



International Networking Conference

DIALOGUE FOR FUTURE 2023

“The Future of Eastern Partnership: Empowering Democratic and Sustainable Civil Societies”

17-20th of September 2023

Humboldt Carré Berlin

Behrenstraße 42, 10117 Berlin

The Russian war against Ukraine has shaken the region and represents a turning point, the effects of which can be felt not only in the EU, but especially in the countries of the Eastern Partnership: in terms of security, domestic and economic policies. But how does the Eastern Partnership Program have to be adapted under changed circumstances to sustain and enhance the capacities of civil society actors in restoring stability, security, and peace in the region? Which instruments can the EU and its member states use to strengthen the resilience and power of civil society in fighting corruption and defending democracy and human rights? How can civil society organisations be supported by promoting renewable energy, citizens' energy, and the green transition to get more independent and secure? These and other issues will be discussed during the conference. The main goal of the conference is to bring together change-makers from the EU and its Eastern neighbours for a more society-minded, more sustainable and deeper dialogue.

Working language: English (no translation)

Sunday, September 17th, 2023

Arrival of participants

19:00 Welcome dinner

Monday, September 18th, 2023

09:00 - 09:30 Registration & Networking

09:30 - 10:00 Ice-Breaking Session

10:00 - 10:15 Welcoming & Presentation of the Conference | Room ‚Kassenhalle‘

- **Enno Strudthoff**, Head of International Projects, wechange eG, Berlin
- **Inna Nelles**, Co-Founder of the German-Ukrainian Bureau, Germany

10:15 - 10:30 Keynote | Room ‚Kassenhalle‘

- **Robin Wagener**, Coordinator for Intersocietal Cooperation with the Southern Caucasus, the Republic of Moldova and Central Asia, Federal Foreign Office, and Member of the German Bundestag, Berlin

10:30 - 12:00 Panel Discussion: “Challenges and Opportunities for the Eastern Partnership in Times of Russian Military Aggression” | Room ‚Kassenhalle‘

The Eastern Partnership (EaP) was created to make the participating states and their societies more resilient, inclusive and prosperous as well as accelerate their political association and deepen their economic integration with the EU. Russian aggression against Ukraine prompted the EU to offer candidate status to Ukraine and Moldova and a membership perspective to Georgia. A common Russian threat offers an incentive for upgraded regional cooperation in the EaP security dimension. But how to use the current geopolitical challenges as an opportunity for the EaP vitalization and upgrade? Which structural adjustments of the EaP would help to strengthen civil societies, advance their capacities and increase their leverage in the EaP bilateral and multilateral tracks?

- **Dirk Schuebel**, Special Envoy for the Eastern Partnership, European External Action Service, Brussels
- **Iulian Groza**, Executive Director, Institute for European Policy and Reforms (IPRE), Chisinau, Moldova
- **Kataryna Wolczuk**, Associate Fellow, Russia and Eurasia Programme, Chatham House, London
- **Robin Wagener**, Coordinator for Intersocietal Cooperation with the Southern Caucasus, the Republic of Moldova and Central Asia, Federal Foreign Office, and Member of the German Bundestag, Berlin

Moderation: Rebecca Harms, former MEP, Greens/EFA, Brussels

12:00 - 13:00 Lunch Break & Networking

13:00 - 13:30 Moderated Interview

Ukraine’s Resilient Recovery: Collaborative Efforts of Civil Society and Politics

- **Jean P. Froehly**, Head of the URC24 Task Force, Federal Foreign Office

Moderation: Mattia Nelles, Co-Founder of the German-Ukrainian Bureau, Germany

13:30 - 15:00 Parallel Working Groups and Bar Camps

A. Open Fishbowl: Building Democratic, Resilient, Equal and Inclusive Societies | Room ‚Kassenhalle‘

Recent democratic backsliding and autocratic tendencies in the EaP region have been targeting democratic values and constraining the spaces for NGOs, think tanks and independent media in promoting freedom of speech and of assembly, and political pluralism. How have the new political, social, economic and security challenges affected civil societies across the EaP countries? How have civil societies coped with these challenges and adapted their activities? What can be improved in the EaP frameworks to protect and support the work of civil societies?

