

<p><b>EU-UKRAINE CIVIL SOCIETY PLATFORM</b></p>		<p><b>ПЛАТФОРМА ГРОМАДЯНСЬКОГО СУСПІЛЬСТВА УКРАЇНА-ЄС</b></p>
---	---	---

**15th meeting, Brussels, 14 June 2024**

**JOINT DECLARATION**

The EU-Ukraine Civil Society Platform (CSP) is one of the bodies set up under the Association Agreement between the European Union (EU) and Ukraine. The CSP enables civil society organisations on both sides to monitor the implementation process from the point of view of civil society, and to prepare its recommendations to the relevant authorities. The 15th meeting of the CSP was co-chaired by Nadija Afanasieva, Ukrainian Institute for International Politics, and Marcin Nowacki, European Economic and Social Committee.

***The CSP members:***

1. welcome the European Commission's assessment that Ukraine has met the requirements for starting negotiations to join the European Union; they call on the EU Member States to agree on the negotiating framework in order to convene an intergovernmental conference with Ukraine;
2. welcome and support the approval and ratification of the Framework Agreement with Ukraine for implementation of the Ukraine Facility;
3. draw attention to the readiness of EU and Ukrainian civil society to provide expert support for, and monitoring of, implementation of the Ukraine Facility Plan; in this regard, they emphasise the need to plan regular meetings with the National Coordinator of the Ukraine Facility Plan in the Ukrainian Ministry of Economy, specialised departments of the EU Representation in Ukraine and DG NEAR;
4. emphasise the need to establish inclusive, innovative (including digital), corruption-free and effective mechanisms for the use of funds under the Ukraine Facility and note that civil society should be offered the possibility of carrying out checks on this use upon request and be provided with all documents in full transparency;
5. draw attention to the need for the direct involvement of Ukrainian businesses (small, medium and large) in the implementation of projects under the Ukraine Facility, supported by international financial organisations;
6. underline the urgent need to create a decentralised and diversified innovative energy system while ensuring that infrastructure is protected using modern means of air defence and that electricity generation facilities, heat and critical infrastructure are restored;

7. call on EU countries to demonstrate solidarity by supporting efforts to protect Ukrainian energy facilities, and support/advocate measures to boost energy sustainability, strengthen stability and build/rehabilitate Ukraine's energy infrastructure;
8. draw attention to the fact that Ukraine needs guarantees for its security both now and in the future; in this regard, an invitation to join NATO already at the Washington Summit in August 2024 would send out an important signal;
9. emphasise the importance of environmental reforms in the negotiation framework on Ukraine's application to join the EU and the earliest possible opening of negotiations on Chapter 27 on "Environment and climate change" and on Cluster 4 of the "Green agenda and sustainable development", as well as constant efforts to implement measures set out in the European Green Deal, which will become an important prerequisite for post-war reconstruction in Ukraine;
10. again urge that the actions of the Russian Federation and Rosatom be recognised as nuclear terrorism, in particular in respect of the occupation of the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant and the shelling of other nuclear power plants in Ukraine; call on international partners to increase pressure on the International Atomic Energy Agency to take effective measures to influence the aggressor country, including with the aim of stopping Rosatom from constructing new nuclear plants in any country and of ending any cooperation with Rosatom, including participation in international bodies;
11. propose that the possibility be investigated of limiting and even terminating the participation of representatives of the Russian Federation in European and international energy organisations;
12. stress the need to step up EU assistance to Ukraine in demining the land in order to prevent an increase in the number of human casualties after the end of hostilities and to create conditions for restoring normal and safe economic activities, as well as providing support for the elimination of dangerous environmental pollution, all of which should be a priority;
13. call for greater efforts to prevent Russia from circumventing existing sanctions against it and to further increase the pressure of sanctions;
14. emphasise that the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement is a pivotal element in Ukraine's European integration, fostering significant political, economic and social reforms. However, the ongoing disinformation campaigns pose a substantial challenge. Through strategic communication, cybersecurity, media literacy and support for independent journalism, both EU and Ukrainian civil society can be actively involved in countering these threats and promoting a more transparent, resilient information environment;

