

EU-UKRAINE CIVIL SOCIETY PLATFORM		ПЛАТФОРМА ГРОМАДЯНСЬКОГО СУСПІЛЬСТВА УКРАЇНА-ЄС
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5th meeting, Kyiv, 15 November 2017

JOINT DECLARATION

The EU-Ukraine Civil Society Platform (CSP) is one of the bodies set up within the framework of the Association Agreement between the European Union and Ukraine.

The CSP enables civil society organisations from both sides to monitor the implementation process from the point of view of civil society, and prepare their recommendations for the relevant authorities.

The CSP is made up of thirty members, fifteen from each side, representing the EESC and Ukrainian civil society. The 5th meeting of the CSP was co-chaired by **Zoriana Mishchuk**, expert of the Ukrainian environmental NGO MAMA-86, and **Alfredas Jonuška**, member of the EESC and Director-General of the Šiauliai Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Craft.

The CSP members discussed the progress in the implementation of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement, and considered and adopted reports on the implementation of European integration reforms in the field of science and technology as well as on the policy regarding internally displaced persons in the context of the Association Agreement. They also discussed plans for the Platform's work in 2018.

1. With regard to the implementation of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement, the CSP members:

- 1.1 welcome the entering into full force, on 1 September 2017, of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement, including the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area, and call upon the European Union and the Government of Ukraine to ensure its complete and timely implementation;
- 1.2 acknowledge the importance of reforms in healthcare, education, energy efficiency and the pension system of Ukraine and call for determined and consistent implementation of these and other reforms under the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement, in particular on decentralisation, public administration, social and labour relations, as well as in other sectors, in dialogue with all relevant stakeholders and aiming to ensure decent work and achieve European-level standards of living;
- 1.3 urge the Ukrainian authorities to boost reform of the judiciary, focusing in particular on enforcement of anti-corruption legislation, and ensuring the independence and operability of the

established anti-corruption institutions, and call for the swift adoption of legislation enabling the creation of an anti-corruption court, transparent and independent appointment of judges and ensuring citizens' access to justice;

- 1.4 bearing in mind the fact that Ukraine is lagging behind the legal approximation schedule provided for in the Association Agreement, welcome the adoption by the Ukrainian government of the European Integration Communication Strategy and the new Action Plan for implementing the Association Agreement, while also stressing that the public consultations on the latter document did not meet the minimum standards laid down by Ukrainian legislation. The CSP members call on the government to make the planned online monitoring system of the Association Agreement's implementation available, which would contribute to the transparency of the implementation process as well as raising awareness among Ukrainian civil society and the wider public with regard to how well implementation is being carried out;
- 1.5 welcome the adoption by the European Parliament of the recommendation to the Council, the Commission and the EEAS on the Eastern Partnership, setting out plans to introduce the "EaP+" model for Ukraine and other associated countries, including the creation of a trust fund for Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia, in order to unlock enhanced opportunities for further integrating Ukraine into existing EU cooperation mechanisms and increase participation in EU programmes and agencies;
- 1.6 welcome the initiative of the Lithuanian parliament to draft the "New European Plan for Ukraine for 2017-2020" (the so-called "Marshall Plan for Ukraine") that would guarantee an increase in the EU's economic, political and financial assistance to Ukraine, and call upon the EU institutions to study the proposal thoroughly;
- 1.7 note the positive impact of the recently introduced visa-free travel regime – in force since 11 June 2017 – for citizens of Ukraine, boosting people-to-people contacts, and express confidence that it will continue to bring societies closer together; furthermore, call upon both sides to seek further opportunities to ensure that Ukrainians feel the tangible results of European integration in Ukraine;
- 1.8 express their unequivocal support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders and condemn Russian aggression, which resulted in the illegal annexation of Crimea, the City of Sevastopol and the partial occupation of Donetsk and Luhansk regions and led to multiple deaths; also express deep concern regarding the further deterioration of the human rights situation in Crimea, in particular concerning Crimean Tatars, and occupied territories in eastern Ukraine. CSP members also call for the immediate liberation of all Ukrainian political prisoners illegally detained in Russia and hostages of Russian proxies in the occupied territories;
- 1.9 welcome the prolongation of EU sanctions against the Russian Federation, targeting the financial, energy and defence sectors, and the area of dual-use goods as well as individual restrictive measures, and call on the EU Member States to push, with all necessary political and economic means, for the restoration of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity,

establishing peace and solving the humanitarian problems of the residents of these and adjoining territories;