- **Anton Shekhovtsov**, Director, Centre for Democratic Integrity, Austria, Associated Researcher at the Research Center for the History of Transformations at the University of Vienna
- **Laure Delcour**, Professor, Université Sorbonne Nouvelle, Paris
- **Gabriela Svárovská**, Lecturer in human rights and foreign policy, Czech Republic, Prague
- **Salome Kandelaki**, Policy Analyst, Georgian Institute of Politics, Georgia

Speaker & Facilitator: Inna Melnykovska, Assistant Professor in Comparative Political Economy, Political Science Department, Central European University, Vienna, Austria

B. Promoting Good Governance and Fighting Corruption through Digitalization and Transnational Networking | Room ‚Caroline‘

Corruption practices of political elites, bureaucrats and businesses pose considerable challenges to the values of democracies and represent a threat to the integrity of societies in the EaP region. At the same time, corruption doesn't have borders. Stolen money and assets are often parked in 'safe Western jurisdictions' with the assistance of Western "enablers". What new opportunities and challenges in anti-corruption have been brought on by digitalization? How effectively have been digital tools applied in anti-corruption activism? How useful are the EU's initiatives to promote digital transformation and anti-corruption in the EaP participating countries and how can they be adapted to the needs of anti-corruption activism?

- **Oksana Huss**, Research Fellow at the University of Bologna
- **Tigran Tsaturyan**, Head of Department for supervising financial activities of political parties, Corruption Prevention Commission of the Republic of Armenia
- **Andrii Biletskyi**, Administrative Director, Anti-Corruption Research and Education Centre, Ukraine

Speaker & Facilitator: Oleksandra Keudel, Research Communication Advisor, Assistant Professor at the Department of Public Policy and Governance, Kyiv School of Economics (KSE)

C. On the Road to Sustainability, Citizen Energy and Energy Security | Room ‚Wilhelm‘

The Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine highlighted the dependency on Russian fossil fuel imports both in the EU and Eastern Partnership. The EU acknowledged the need for immediate actions and with its European Green Deal committed to climate neutrality by 2050. But how can the ambitious Green Deal be translated into local action and bring about a shared understanding of climate and energy security problems and solutions in EaP countries? What can be done to enhance climate efforts and decentralised energy production in Eastern Partnership? How to unleash the potential of the regional exchange and activate climate-related cross-border civil society cooperation?

- **Vahe Ohanian**, Green Armenia
- **Bartłomiej Kupiec**, Lawyer and Climate Policy Analyst, Kraków, Poland
- **Victoria Burnazyan**, EcoLur PressClub, Armenia

Speaker & Facilitator: Julia Eichhofer, Project Manager, Sustainable Energy, Wechange

D. Beyond the Eastern Partnership: joint efforts of diaspora and civil society in exile for building a democratic Belarus | Room ‚Alexander‘

Belarusian (civil) society showed its strength and resolve in the protests following the falsified presidential elections in August 2020. Since then, massive repressions and the incarceration of more than 1500 political prisoners followed. The vast majority of civil activists now reside in forced exile, preparing for a democratic Belarus. What is the state of the diaspora and civil society in exile three years after the mass protests of 2020? Is the support they receive sufficient and what else is needed to strengthen the impact of the Belarusians abroad planning for a post-Lukashenko Belarus?

- **Astrid Sahm**, Visiting Fellow, German Institute for International and Security Affairs, SWP Berlin, IBB-Dortmund
- **Natallia Rabava**, Director, School of Young Managers in Public Administration (SYMPA), Minsk, Belarus

Moderation: Olga Dryndova, Coordinator, European Network for Belarus, Austausch e.V. Berlin

15:00 - 16:00 Coffee Break & Topic Café

At thematic coffee tables, participants can hear the summary of the working groups of other sessions presented by rapporteurs, speakers, and moderators.

16:00 - 17:00 Presentation of the Program “Expanding Cooperation with Civil Society in the Eastern Partnership Countries” | Room ‚Kassenhalle‘

The Federal Foreign Office annually provides grants to civil society actors within the Eastern Partnership programme. The support aims to establish or expand durable, democratically oriented civil society structures and enhance cooperation between stakeholders from Germany and the Eastern Partnership countries. But what does the application process look like? How to write project outlines and where to apply for them? These and further questions will be addressed in the workshop, provided by the Federal Foreign Office. After an initial input phase, the participants are invited to write and share their outlines of projects that can be handed in during or after the conference.