***On ensuring human rights and the rule of law, the CSP members***

15. stress the need to respect the rule of law and call for a system of effective institutions to be established to guarantee human rights, including the rights of people belonging to national minorities, and respect for diversity;

16. underline the need to take stronger measures to combat corruption and any other form of wrongdoing in order to prevent selective justice and selective prosecution, particularly in cases of corruption; in this connection, they point out that civil society can help combat challenges to democratic governance in Ukraine by providing oversight of anti-corruption activities and legislation, policy reforms and the distribution of funds;
17. emphasise that neglecting intellectual property rights as the basis of modern innovative development is inadmissible, and call for the creation of effective procedures and institutions for guaranteeing respect of intellectual property rights;
18. express concern about the growing political influence of right-wing radical parties in the EU and about the potential danger their anti-European narrative represents for democracy and the rule of law;

***On the process of Ukraine's European integration, the CSP members***

19. draw attention to the need to use appropriate practices for devising and implementing general and sectoral policies in Ukraine, in harmony with EU policies;
20. emphasise that Ukrainian civil society representatives are ready to be more actively involved in the activities of the working bodies of the EESC, as enlargement candidate members (ECMs);
21. suggest that the possibility be explored of inviting Ukrainian stakeholders to discussions on the EU policy priorities for the upcoming – post-2027– Multiannual Financial Framework;
22. welcome the Ukrainian authorities' efforts regarding clarification of the screening processes and emphasise the need for a more systematic approach to the next stages of screening and for the CSP to be involved in the process;
23. propose to involve the CSP in preparations for the negotiation process and in public communication activities regarding the EU integration process;
24. underline the need to allocate adequate EU funding for Ukrainian organised civil society, including for the EU-Ukraine civil society platform, and its participation, coordination and advocacy activities, especially – but not exclusively – in relation to EU accession and steps to strengthen democracy and enhance the CSOs' capabilities;
25. urges the authorities to design legal and organisational grounds for an institutional platform for civil dialogue in all areas of decision-making, inter alia on issues relating to EU integration, and to use the potential of the existing EU-Ukraine civil society platform to this end;
26. stress the need to identify ways of encouraging Ukrainians living in the EU to be more involved in international and European CSO networks to the benefit of EU integration and to boost cooperation between players in the EU and Ukraine;

***On regional development and cross-border cooperation, the CSP members***

27. emphasise the importance of forecasting based on macroeconomic models when developing programmes for comprehensive recovery in the territory of Ukraine as well as the national recovery plan;

28. underline the importance of developing programmes for comprehensive recovery throughout Ukraine's territory, taking into account innovative smart specialisation approaches to regional economic development;
29. encourage Ukraine's integration into the New European Bauhaus initiative in order to implement the European Green Deal in people's everyday lives and promote the sustainable recovery of Ukrainian regions;
30. stress the need to improve the operation of instruments of cross-border cooperation that have already been created, including Solidarity Lanes, as well as the need to step up involvement with the Advisory Group on Trade and Sustainable Development, set up under the Association Agreement;