- 1.10 express satisfaction about the significant increase in bilateral trade following the implementation of DCFTA as well as the introduction of a set of temporary autonomous trade measures in favour of Ukraine, further improving access for Ukrainian exporters to the EU market. The CSP members encourage the Ukrainian authorities to take the final steps towards joining the regional convention on pan-Euro-Mediterranean preferential rules of origin (PEM Convention), which would open up new opportunities for Ukrainian and EU enterprises as well as calling on both sides to sign the Agreement on Conformity Assessment and Acceptance of Industrial Products;
- 1.11 note that the implementation process for the adopted Strategy on Technical Regulation until 2020 is lagging behind schedule, in particular with regard to the stages of drafting and adoption of the relevant legislative and normative acts, and also does not take sufficient account of the needs and capacity of market actors;
- 1.12 acknowledge that the procedure for the implementation of the EU *acquis* in the sphere of aviation has to be simplified, in order to implement the original EU regulations, as set out in the annexes to the Common Aviation Area (CAA) agreement, seeking swift approximation of the Ukrainian legislation to the EU *acquis* in the field of civil aviation without additional budgetary allocations;
- 1.13 welcome the fact that the updated Strategy of National Environmental Policy of Ukraine until 2030 has been made public and discussion with civil society on this document, which includes 35 target indicators, has commenced, and call for it to be approved immediately;
- 1.14 note the urgent need to adopt legislation in the field of Strategic Environmental Assessment and the necessary by-laws for the practical implementation of the Ukrainian law on environmental impact assessment;
- 1.15 note that one of the key tasks for healthcare reform in Ukraine should be the simultaneous introduction of compulsory state social health insurance, which could become an effective and efficient way of guaranteeing the treatment, diagnosis, prevention and rehabilitation of patients in the case of illness or accident, and to avoid shifting the burden of financing medical services to patients;
- 1.16 call on the authorities of Ukraine to ensure the minimum level of social protection in Ukraine, as laid down in Recommendation No. 202 of the International Labor Organization, as well as to fully ratify the revised European Social Charter;
- 1.17 reiterate their call on the Ukrainian government to facilitate the immediate establishment of the Domestic Advisory Group on sustainable development, as provided for in Article 299, Chapter 13, of the Association Agreement, with broad representation of employers' organisations, trade unions, non-governmental organisations and other stakeholders so as to ensure a permanent,

coherent and timely dialogue, covering sustainable development aspects of EU-Ukraine trade relations.

2. On implementation of the Association Agreement in the field of science and technology, the CSP members:

- 2.1 point to the fact that the Association Agreement is a powerful incentive for reforming the public administration system in the field of science and technology, joining the European Research Area (ERA), enhancing efficiency of the national research system, streamlining investments in international cooperation and research infrastructure, creating a free market of researchers, as well as knowledge and data exchange with a view to addressing global challenges and increasing the competitiveness of the economy;
- 2.2 welcome the signing of the Ukraine's Association Agreement with regard to Horizon 2020 and the agreement on scientific and technological collaboration between the European Atomic Energy Community and the Ukrainian government allowing Ukraine to cooperate with the Euratom Research and Training Programme (2014–2018), as well as commencing cooperation under the agreements with CERN, EuroFusion and the Joint Research Centre;
- 2.3 note that the decline in funding for science to its lowest ever level has led to a sharp deterioration in working conditions for researchers and a drop in their salaries, as well as a significant science brain drain abroad and to other sectors of the economy, and demonstrates that science is not among the government's priorities. This jeopardises Ukraine's implementation of the Association Agreement in the field of science and technology, and is leading to a decline in the economy's competitiveness and a loss of opportunities with regard to achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals;
- 2.4 call on the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine (NASU) to take steps to modernise this key institution by following the recommendations set out in the Horizon 2020 Policy Support Facility Report, which are based on the best practices of similar institutions within EU Member States. In particular, it should take into account gender balance at decision-making level and encourage young researchers to participate in NASU management structures;
- 2.5 recommend aiming R&D funding at broader competitive project-based initiatives as well as encouraging and supporting research related to business and industry, and cooperation between Ukrainian companies and scientific institutions;
- 2.6 note that the effective use of opportunities offered by the associated participation in the Horizon 2020 programme depends mainly on enhancing the institutional capacity of certain executive authorities and the government in general, the establishment of effective coordination mechanisms between various ministries under the aegis of the Vice Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic integration, coordination with stakeholders of the European Research Area and communication with civil society more broadly;
- 2.7 invite relevant EU institutions to consider a wider set of tools for Ukraine's integration into the ERA, particularly educational, scientific and technical and economic leverage aimed at

providing incentives for the necessary reform and avoiding the reform process being hindered as a result of obsolete practices and lack of finance. The CSP members consider it reasonable to establish a specialised fund to provide international technical assistance to Ukraine during its integration into the ERA, provide it with the necessary research and innovation infrastructure and support exchange programmes for scientists;