16:00-16:10 Welcoming Address

- **Anna Friederike Bartels**, Director, Foreign Cultural Policy, Federal Foreign Office

16:10-17:00 Presentation of the Program

- **Mariette Pfister**, Cultural, Social and Media Relations Desk Officer for Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and the Eastern Partnership Program, Federal Foreign Office
- **Daniel Demele**, Head of Division, Civil Society Cooperation Eastern Partnership and Russia, Federal Agency for Foreign Affairs
- **Fabien Ness**, Desk Officer, Cultural, Social and Media Relations with Russia and Belarus and the Eastern Partnership Program, Federal Foreign Office

17:00 - 18:00 German Partners' Fair & Networking

German NGOs are invited to have tables in the foyer to introduce themselves and their work to the participants.

18:00 - 19:45 Panel Discussion: “Europe's Centre of Gravity Shifts East” | Room ‚Kassenhalle‘

After Russia’s full-scale invasion, the West rallied in support of Ukraine. Besides the U.S., the most decisive voices and supporters of Ukraine continuously come from the Baltic States, Poland, the United Kingdom, and the Nordic countries. The newfound confidence and moral leadership in the Ukraine portfolio raised the profile and influence of these states within the EU. But is the rising importance of eastern and northern Europe as the frontline states in the confrontation with Russia durable, and does it translate to more influence on overall EU decision-making processes? Is the centre of gravity shifting away from Western Europe? What does it mean for the Union and the understanding of French and German leadership of the EU?

18:00 - 18:15 Keynote on the Future of Europe’s East by **Toomas Ilves**, former President of Estonia

- **Karolina Wigura**, historian of ideas, member of the Board of the Kultura Liberalna Foundation, Warsaw, Senior Fellow of the Center for Liberal Modernity, Berlin
- **Ulrich Speck**, Independent Foreign Policy Analyst, Germany
- **Martin Svárovský**, former Czech diplomat, Prague
- **Kristi Raik**, Deputy Director, Head of Foreign Policy Programme, International Centre for Defence and Security, Estonia

Moderator: **Ralf Fücks**, Co-Founder, Center for Liberal Modernity (LibMod)

19:45 - 21:00 Reception

Tuesday, September 19th, 2023

09:00 - 09:30 Registration & Coffee Reception

09:30 - 10:00 World Café

10:00 - 10:05 Summary of the First Day | Room ‚Kassenhalle‘

- **Inna Nelles**, Co-Founder of the German-Ukrainian Bureau, Germany

10:05 - 10:15 Welcoming Address | Room ‚Kassenhalle‘

- **Maksym Yemelianov**, Minister-Counsellor, Embassy of Ukraine to Germany

10:15 - 10:30 Keynote | Room ‚Kassenhalle‘

- **Volodymyr Yermolenko**, philosopher and writer, President of PEN Ukraine

10:30 - 12:00 Open Fishbowl: Ukraine’s Societal Resilience and Lessons for the Region | Room ‚Kassenhalle‘

During the full-scale Russian invasion of the country in 2022, the whole of Ukrainian society showed a remarkable degree of resilience and resistance. Many new grassroots initiatives were launched and the old initiatives were re-oriented to support the army, internally displaced, elderly, and other vulnerable groups. But what are the key ingredients of Ukrainian resilience and what are the lessons for the other civil societies in the EaP region? What more

can be done by external supporters like the European Union, the U.S., and Germany to make the activism of Ukrainian civil society (more) sustainable?

- **Volodymyr Yermolenko**, philosopher and writer, President of PEN Ukraine
- **Nico Lange**, Senior Fellow, Munich Security Conference
- **Orysia Lutsevych**, Deputy Director of the Russia and Eurasia Programme, head of the Ukraine Forum at Chatham House, United Kingdom
- **Rebecca Harms**, former Member of the European Parliament, expert on Ukraine
- **David Stulik**, Diplomat, Czech Republic

Moderation: Mattia Nelles, Co-Founder of the German-Ukrainian Bureau, Germany

12:00 - 13:00 Lunch Break & Networking

13:00 - 13.30 Keynote | Room ‚Kassenhalle‘

- **Robin Wagener**, Coordinator for Intersocietal Cooperation with the Southern Caucasus, the Republic of Moldova and Central Asia, Federal Foreign Office, and Member of the German Bundestag, Berlin

13:30 - 15:00 Parallel Working Groups, Panels and Bar Camps on the Four Thematic Tracks

- A. Political transparency and accountability - the power of watchdog initiatives | Room ‚Wilhelm‘**

What is the role of civil society in creating a quality political culture and fighting political corruption? How can citizens monitor elections, politicians and political parties? How can digital tools help to engage citizens in monitoring members of parliament? What is the role of watchdog initiatives in countries' democratisation?