***On the economic development and recovery of Ukraine, the CSP members***

31. confirm the relevance of the provisions of the joint declarations adopted at the joint meetings of the CSP in December 2023;
32. call on the Government of Ukraine and the European Commission to start discussing and preparing an updated framework for Ukraine-EU trade for the period before Ukraine's accession to the EU, taking into account Article 29 of the Ukraine-EU Association Agreement, after the EU's autonomous trade measures for Ukraine expire 2025;
33. urge the European Commission to use existing EU mechanisms to prevent any unjustified blocking of the free movement of goods across Ukraine-EU borders;
34. emphasise the critical need to continue the agreement on the carriage of freight by road, liberalising road freight transport between Ukraine and the EU on an indefinite basis in order to support the stability of the Ukrainian economy;
35. support the development of cooperation between Ukrainian industrial clusters and the EU, with a focus on the reconstruction of, and restoration work in, Ukraine;
36. urge the European Commission and the Government of Ukraine to complete the preparation of and then conclude the Agreement on Conformity Assessment and Acceptance of Industrial Products (ACAA), and to develop a mechanism for the mutual recognition of good manufacturing practice (GMP) certificates;
37. underline the need to continue applying the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) to exports from Ukraine in a declarative mode (in line with force majeure provisions);
38. draw attention to the need to form plans for recovery in Ukraine, taking into account the tasks and mutually beneficial opportunities of incorporating the Ukraine economy into the EU's Single Market;
39. emphasise the need for steadfast adherence to the "Build Back Better" principle in restoration projects, based on an innovative approach;
40. call for implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, and for the introduction of appropriate reporting when devising and financing projects for the development of the national economy;

41. call for the introduction of the "innovation principle" in Ukraine's legislative practice to ensure that the impact of regulations on innovation is taken into account;

***On employment and social policy, the CSP members***

42. request that there be increased checks on the observance of labour rights during and after martial law; emphasise that a comprehensive revision of labour legislation must be carried out on the basis of properly restored social dialogue that recognises and respects the right to strike, collective agreements, trade unions, and their legitimate role at the workplace and in society as a whole; and note that restarting labour relations in Ukraine should facilitate both tripartite and bilateral negotiations;
43. note that applying higher standards at national level in relation to the minimum standards agreed at EU level not only is fully in line with EU legislation, as directives always define minimum standards, but should also be a legitimate goal for Ukraine, in particular, in the employment and social spheres;
44. point out that deregulation and liberalisation, as well as approaches aimed at reducing the "social burden", which do not ensure social progress, must be rejected; note that Ukraine's competitiveness must be based on high social and environmental standards;
45. underline that every public procurement announcement should include social and labour conditions; note that public procurement should become a driving force for achieving Ukraine's strategic goals, including social progress, and stress that government contracts should not automatically be awarded on basis of the lowest price criterion and should promote the creation of high-quality jobs, hallmarked by fair wages and conditions, and supported by collective agreements;
46. warn against signing blank checks for companies investing in Ukraine, including transnational corporations; note that such companies are welcome, provided they commit to creating decent jobs, not maximising profits or paying excessive dividends to the detriment of the opportunities that will arise from the country's recovery and the rebuilding of its infrastructure;
47. draw attention to the fact that the labour market must be inclusive and take into account the needs of those who return from the front with injuries and other health problems; in this connection, they call for an institute to be created for the protection of the rights of employees in the event of the employer's becoming insolvent;
48. believe that in order to attract workers returning from abroad, adequate jobs with decent working conditions should be created, as set out in ILO Recommendation No 205, where social dialogue is deemed to be essential for maintaining peace;
49. highlight that respect for social dialogue and the role of social partners – including respect for trade union rights, freedom of association, the right to organise, collective bargaining, the right to strike and the full protection of trade union representatives – is a cornerstone of democracy and the basis of the European Social Model, while being key for Ukraine's integration into the EU;
50. underscore the need to provide adequate funding for building up the potential of social partners;

51. urge the EU institutions to involve civil society and social partners in all processes and discussions on Ukraine's integration into the EU, as well as to explore possibilities of holding exchanges with social partners on the eve of the EU-Ukraine Summits;
52. stress that EU accession should be an opportunity to bring the country into line, legislatively and in practice, with international labour and social standards and EU rules, so as to ensure that it will be a successful experience for workers in Ukraine and for the rest of the EU, but note that this entails a significant, genuine strengthening of labour relations management institutions (courts, inspection services) as a pre-requisite for joining the EU;
53. calls for steps to raise awareness about the accession requirements, in particular respect for human rights and the rule of law and compliance with EU social legislation;
54. ask for advocacy opportunities to be created at both national and EU level so that civil society and social partners can effectively influence the accession process;

