



**Written contribution of the EEIG for Azerbaijan to the Eastern
Partnership Civil Society Forum
(16-17 November 2009, Brussels, Belgium)**

The European Economic Chamber of Trade, Commerce and Industry for Azerbaijan presents its compliments to the members of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) Civil Society Forum (CSF) and its Steering Committee of the and, in conformity with its mandate, is pleased to present herewith the written contribution and recommendations.

The recommendations reflect the vision of our Azerbaijani members representing the most successful business circles in the country and possessing a wide spectrum of means for advancing the provisions of EaP within the country and the Caucasus region. In accordance with the Chamber's initial expression of interest, the recommendations basically focus on two platforms, which had been duly defined as Economic integration and convergence with EU policies and energy security. However, the Chamber does not limit itself to these sectors and is open for any discussion, where the efforts of the Chamber might be useful.

In this regard, the Chamber recommends:

For the structure, meetings and participation at the Civil Society Forum:

- 1) Apart from the 4 thematic working groups - establishing sub-groups for further concretisation of the efforts of the concerned participating institutions and a more deep exchange of ideas. This can be easily made on the basis of the potential subjects mentioned in the "Commission Staff Working Document accompanying the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council" (Brussels, SEC(2008) 2974/3, COM(2008) 823);
- 2) Taking into account the number of institutions participating in the CSF – creating a CSF managing board with its coordinators/mediators for each concrete thematic policy of EaP. This board should be elected on the basis of geographic origin/nationality and proportionality. The members of the board must have an even distribution of tasks and mechanisms at hand for their implementation;
- 3) Creating a body for monitoring and assessing the activities of the CSF, possibly, in the form of a separate assessment committee. This body could also be responsible for presenting quarterly accounts/reports on the activities of the thematic working groups in particular;
- 4) Promoting internal CSF relationships in each partner country through creating EaP CSF National agencies, which would meet on quarterly basis in order to coordinate their activities and exchange best practices and ideas.

For the EaP and its structures:

- 1) Ensuring constant interaction between all the levels of EaP;
- 2) Further developing the idea of EURO-NEST Parliamentary Assembly with EaP countries. It is vital to involve legislative bodies of the countries in the whole process;
- 3) Creating a mechanism of cooperation/interrelation between CSF members and concrete government and ministerial representatives in related thematic platforms. This is needed for a better outcome of the decisions taken at ministerial and heads of states levels. This can also be the responsibility of EaP CSF National agencies mentioned above;
- 4) Creating a quarterly 'EaP progress newsletter' available for all the general public;
- 5) Elaborating a process of providing relevant CSF recommendations to the EU Presidency directly (if this is the practice of the EU).

For thematic platforms

General issues

- 1) Promoting the provisions of the EaP policies inside the partner countries and EU, also through the CSF network;
- 2) Emphasising the need of settling all the regional conflicts in the concerned countries on the basis of principles of international law, such as the principle of territorial integrity etc.;
- 3) Providing realistic solutions for sustainable development and economic growth in the context of EaP priorities.
- 4) Promoting the exchange of ideas, expertise and experiences at regular thematic meetings and workshops
- 5) Developing technical assistance for training officials in the spheres of the thematic platforms;

Economic integration and convergence with EU policies

- 6) Supporting the trade approximation efforts of the partner countries and holding related thematic workshops;
- 7) Improving customs and trade facilitation in partner countries; supporting and developing activities related to approximation of trade and customs legislation of the partner countries to the EU standards;
- 8) Supporting partner countries' efforts in their WTO accession processes;
- 9) Setting up EaP business forums held in the EU and/or the partner countries in order to strengthen constant business interaction and to promote new partnerships;
- 10) Supporting business, in particular small and medium-sized European enterprises (SMEs) through consultancy, corporate training and transfer of professional skills and knowledge;
- 11) Assisting in raising funds and capital from the private sector for international project financing and aid-deserving investments in partner countries;
- 12) Promoting and securing full employment, the creation of new jobs and opportunities, and human resource development by improving the individual and corporate competitiveness

Energy security

- 13) Improving diversification of energy supply through various regional projects;
- 14) Supporting the countries engaged in export of oil- and gas-based chemicals and derivatives; facilitating corresponding procedures;
- 15) Providing financial assistance or facilitating the process of obtaining credit lines for new petrochemical projects intending to produce oil and gas derivatives.

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