

Working Group 3 “Environment, climate change and energy security”
Annual Meeting
13-15 September 2016, Brussels
Hotel Thon, Rue de la Loi 75, Brussels

The Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum Working Group 3 (WG3) "Environment, climate change and energy security" held its Annual Meeting on 13-15 September in Brussels. The event covered topics concerning waste management, sustainable development and renewable energy.

The Annual Meeting of WG3 was preceded by a **joint training** with WG2. The capacity-building part oriented on policy was dedicated to **Green Economy** (with **Angela Bularga**, DG NEAR, **Andreja Skerl**, DG ENVI and **Florian Peter Iwinjak**, UNIDO as speakers). The skills-building part was tackling the issue of **monitoring of development funding** (with **Petr Hlobil**, Bankwatch, as a trainer).

- [Presentation on Circular Economy, by Andreja Skerl](#)
- [Presentation on Mobilizing Stakeholders for Green Economy and Sustainable Industrialization, by Florian Peter Iwinjak](#)

During the event WG3 members met with EU stakeholders from the European Commission (**DG NEAR**, **DG CLIMA** and **DG ENER**). The discussions focused on funding opportunities for CSOs, as well as on the EU's Energy Policy towards the region and the impact the Paris Climate Agreement has on the EU's relations with EaP states, in particular with CSOs.

The members of the WG3 also discussed on **EaP CSF 2016 re-granting project**, further development of the WG3 activities and provided inputs to the **EaP CSF Annual Assembly** in November.

Presentation of preliminary results of WG3 re-granting projects

Six national policy papers have been completed so far and two working meeting with the EU officials were conducted.

In **Azerbaijan** the importance of research was outlined. As of 2010 the oil production has been declining and according to OPEC this trend will continue (40 000 per day in 2017). It was mentioned that energy security of Azerbaijan is not the same definition as it is for EU. Azerbaijan Gas pipeline is extremely important thus, supply diversification plays a considerable role as well. There is a dependency on Georgia in terms of energy supply. Between 2010-2013 Azerbaijan was not willing to support alternative energy sources. Therefore, market and technology diversification is perceived as a priority, along with increased support for alternative energy and security of pipelines.

Regarding **Georgia** it was emphasized the need for the EU to focus on the gas from the Caspian Sea to as a method from which both Georgia and the EU can benefit. In terms of energy and transport cooperation there were discussed possibilities other which also involves actors from the region such as Russia, Azerbaijan, Armenia and Iran. It was also mentioned that Russia is conducting an active energy diplomacy, for example the case of the North Stream Pipeline, which can have an impact on Georgia's cooperation with the EU.

The **Moldovan** example brings up the importance of biomass as a further energy source. According to some research, alternative energy can be based on household waste, thus it is worth investing. At the same time, the dependence on the Russian gas is mentioned, but also the energy debt toward Russia whereas the major part of it belongs to Transnistria. From this perspective, the energy security was reiterated as a priority for the state, referring to the Iasi-Ungheni pipeline and the Association Agreement.

Implementation of Waste Management Policies in EaP countries according the Association Agreement signed with Moldova, Ukraine, Georgia.

Ina Coseru's project provided an overview of these three countries on waste management issues which has existed for at least 15 years in the EaP countries. The objectives of the project are the promoting reforms in EaP countries and raising the level of awareness the field of waste management. In **Moldova's** case among the main activities, there are development of questionnaires and surveys with the participation of different players (Ministry of Environment, donors, local authorities etc.). So far, three info days were organized between 7-9 July which included informative flyers for people. This initiative is considered to be a successful one. The initiators plan to repeat the success in other cities such as Anenii Noi Town in autumn. There also has been recorded violations of waste management. Thereby, efforts are being made in enforcing the cooperation between Ministry of Environment, companies that recycle waste and companies that produce it. There are also some gaps in implementing the Association Agreement. In **Ukraine** real institutional strength is needed, no matter of the laws that are put into practice. Among the issues in Ukraine there are the implementation of the Association Agreement; the reduction of the recycling paper. There also has been conducted research and questionnaires in **Georgia**. Now these are being analyzed. There are working groups that work closely in Tbilisi, Batumi, Kutaisi. There has been recently released a poster that was produced in more than 1000 copies. Now they will focus on these paper and they will deliver advises based on the results that they receive. The main idea is to have connection between these three countries but also between people.

Promotion of paludiculture in Black Sea region wetlands for carbon sequestration, sustainable development and community-based renewable energy.

Oleg Rubel provided an overview of the [project](#) which aims to promote the role of paludiculture (sustainable peatland utilization) as a means of reducing carbon emissions, supporting sustainable development, and generating community-based renewable energy in the Black Sea region. Traditional activities include hunting, fishing, agriculture. In order to demonstrate the sustainability role of paludiculture, the project focused on Reedbed resources due to its importance for sewage systems and chemical production and included cases studies from Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. The main audience were local authorities, SME's and management bodies of parks in the Eastern Partnership countries.