***On energy, transport, the environment and climate change, the CSP members***

55. emphasise the importance of putting into practice the European Commission's recommendations regarding Ukraine's environmental and climate policy, in particular: steps to ensure cross-sectoral integration of environmental and climate issues into the country's recovery and reform programmes; and the need to adopt primary and secondary legislation for continued reforms in the field of waste management, water resources, completion of the horizontal reform of state environmental control, adoption of primary and secondary legislation on industrial emissions, and adoption of climate legislation and the update of low-carbon development strategy;
56. stress the need to improve state environmental policy and strengthen the capacity of the state administration to ensure intersectoral integration of measures on the environment and climate, as well as the implementation and performance of already adopted parts of the EU acquis, in addition to the need to significantly strengthen the administrative and inspection potential in the environment and climate sector;
57. underline that the assessment of the impact of the war on the environment must meet international standards in order to prove in international courts Ukraine's right to compensation for damage caused to it by the aggressor country;
58. urge that steps be taken to ensure civil society obtains access to environmental information and participates in decision-making; this has worsened due to martial law, especially in Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), procedures; the aim of these steps would be to prevent the narrowing of the EIA and the SEA during the reconstruction period, which would be contrary to the provisions of Directives 2011/92/EC and 2001/42 /EU and the Aarhus Convention, and to regulate at legislative level the sequence of all interrelated permit procedures;
59. emphasise the urgency of adopting legislation on waste management and the need to move towards a circular economy; they call on the EU to explore ways of safely managing waste left behind after active hostilities;

60. draw attention to the importance of restoring nature, including protected areas, bodies of water, soil, etc., as an integral part of post-war reconstruction initiatives planned and implemented at international, national and local levels;
61. welcome the fact that the Ukraine Facility includes environmental and climate conditions for Ukraine to receive funding, as well as the fact that green reforms are included as an integral part of the Ukraine Plan;
62. draw attention to the need to include green reconstruction indicators in monitoring implementation of the Ukraine Plan, in order to ensure the planned reforms are properly implemented, the environmental and climate component has a cross-cutting impact and environmental and climate-oriented projects are adequately funded, as well as reconstruction of infrastructure, industry and buildings, based on the principles of decarbonisation, climate neutrality and energy efficiency;
63. emphasise that the terms for Ukrainian businesses' access to funds for ensuring the green transition should be comparable to the terms applicable for EU enterprises; this is also a key prerequisite for introducing the climate and environmental sections of the EU acquis in Ukraine;
64. endorse initiatives regarding the need to support the construction of distributed generation facilities by Ukrainian enterprises, using tools and resources as part of the implementation of Ukraine Facility projects;
65. call on the EU to provide effective support for strengthening the physical protection of energy facilities in Ukraine, including nuclear power plants, from Russian attacks;
66. invite relevant EU companies to assist Ukraine in building decentralised energy and heat generation facilities to replace those destroyed by the Russians;
67. underline the need for a complete and long-term suspension of the flow of Russian gas (including LNG) to the EU and a general suspension of trade with the Russian Federation in the energy sector in order to weaken the Russian Federation's ability to engage in military aggression;
68. emphasise the importance of an action plan for implementing the Energy Strategy of Ukraine for the period up to 2050, which is mandatory for all State bodies, as well as for expanding the list of mechanisms for State support for renewable energy in communities, encouraging the development of energy cooperatives, implementing measures to ensure the autonomy of electricity supply through the development of small distribution systems on the ground, and assisting in the application of advanced technologies in the installation of power systems;

