Poland (ISP)

<http://www.isp.org.pl>

International Centre for Policy Studies, Kyiv, Ukraine (ICPS)

<http://www.icps.kiev.ua>