



EASTERN PARTNERSHIP Civil Society Forum

Invitation to submit expressions of interest to participate in the third meeting of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum (Poznan, Poland, 28 - 30 November 2011)

The Eastern Partnership Summit in Prague on 7 May 2009 confirmed the European Commission proposal from December 2008 to establish the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum (EaP CSF) “to promote contacts among Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and facilitate their dialogue with public authorities” in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, and Ukraine. The summit invited the European Commission “to develop and propose modalities for the establishment of a Civil Society Forum of the Eastern Partnership”.

In the course of 2009, the European Commission consulted the modalities of the Forum with all interested stakeholders. The consulted parties favoured a comprehensive approach allowing for the participation of a wide range of CSOs: trade unions, employers' organisations, professional associations, NGOs, think-tanks, nonprofit foundations, national and international CSOs/networks and other relevant Civil Society actors from EaP Partner Countries, but also from EU Member States and international organisations/networks.

The first EaP CSF took place in Brussels on 16-17 November 2009 and gathered more than 200 CSOs. During the Forum, participants elected the CSF Steering Committee and tasked it with the responsibility of developing a procedure for selection of the participants for the next Forum. The CSF Steering Committee elaborated the procedure that can be found below. The procedure was applied in the process of selection of the participants to the second meeting of the EaP CSF, which was held in Berlin on 18-19 November 2010. Although the Forum was organised by the European Commission and co-hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Germany, all decisions regarding the aims of the meeting and its agenda were taken on the basis of proposals worked out by the CSF Steering Committee. The third meeting of the EaP CSF will be held in Poznan, Poland, on 28-30 November 2011.

The Steering Committee of the EaP Civil Society Forum, in cooperation with the European Commission/European External Action Service, is now inviting all interested parties to submit expressions of interest to participate in the third meeting of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum. The submission of expressions of interest is a necessary step in the selection process to participate in the EaP CSF meeting on 28-30 November 2011.

The extended format (from 1,5 up to three days) of the EaP CSF has been made possible thanks to the European Commission/European External Action Service and the generous support of Poland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Complementing the work already done by the Forum 2009 and 2010, this annual event will be mainly focusing working groups, we would elaborate common programmes and activities.

The application form prepared by the CSF Steering Committee can be found since May 23, 2011 on the official CSF website - www.eap-csf.eu

Submissions of expressions of interest (see application form attached) should be completed in English or Russian and sent before 26 June 2011 to the contact e-mail address: applications@eap-csf.eu

IMPORTANT NOTICE:

Due to budgetary constraints, the European Commission/European External Action Service will be able to fund the travel and hotel stay during the Forum meeting only for the CSOs from EaP countries. **It will not be possible for the EC/EEAS to cover any expenses of the CSOs from EU Member States, international organisations, networks or participants from third countries.**

THE PROCEDURE FOR THE SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS TO THE THIRD MEETING OF THE EaP CSF:

The Civil Society Forum is open to a wide range of CSOs: trade unions, employers' organisations, professional associations, NGOs, think-tanks, non-profit foundations, national and international CSOs/networks and other relevant Civil Society actors from EaP Partner Countries, but also from EU Member States and international organisations/networks. A limited number of CSOs from third countries can also participate in the EaP CSF.

All CSOs fitting within the above description are eligible to apply for participation.

The selection of the participants to the EaP CSF 2011 will be carried out by the CSF Steering Committee in cooperation with the European External Action Service representatives. The selection procedure will be twofold:

I. Preparation of two shortlists:

(1) By EaP Country Facilitators elected by the CSF in 2010 and supported by CSF national platforms, where they exist. In the case of CSOs from EU Member States and international organisations/networks as well as CSOs from third countries, the shortlist is prepared by the three EU representatives elected by the CSF in 2010.

(2) By the thematic working group's coordinators elected by the CSF in 2010.

Shortlists are prepared on the basis of the following criteria:

- Diversity of spheres of activity (it is crucial to assure the involvement of all the major components of civil society and at the same time to ensure adequate representation for each of the thematic working groups and subgroups).
- Involvement in ENP/EaP-related matters.

II. The final decision is made by the CSF Steering Committee members in consultation with the European External Action Service representatives on the basis of the following criteria:

- Diversity of spheres of activity (it is crucial to ensure the involvement of all the major components of civil society and at the same time to ensure adequate representation for each of the thematic working groups and subgroups).
- Involvement in ENP/EaP-related matters.
- Nationality (a minimum of 10% participants from each EaP country and a minimum of 25% from the EU). Up to 10 participants from the third countries may be invited as guests (without voting rights).
- Participation in the previous Forum (with a minimum 40% of new participants and up to a maximum 60% of those who participated in the CSF meeting in 2010).

The final list of CSOs invited to participate to the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum prepared by the CSF Steering Committee will then be submitted for approval by the European External Action Service, *inter alia* because the European Commission/European External Action Service will cover the costs of participation for CSOs from the EaP countries.