***On the healthcare sector, the CSP members***

69. emphasise the importance of preserving and modernising the health care system in order to preserve the potential of healthcare personnel, including for people with disabilities, in the context of the recovery of Ukraine;
70. stress the need for cooperation between the Ukrainian authorities and the EU in the field of healthcare, in particular regarding management, emergency response and disease prevention;

71. underline the importance of equal access to health care services in the areas adjacent to the combat zone, especially for the most vulnerable categories of the population of Ukraine;
72. draw attention to the priority of providing services for the provision of psychological assistance to the population during and after the end of hostilities;
73. recognise the critical importance of rebuilding healthcare infrastructure destroyed or damaged during hostilities, ensuring that reconstruction efforts prioritise hospitals, clinics and healthcare facilities in the regions that have been most badly hit;
74. stress the importance of establishing partnerships with international medical and humanitarian organisations to facilitate the exchange of expertise, resources and best practices in healthcare delivery and management;

***On education, science, innovation and the information society, the CSP members***

75. note that science, technology and innovation are able to make a considerable contribution to the social and economic development of Ukraine in the post-war period and encourage authorities to invite think tanks and academic institutions to play a direct part in post-war economic development projects and in the implementation of an innovative strategy of national economic development;
76. recognise the leading role of education as a system for educating and training individuals, combining knowledge, skills, values, vocational training, experience and competences, and in this connection emphasise the strategic need to support the education and training system for both vocational-technical education and the adult population (employed or temporarily unemployed) and to adapt it as quickly as possible to the growing needs for the workers required for the post-war reconstruction of Ukraine;
77. note the need to draw up a comprehensive map of Ukraine's research infrastructure in accordance with the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures standards, based on a comprehensive audit of existing infrastructure, accounting for obsolescence and war-related destruction, as well as needs according to the Smart Specialisation strategy, as this will help prepare for the negotiations on membership of the European Union (Chapter 25 of the Acquis Communautaire), as well as discussion with donors as to the most urgent investment in research and innovation-related reconstruction;
78. underline the importance of supporting Ukrainian scientists who remain in Ukraine, note that violation of the conditions for scientific activities requires assistance to ongoing research efforts in Ukraine and increasing financial support for remote working contracts, technological and laboratory supplies, digital tools and open access to scientific data and publications;
79. consider a priority the need for mid- to long-term recovery and modernisation plans, which should include measures that can be activated immediately, aimed at ensuring the survival of researchers in Ukraine and allowing them to continue their research;

80. consider important the need for policy measures to support refugee scientists from Ukraine, which should be designed: to ensure from the outset that they are able to maintain strong links with their home institutions and fellow scientists, so that the brain exodus can be rapidly reversed once the war is over; and to ensure the scientists' integration and continuation of research in Ukraine at the level of research currently conducted in European institutions;
81. emphasise that policies should be geared to keeping in touch with the diaspora and facilitating contacts between Ukrainian institutions and enterprises with the members of the diaspora who can provide significant assistance in the establishment of scientific and business contacts globally;
82. urge science to be promoted in all State programmes aimed at countering propaganda and disinformation, as well as assessing the damage caused to Ukraine by Russian aggression; reiterate that science plays an important role in creating the intellectual and technological resilience of society, and involves scientists in the communication of complex scientific subjects where their expertise can influence public opinion;
83. note that science, technology and innovation have the potential to contribute to societal transformation and to the green transition of Ukraine in the post-war period, provided enhanced cooperation exists between academia and entrepreneurs and feeds into an industrial strategy based on innovation;
84. underline the need for mechanisms to coordinate assistance and support for higher education and science which meets immediate needs and also bears in mind planning for the long term, particularly for rebuilding the Ukrainian higher education and science systems, and academic and scientific infrastructure after the war; and
85. emphasise the importance of bilateral cooperation as well as cooperation under the European Research Area (ERA), in particular through the use of the ERA Forum, the ERA Talent Platform, the Competence Framework for Researchers and the Research Careers and Innovation Observatory.