- **Vita Dumanska**, Leader of CHESNO Watchdog Movement, Ukraine
- **Viktoriiia Maksymova**, Political Analyst, CHESNO Watchdog Movement, Ukraine

- B. Round Table Discussion: On the Way to the EU: The Role of Civil Society in the EU-Accession of Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia | Room ‚Caroline‘**

Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova, the so-called "Trio" all strive to join the European Union in earnest. In recognition of the reform progress, both Ukraine and Moldova got candidacy status in the Summer of 2022. Georgia, on the other hand, received only a membership perspective. All three have set in motion reforms largely concerning the fundamental political, anti-corruption, and rule of law criteria for membership. The Commission is due to publish in October 2023 comprehensive evaluations of the preparedness of each of the three states, and in the case that the conditions are largely met, the EU should as a next step open up the formal accession negotiation process. But what is the role of civil society activists and think-tanks in advocating for, accompanying the implementation of, and monitoring reforms in the necessary process? How can the EU support change-makers from each of the three states to advance the EU accession process?

- **Sergi Kapanadze**, Founder of the Think Tank Georgia's Reforms Associates (GRASS), Georgia
- **Oleh Rybachuk**, Head, Centre for United Action, Ukraine

- **Denis Cenusa**, Associated Expert, Think Tank EESC, Lithuania, Associated expert, Think Tank Expert-Grup, Moldova

Moderator: Khatia Kikalishvili, Programme Director for Eastern Partnership, Centre for Liberal Modernity

C. Panel Discussion: “Analysing Geopolitical Shifts in South Caucasus” | Room ,Kassenhalle‘

Co-organized by the Georgian Institute of Politics (GIP) and the Heinrich-Boell-Foundation Tbilisi Office - South Caucasus Region

The recent geopolitical shifts in South Caucasus (SC) are largely due to the 2020 Armenia-Azerbaijan war over Nagorno-Karabakh. While the Western actors were mostly absent during the war, Russia, Turkey, and other regional players stepped into the emerging vacuum, learning to come to terms with one another. Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine again changed the geopolitical picture and power balance, the role of different actors in the region, and beyond. It increased various security, economic, and energy policy-related challenges for the EU, with consequences for its role in the South Caucasus. How much has changed in the EU's foreign policy towards the region and each South Caucasus country? Which way can and should the EU balance geopolitics, and economics and promote democracy in the region? How can civil societies ensure that their voices are heard in the current dynamic environment?

- **Mikheil Sarjveladze**, Foreign Policy Advisor, German Bundestag, Postdoctoral Researcher, Friedrich Schiller University, Jena
- **Mahammad Mammadov**, Research Fellow, Topchubashov Center
- **Harutyun Voskanyan**, PhD Candidate, School of Social Sciences, University of Warsaw
- **Ivanna Machitidze**, Associate Professor in International Relations, New Vision University

Moderator: Kornely Kakachia, Director, Georgian Institute of Politics (GIP), Professor, Tbilisi State University, Jean Monnet Chair, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University

15:00 - 16:00 Coffee Break & Topic Café with Presentation of the Working Groups

At thematic coffee tables, participants can hear the summary of the working groups of other sessions presented by rapporteurs, speakers, and moderators.

Including an experience exchange session on **Citizen Diplomacy vs. Public Diplomacy: How do we advocate for Ukraine abroad?** | Room ,Alexander‘

Moderated by **Khrystyna Rybachok**, European Values Center, Central European University

16:00 - 17:30 Cooperation Sessions on Project Grants, Professional Skills and Networking

1. **Round Table: Integrating Project Ideas and Drafting Grant Applications with New Partners** | Room ,Caroline‘

Input by the Federal Foreign Office

Those participants, interested in applying for grant applications with the German Foreign Ministry, get the opportunity to continue drafting their applications, discuss with potential partners and submit a project outline.