Presenting the WG3 activities in 2016

Eight Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference in Batumi (Georgia)

Plamena Borisova presented the conference outputs and summarized the main commitments adopted in the Declaration: improving environmental protection and advancing sustainable development; taking the lead in the transition to a green economy as a key path to SD; endorsing the

voluntary “Pan-European Strategic Framework for Greening the Economy”; Civil society participation: including business, women, NGOs, academia and other groups, role in decision -making to improve the environment and promote sustainable development.

Manana Devidze reported about a side event organized by the Georgian National Platform on remarked that CSOs of Georgian Eastern Partnership National Platform form advancing green economy. Some of the subjects discussed were: GHG emissions inventory for 2010-2013 and Mitigation Measures in Georgia; Biological farming or green economy. The final activities were dedicated to the preparation of a declaration which confirms commitments to the improvement of the environment, protection and advancing sustainable development and distributed in all groups of CSO of EaP countries. The content of the Declaration stated the need to be prompted development of improvement of new regulations and standards to promote and stimulate the wider use of energy efficiency and environmentally friendly technologies in production. The declaration was sent to the government of Georgia and uploaded on the conference website. The development of blue economy and backing fishing. As result there has been stopped the building of hydro plant.

Anna Golubovska-Onisimova presented an overview of the European Eco forum and EaP CSF side-event “**Environmental PPPs to implement SDGs in the EaP countries: from commitments to achieving targets**”. The side-event was dedicated to environmental pillar of SDGs, knowledge sharing and cooperation with all stakeholders. Anna Golubovska-Onisimova added that during the side event the national perspectives from Ukraine and Moldova were outlined. Furthermore, during this side-event she along with Plamena Borisova, Leida Rijnhout (European Environmental Bureau) and Sylvie Motard (UNEP Regional Office for Europe) highlighted that the environmental sector remains sidelined and the government underestimate the full importance of it.

Funding opportunities for CSOs in environment, energy and climate change

Michael Erbs-Jorgensen (DG NEAR, European Commission) began his [presentation](#) stating that the EU supports CSOs capacities in order to promote technical specialisation, strengthen advocacy activities, networking and coalition building between organisations and strengthen internal governance and management.

The overall trends focus on long-term work between NGOs, recognising that capacity building and advocacy requires time and resources. **Michael Erbs-Jorgensen** stated that the EU supports flexible approach based on fostering partnerships and coalition building, as well as reaching out to grassroots organisations. He added that civil society will be supported under the sectoral programmes as a measure to provide EU financial assistance. The purpose of sectoral programmes is to enhance the role and capacities of civil society with the view of its active participation in the development and implementation process of these strategies.

For the Eastern Neighbourhood financial support instruments for sectoral programmes are the following:

- ENI Civil Society Facility;
- Thematic instruments such as Civil Society Organisations and the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights

Other types of supports are Civil Society Fellowships, Info sessions, Technical workshops and online courses.

WG3 members requested DG NEAR to share more information on the specific calls for proposals for civil society in the field of energy, environment and climate change.

Michael Erbs-Jorgensen suggested that the 2017-2020 dialogue with civil society will focus on these priorities.

WG3 members suggested that a common ground for the human rights and environment protection should be found

Michael Erbs-Jorgensen suggested that NGOs from the EaP countries should consider connecting with environmental NGOs from the EU Member States, as an option to foster their activities.

He added that despite the fact that the ENP Review considers environmental issues as a high priority, it draws very little attention to concrete actions concerning such issues.

One year after the UN Climate Change Conference and Sustainable Development Summit: EU and EaP policy

Niels Schuster (DG CLIMA, European Commission) focused his [presentation](#) on:

- Sustainable Development Goals and Paris agreement
- EU response
- Eastern Partnership regional and bilateral cooperation

Regarding the Sustainable Development Goals, goals 7 and 13 of the SDG state the necessity to act urgently to prevent climate change.

On the Paris Climate Agreements, **Niels Schuster** remarked the great acceleration of ratifying the agreement by the signatories (US, China, Ukraine and Brazil recently ratified the agreement), adding that it is a possibility for the agreement to enter into force by November this year. The agreement was presented as:

- an ambitious agreement due to the 5-year ambition cycle
- transparent in terms of methodologies, enhanced transparency and accountability, biannual reporting
- a fair agreement in terms of finance, adaptation, capacity building,

With regards to the review of the ENP, **Niels Schuster** stated that **climate change and environment are one of the priorities** which includes the implementation of the Paris Climate Agreement and that it is room of improvement.