- 2.8 express their concern about the lack of organisational, logistical and information support to the National Board of Ukraine on the Development of Science and Technology, as well as the failure to provide – in the draft 2018 State Budget – funding for the creation and activities of the National Research Fund, and of the common system for assessing the science-based activities of scientific institutions and higher education establishments, based on European best practices;
- 2.9 emphasise the importance of elaborating a strategy for the development of science and technology and bringing it in line with the government's other strategic documents and with ERA policy, as well as the importance of creating organisational and financial mechanisms for the implementation of that strategy, particularly through the participation of Ukrainian representatives in the ERA's groups and committees for scientific policy, setting up a system of expert support in Ukraine and ensuring coordination between the key research funding organisations with a view to implementing the roadmap of Ukraine's integration into the ERA;
- 2.10 encourage the wider use of instruments of international cooperation, particularly in order to: ensure participation in the ESFRI-2016 research infrastructure, which is a key priority for Ukraine; adopt the law on recognising the European Research Infrastructure Consortium; create opportunities for engaging foreign researchers and benefiting from the academic mobility of Ukrainian scientists; introduce the procedure of open, transparent and merit-based recruitment of researchers; develop Open Science and Open Innovation agendas; and ensure that Ukraine participates in the European Open Science Cloud for Research;
- 2.11 invite the Ukrainian government, in cooperation with the relevant social partners and civil society organisations, to develop and adopt legislation to empower women in science, which should include affordable childcare, paid leave, encouragement for fathers to take on a bigger role in child care, etc.

3. On the rights of internally displaced persons (IDPs), the CSP members:

- 3.1 stress that internally displaced persons should have the same rights and living conditions and should enjoy the same opportunities to participate in civil, political and cultural activities as the local population. This requires not only adequate financing and determination on the part of the authorities, but also cooperation with the broader world of organised civil society;
- 3.2 underline, in particular, the importance of ensuring equal treatment of IDPs with regard to access to accommodation, employment and social security, which is a prerequisite for their integration with local communities and into the labour market; call on the Ukrainian authorities, especially the Ministry for Temporarily Occupied Territories and IDPs, to urgently take

measures in this respect, *i.a.* by promoting employment and self-employment of IDPs and providing them with social housing;

- 3.3 emphasise the need to take steps in order to reunite families, rebuild the social fabric, restore mutual trust and eliminate prejudices towards IDPs; note that civil society organisations can play a key role in these processes;
 - 3.4 note that restrictions on the movement of civilians between the government-controlled zones and the zones that are not under the control of the government should be gradually lifted and should not make it excessively or unjustifiably difficult for the IDPs to cross the dividing line or prevent those wishing to return from doing so;
 - 3.5 call for restitution of the civil rights of IDPs, including their electoral rights, as well as for the development of mechanisms for the recovery of these rights through simplified access to justice;
 - 3.6 insist that violations of the right to free movement should be stopped, and that the establishment of a legal mechanism for checking IDPs' place of residence should only be carried out if there is evidence of illegal use of rights to social assistance or other significant breaches of the law;
 - 3.7 call for the restoration of the right to have a pension, irrespective of the IDPs' place of residence, and for the extension of the number of state-owned banks available for receiving such payments;
 - 3.8 encourage the regulation by means of legislation of procedures confirming IDPs' civil status, the recovery of lost documents, and the restoration of violated rights with regard to legal acts; also call for the establishment of an effective mechanism to demonstrate actual seniority so as to create conditions for providing a proper pension service to IDPs;
 - 3.9 call for the establishment of a transparent system for providing information about existing IDP support programmes, receipt of such support and its usage, which is also agreed with IDPs;
 - 3.10 reiterate the importance of involving IDPs and other stakeholders in the development of any policy affecting IDPs.
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