2. **Expert Clinics:** One-to-one 15-minute talk with an expert | Room ‚Fritz Hall‘

- **Anahit Badalyan:** Social entrepreneurship as a model of economic development and empowerment / Media coverage principles during the war/conflict time
- **Nataliia Baliuk:** Monitoring and evaluation of project activities, capacity development of NGOs and think tanks
- **Khatuna Ioseliani:** Integrating project ideas and drafting grant applications
- **Tamar Jangulashvili:** Investing in inclusive governance that strengthens the role of CSOs
- **Mithun Mridha:** Intercultural Management: How to create an inclusive environment and engagement in multicultural teams?

3. **Open Fishbowl:** *Organised by VITSCHE* | Room ‚Kassenhalle‘

Case-based Barcamp about different Russian disinformation strategies and their base in long-lasting stereotypes and myths. The talk aims to discuss the best possible ways of deconstructing propagandist narratives and reaching people in different bubbles.

Exposing Russian disinformation strategies and deconstructing propaganda narratives

- **Kateryna Demerza,** Interdisciplinary analyst, Vitsche
- **Eva Yakubovska,** Project manager, historian, Vitsche

4. **Workshop:** *Co-organized by Clean Energy Wire*

Energy Supply in South Caucasus: Ways to Reduce Dependencies on Russia | Room ‚Wilhelm‘

Energy is a central tool of the Russian authorities to influence neighbouring countries and resulting dependencies are then exploited politically. But how can that dependency be understood and reduced and what can reporters, watchdogs, and civil society do to reduce dependencies on Russian Gas and Oil in the South Caucasus and promote climate-friendly alternatives? The discussion of the workshop will also focus on how to address the climate crisis by civil society and governments and prevent new contracts with companies that have detrimental impacts on the environment.

- **Tsira Gvasalia,** Environmental Journalist & Founder Cactus Media, Tbilisi, Georgia
- **Suren Deheryan,** Editor-in-chief, Ampop Media, President of Journalists for the Future NGO, Armenia

Moderator: **Clemens Schöll,** Journalism Programme Manager, Clean Energy Wire, Berlin

5. **Experience exchange session:**

The role of international organizations in mitigating ethnic disputes in Caucasus | Room ‚Goethe‘

- **Anna Vardanyan,** *journalist, political analyst, “Hayeli”, Armenia*

18:00 - 19:30 Panel Discussion: “A New European Security Architecture in the Eastern Neighbourhood” | Room ‚Kassenhalle‘

Russia’s aggression against Ukraine threatens European security and bears the risks of escalation in the EaP participating states. While Russia’s position could be weakening on the battlefield in Ukraine, it is still able to exercise spoiling and destabilising influences in its neighbourhood. The presence and role of the EU as a peace facilitator in the region is thus extremely important. But can the EU live up to these expectations? How to balance the geopolitical and reform-promoting rationales in the EU’s neighbourhood policy? How can the Eastern Partnership Instrument and other EU policy tools be used, to counteract Russian destabilisation efforts and promote sustainable peace in Europe and in the EaP region? How to extend the “sandwich model” of the EU’s top-down pressure and bottom-up pressure of active civil society toward the security and defence policy arena? What can a new European security architecture in the EaP region look like?

Keynote: Brian Whitmore, nonresident Senior Fellow, Atlantic Council, Assistant Professor of Practice, University of Texas-Arlington: Russia’s ability to influence and destabilise Europe’s Eastern Neighbourhood and the Caucasus.

- **Oleh Rybachuk**, Head, Centre for United Action, Ukraine
- **Yervand Shirinyan**, Chief Operating Officer, Open Society—Europe and Central Asia
- **Nino Chachava**, former diplomat, Georgia
- **Rebecca Harms**, former Member of the European Parliament, expert on Ukraine

Moderation: Wilfried Jilge, Historian of Eastern Europe, Expert on Ukraine, Associate Fellow of the DGAP, Berlin, Germany

19:30 - 21:00 Reception

[Wednesday, September 20th, 2023](#)

10:00 - 13:30 Meetings with NGOs and Think Tanks in Berlin

13:30 - 15:00 Lunch & Final Remarks

16:00 End of the Conference & Departure of the Participants

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