

EASTERN PARTNERSHIP CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM

(Brussels, 16-17 November 2009)

RECOMMENDATIONS

WORKING GROUP 4: CONTACTS BETWEEN PEOPLE

GENERAL

1. Promote and disseminate information on EU issues and the opportunities provided by the EU by developing an information society (i.e. access to internet and computer literacy) and by enlarging the network of European Information Points.
2. Reduce barriers and develop effective contacts between people by enabling the full participation of citizens of the EaP countries in the EU programmes on youth, media, culture, research and education.
3. Address specific situations and levels of development of civil society in each EaP country, in particular through using existing leaders' networks (such as Euclid Network and the Civil Society Leadership Network) for strengthening common understanding, sharing of values, and cooperation between NGOs from EaP countries and EU Member States.

VISA FACILITATION AND LIBERALISATION

4. The EU and its member states should offer all six EaP countries roadmaps towards visa free regimes and waive visa fees as soon as possible. As a first step simplify/streamline visa procedures and provide multiple-entry long term visas.

EDUCATION

5. Encourage the governments in the six EaP countries to support adult education and long life learning and expand the Grundtvig and Comenius programmes. Support the EaP countries to work towards the reforms in line with the Bologna Process.
6. Call for more school exchange programmes and distance learning, and provide access to educational programmes for marginalised people and people with few opportunities. Ensure the involvement of CSOs in EU educational programmes.
7. Increase significantly funding for volunteer and internship opportunities for young people, thus ensuring the access of young people to employment, both as a part of formal educational programmes, as well as outside formal education (calling upon all European institutions, national public authorities, private sector and NGOs).
8. Increase the recognition of non-formal education in the EaP countries and provide links with EU organizations delivering non-formal education. Support EaP countries in developing a quality assurance framework for the non-formal education.

YOUTH

9. Enhance the active participation of young people in decision making processes at all levels and develop mechanisms for involving them in the achievement of the EaP's goals.
10. Develop special programmes for peace and intercultural education in post conflict areas.
11. Assist EaP governments in adopting and approximating national legislation and strategies in line with EU standards with the regard to young people and youth structures (such as Law on Youth, Law on NGOs, Law on volunteering, etc.)

RESEARCH

12. Support joint research projects by developing an institutionalised network of researchers and by creating a free database of studies and research.

CULTURE

13. Foster cultural exchanges and cooperation between EU and EaP countries.
14. Encourage ratification/fostering implementation of the 2005 UNESCO *Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions* in the six EaP countries.

MEDIA

15. Explore and promote the new media tools and create an informal, internet-based media network among the EaP and EU countries.
16. Develop mechanisms to systematically inform civil society about ongoing projects and programmes of all four platforms, and support information projects through TV, radio and press.

WORKING PAPER

GENERAL

- Ensure **full participation** in all the EU programmes on youth, media, culture and education
- Working group 4 has the potential to **support and facilitate the other three working groups**, because as the people to people working group it can stimulate interactions and communication between civil society within the EaP countries, and between the EaP countries and the rest of Europe.
- **Develop regional cooperation** inside the EaP countries and with the EU countries and contribute to regional understanding
- **Bridge differences** inside and between the EaP and EU countries; take into consideration the people that are not covered by a central government
- **Corruption**: EU should facilitate **fight of corruption in the education field**
- Initiate "**Europe days**" / "**EU week**" in the EaP countries with EU related activities.
- Start drafting an **Action plan of the Working Group** and a list of organizations willing to cooperate, youth, trade union organisations etc.
- **Reduce barriers and develop effective contacts**: barriers: **distance** – isolated regions; **money- create travel grants programmes; ease language barrier**
- **Support Civil Society** in the countries where it is marginalised and not officially recognised
- Enlarge the **existing networks of leaders in the Civil Society** (such as the Civil Society Leadership Network, which focuses just on the EaP countries, and Euclid Network, which focuses on the whole of Europe including the EaP countries).
- Facilitate and develop an **information society** (generalised access to internet) in the region, including by enlarging the network of **information points**

VISA FACILITATION AND LIBERALISATION

- **Develop mobility**: facilitation and eventually long term liberalisation of the **visa regime**.
- **Harmonisation and simplification of the visa procedures** in the EU countries (eg. electronic application)
- Easing of the **financial burden linked to visas**; more **transparency**
- **Visa facilitation focused on particular categories of people (eg. students and participants at the EU programmes)**
- **Medium and long term multiple entry visa**

EDUCATION

- Need of tools for **continuous educations** and for grown up people. **Informal education and long life learning**. Expand EU Grundwig programme to the EaP countries.
- Stimulate **distance learning**
- Need to facilitate **access to information in province** for the young people to study abroad.
- **Volunteers from EU MS** countries to go in the EaP countries to ensure training programmes from the youth and present studies opportunities – the **European Voluntary Service**
- More **internship opportunities** for the EaP countries in the EU countries
- **School exchange programmes** (students, pupils and teachers)
- **Involvement of CSOs** in the EU educational programmes

YOUTH

- Share EU's experience with the EaP countries in **involving youth in decision making process** at all levels (ex. youth local councils, youth self governance)

- Assist EaP governments in adopting and approximation of national legislation and strategies in line with EU standards with the regard to young people and youth structures (such as Law on Youth, Law on NGOs, Law on volunteering, etc.)

RESEARCH

- Necessity to develop **joint research**
- Research in the **humanitarian field**
- **Institutionalised network of researchers** from EU and EaP countries and **database of studies and research, with free access.**

CULTURE

- A dialogue covering modern culture but also issues connected to **identity and historical memory**. Encourage ratification of the 2005 UNESCO Convention regarding historical heritage
- Promote exchanges and cooperation between **artists in the EU and EaP countries**
- Encourage ratification /fostering implementation of the 2005 UNESCO *Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions*.

MEDIA

- **Develop the new tools of the media** and create an **informal media network** in the EaP and EU countries