

Thank you, Mr Chair,

On behalf of the EaP CSF I would like to express our gratitude for opportunity to speak today and communicate main messages of the EaP CSF WG3 annual meeting held recently in Brussels.

At the first Ministerial in 2016 CSF requested for clear targets and timetable for the LD implementation, therefore we are happy about 20x20 targets but so far, only Ukraine developed national Roadmap to implement Declaration's provisions. We are concerned about LD implementation therefore, because we expected all EaP countries to elaborate national implementation frameworks, which linked a long-term, mid-term and short-term policy goals with 20x20 targets. On our mind, such national framework is also important to guide the environmental governance reforms, which are going on in majority of EaP countries. Therefore we call upon EaP environmental ministries to elaborate their national soft documents, which inter alia could help to organise and communicate to the society a new policy and laws development in line with LD and 20x20 deliverables.

[We recall to the need of strengthening environmental governance and monitoring of the reforms, enhance environmental institutions, implement environmentally friendly decision-making within the governments and communicate it strategically in order to promote environmental awareness, transparency and public participation on environmental matters.]

We are inspired by the fact that all EaP countries adopted new EIA and SEA legislation, and associated countries practically started to implement correspondent EU Directives. However, Civil Society monitoring provide facts about attempts of developers to ignore or get around of new assessment procedures for big projects such as Svydovets ski resort in Ukraine (also requires transboundary assessment) or Amulsar gold mine in Armenia or E40 waterway project and others.

We call on the distinguish participants of high-level meeting to pay special attention to such cases and propose to establish regular reporting by the EaP countries on EIA implementation on big projects which encroach to the Emerald Network territories, Ramsar sites or other nature territories of high value.

Meanwhile, the deforestation in majority of EaP countries continues and mainly attributed to illegal logging, which is carried out even in natures reserves. We are concerned about lack of systematic measures in halting illegal logging, what often rooted from [is largely encouraged by] the artificial prohibition by the Government of ecological inspections in forests, what unfortunately proves that deregulation often continues in a cost of environmental losses.

CSF is very concerned about HPP epidemic in EaP countries fuelled by green tariffs, with especially grave environmental consequences in Georgia. As hydropower harms the environment, it should not be considered green, green tariffs shouldn't apply and such projects should not be financed by IFIs. The governments must decide on the construction of HPPs, small of big, or changing its performance pattern in strict conformity with the EIA legislation and with an active participation of civil society, what we hope will be the case with Novodnistrovka HPP, that the results of the EIA Study being conducted by the UNDP Moldova will be taken into account.

Civil society marks a significant progress made by the EaP countries in developing policy on combating climate change, reforming water and waste management system, expansion of nature protected areas and Emerald network development, but also enhancing accountability, openness and public participation. However, the trend of losing already attained positions persists. We advocate for comprehensive approach to the environmental governance issue, because GEG is an important prerequisite to enable, promote and sustain (secure) environmental

reforms in our countries. But for this we need far more strong environmental institutions and better cooperation to increase political weight of environmental sector in the Governments. We don't support therefore merging of environmental ministries with agriculture ministries in Georgia and Moldova as a step in opposite direction and reconfirm our position that institutional strengthening needs to be a priority of environmental cooperation and included into the core of planned actions.

In its turn, civil society will continue the monitoring and assessment of the environmental reforms in EaP countries and remain a reliable partner, active participant and the endless source of agents of change.

For circular economy:

In order to promote circular economy in EaP countries, which at the moment have very low waste recycling rates, EaP countries need strong institutional and legislative framework. We greet the Law on Waste developed according to the EU Waste Directive, which were adopted in Moldova and Georgia, and is on the way to be finalized and adopted in Ukraine. But without strong institutions and legislation enforced circular economy will not be implemented in a desired pace.

It is difficult for Moldova and Georgia to implement AAa in the field of environment, which Ministries of Environment, being merged with the Ministries of Agricultures. We urge other EaP countries not to follow this example, and Moldova with Georgia, to reconfigure the structure of the Government with Ministries of Environment being an independent structure within the new Governments after Parliamentary elections.

Central and Eastern European countries, during the process of EU integration, had strong Ministries of Environment. And now we can see the progress when crossing the border of EaP country and entering the EU country (Moldovan-Romanian border for example). There is a big difference in waste management between EaP and CEE countries, which became members of EU.

EU Green Week demonstrated that circular economy is implemented efficiently where local authorities, SMEs and the general public take an active part in promote the principles of circular economy. In EU countries local authorities are competing for LIFE awards and Green Cities awards, SMEs have access to various investments possibilities, as those which we see at the Luxembourg Circular Economy Hub web page, and the general public is informed about benefits and its role in circular economy and takes an active part in implementing those principles.

No old technologies should be allowed to enter the territory of EaP region and single-use plastic should be banned on the whole territory of EaP region. Otherwise, with already depleted natural resources, we will not be able to build a safe and secure border between EaP and EU countries in terms of environment.

Ministries of Economy should be a part of the dialogues on the promotion of circular economy and meetings of these format and integration of environmental concerns in other sectors of economy should become not just a promise on paper in the EaP region.

Environmental conditionalities should be a part of the process of monitoring the implementation of AAs and CEPA in the EaP region and macrofinancial assistance, when it is used also to improve environmental protection in the EaP countries, should be strictly monitored to bring results.

EaP CSF implements projects to improve waste management in the EaP countries, so let us cooperate together and implement flagship projects, combining EU4Environment Programme and EaP CSF Regranting Scheme.