In terms of climate change, the Association Agreements includes:

- ETS Directive;
- F-Gas regulation;
- ODS Regulation;
- Fuel Quality Directive.

Furthermore, he outlined the post-Paris priorities, which focuses on implementation of NDCs (nationally determined contributions) and capacity building for transparency.

ClimaEast project national events dedicated to the Paris Climate Agreement and climate action are schedule to take place in EaP countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Moldova), which will include participation of government officials, members of the business community, academia and civil society.

Niels Schuster also briefly described the Neighbourhood Investment Facility (NIF) as a method of using EU grants in order to mobilize financing from financial institutions and private sector for greater impact.

Regarding the Annual Assembly, WG3 members discussed potential speakers, structure and topics to be discussed at the EU energy security panel.

Energy Security and Energy Union

During her [presentation](#), **Marion Schiller-Probst (DG ENER, European Commission)** outlined the EU's energy policy objectives, which are based on competitiveness, security of supply and sustainability and the agreed headline targets for the 2030 Framework for Climate and Energy.

She touched upon the Work Programme of 2016 which focuses on Euratom initiatives, security supply packages and energy efficiency price packages as well as Market design and Renewables. A review of energy strategy of the energy efficiency of buildings.

International Energy priorities of the EU with regards to the EaP countries include:

- Energy Community- Joint Act on Gas security of supply.
- Ukraine Strategic Energy partnership
- Vast hydro potential can have an importance for the South Caucasus.

WG members asked about the position of EU Commission towards nuclear energy, given the fact that there are specialists who claim that nuclear is in fact a type of renewable energy and that it may greatly contribute to their efforts in cutting GHG emissions.

The Commission is neutral in this context; every state is responsible for their own energy mix. However, if the nuclear is used, the states have to make sure that it fits with all the EU regulations. It might also be a clean source of energy for a short term in terms of GHG emission, but definitely not a long-term solution since the waste management is not solved.

Comment: South Stream is not a viable option (The Commission doesn't support), Southern Gas Corridor is an option for the EU.

Mapping the route for EaP countries and the EU cooperation with the partners

Oleh Hychka's [presentation](#) was dedicated to Energy Security issues in five EaP countries (Georgia, Azerbaijan, Moldova and Ukraine) and how can they be tackled on the basis of requirements of the EU Energy Market. It was discussed about future of the Energy Union and Horizon 2020 on access and applicability. **At the national level** two events were organized (on EaP Panel on Environment and Climate Change) 26-27 May, 2026 Brussels. Other activity included National advocacy campaigns according to Energy Union and preparation of 6 national policy papers which were presented to national stakeholders. **Oleh Hychka** outlined the challenges Ukraine is facing, which include gas stock

creation, active work on waste management as well as the country's willingness to consider the Russian hybrid war.

Q&A Session

How to mitigate the RU influence on the energy sector?

The reforms in the energy sector have to be accelerated, so that some companies would not seek the Russian support. We can support for the right legislation, transparency, enhance communication.

UN Sustainable Development 25-27 Sept 2015.

Plamena Borisova focused her presentation on goal 11 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, which refers to creating inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities. She gave the example of two previous winners of the European Green Capital Award (All member states are eligible): **Stockholm** and **Copenhagen**. In the case of **Stockholm**, in order to achieve this award, the city had to fulfil some requirements which had to cover green areas, public transport, air quality, waste management, eco innovations. **Plamena Borisova** added that goal 11 combines all the requirements for sustainability.

Regarding **Copenhagen** the city encouraged community involvement, public-private involvement, created a bicycle infrastructure 55% of the population use bicycles. Also district heating saves 98 per cent of household, 90 per cent of building waste is reused. Moreover, Copenhagen set their Green target 2025, by which it has pledge itself to fulfil sustainable development related goals such as to reduce the heat computation to 20 % or power use by household to 10%. Such initiatives demonstrate the capability of the city to administrate itself. For this reason, as a suggestion it is proposed that "We have to start working on a local, national level step by step."

Further WG3 activities for 2016

The session moderated by **Nastasia Beksish** and **Plamena Borissova** was dedicated to the WG3 activity and re-granting scheme in 2016, as well as to the Annual Assembly in November.

Plamena Borisova informed WG3 members about the [projects selected this year under the EaP CSF Re-granting scheme](#) as well as the main 2016 activities, including:

- Training on Nature Protection in Bulgaria, which provided participants with practical lessons on how to offer their contribution to environmental protection
- EfE Ministerial Conference in June in Batumi, at which two side events were organised with the support of the EaP CSF

Compared with 2015, this year was more successful, as more project proposals were submitted, more managed to pass the eligibility check and more were selected for financing (8 projects submitted out of which 3 selected for financing in 2016, compared to 1 project proposal submitted, which was selected for financing).