



## Black Sea NGO Newsletter, No.1, April 2009

### **Foreword**

Dear friends and colleagues,

The Black Sea NGO Bulletin is a direct outcome of last year's Black Sea NGO Forum. As the discussions have revealed, it aims to bring more information on each other's activities around the year as well as on other NGO-related issues that can help improve our work and common understanding.

The Black Sea NGO Bulletin will include information on NGO work in the region, opportunities for funding and partnership, political news related directly to NGO work. Besides the specific NGO related issues (legal and financial framework, relations with government, transparency and governance etc.) the main covered areas will continue to be those on which the Black Sea NGO Forum focused in 2008: Social Justice and Human Rights, Democracy and Good Governance, Environment. We aim to bring information on the most recent policy developments in the region with a direct impact on NGO work. A particular attention will be given to EU policies.

This instrument is for your use and utility and it can only work as long as you will support us in improving it.

Therefore we are looking forward to receiving comments and suggestions from you as on how we can better it, and what kind of information you find most useful.

We will be glad to help you share through the Black Sea NGO Newsletter all the information you consider useful for your partners in the region and beneficial for yourselves.

The Black Sea NGO Bulletin will also help us better prepare the next edition of the Black Sea NGO Forum, bringing up-to-date information to you and from you.

Thank you for your support,

The Black Sea NGO Forum Team

## **Crisis: NGO Reaction to Moldova's Political Crisis**

April has been a dramatic month for civil society in the Republic of Moldova.

The parliamentary elections on 5 April 2009 have been criticized by the civil society and international observers as *"incorrect, containing a long series of infringements and possible fraud"*.



Following the public protests from Chisinau on April 6-7, the civil sector of the Republic of Moldova, international organizations and media keep have signaled numerous cases of abusive arrests as well as the use of force against citizens of this country, limitation of media's activities and intimidation and brutalization of local and foreign journalists. Moldova CSOs considered that it was *"the inaction of police and outraging*

*arrogance of the ruling elite which inflamed the public. Consequently several actions of unrest and discontent continued during 7-8 and 9 of April, deriving primarily from the overall perception that the elections were derailed from democratic standards. Instead of addressing the protester's requests, however, the regime appealed to disproportional arrests of protesters, harassment of the opposition, banning private media, internet resources, crushing upon public meetings, and leaders of the opposition, thus, degenerating the initial legitimated protests into a large political crisis, which may have extremely negative consequences for the constitutional regime in Moldova"*.

Moldova NGOs consider that:

- *The protests have began spontaneously and they represent a desperate anti-government national movement, as a result of unfair elections, of the pressure policy led by the Communist party and of total ignorance towards the liberal-democratic parties and the citizens who support them. As a result, the current government initiated a series of repressive actions. The danger of setting up a complete dictatorial state is more than obvious.*
- *The violent actions were instigated by infiltrators in the crowd. There are now many versions about who is responsible for organizing those actions, including the government party, but the truth can be proved only as a result of impartial investigations.*
- *The public mass-media is monopolized by the regime in power and reflects in a biased and incorrect manner the events and the information. It is also used as an instrument of intimidation for the society and opposition through unilateral declarations and threats.*

- *The opposition parties are not enough consolidated and don't have the right instruments for this situation, including mass-media for guiding society towards conciliation.*

Continuous violations of the freedom of information, freedom of expression, freedom of movement and freedom of assembly and association that the Moldovan citizens have been subjected to represent blatant infringements of the European engagements undersigned by the Moldovan government.

Just as many other European and international nongovernmental organizations, FOND, the Romanian NGDO platform, sent messages to the President of the European Commission and to the Commissioner for External Relations calling on the European institutions to act swiftly to ensure that citizens, civil society organizations and mass media are protected against repressions from the authorities in Chisinau.

However the reaction from the European institutions has been rather late and hesitant. Moreover officials from Brussels declared that EU-level punitive measures against the Government of Moldova are unlikely.

At the end of April, a fact-finding mission from the European Parliament in Chisinau confirmed that reports from local NGOs and mass-media were true and that "acts of horrible violence" were committed by police against young people after postelection protests in the Moldovan capital in early April.

Currently the repression against civil society continues as the authorities of Moldova appear to be punishing non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for carrying out their duties as human rights defenders. At least seven NGOs, including the local Amnesty International structure, received letters from the Ministry of Justice dated 16 April. "Each organization was asked to explain its position on the riots and any measures taken by them to prevent and stop the violence. These seven organizations and four others received subpoenas from their local tax inspectorates dated 24 April asking them to submit financial reports for 2008 and 2009, and identify their sources of income and expenditure up to 28 April".

Pro Democratia Association (Romania), together with GOLOS (Russia), GONG (Croatia), European House (Hungary), Society for Democratic Culture (Albania) have sent a message to the European Parliament, to the European Council and to the Council of Europe asking for a determined involvement of the European institutions to stop the acts of intimidation against nongovernmental organizations in Moldova and to protect them against further abuses from the authorities in Chisinau.

*Sources:*

Coalition 2009, IDIS Viitorul - <http://www.viitorul.org/index.php?l=en> , Agroinform, Amnesty International - <http://www.amnesty.org/en/region/moldova> , FOND Romania, Civic.md, EUObserver, Stiriong.ro, <http://www.rferl.org/section/Romania+Moldovo/160.html>

## News: Launching the Joint Operational Programme "Black Sea 2007-2013"

The Black Sea Basin Joint Operational Programme 2007-2013 will be launched during the first week of May in Bucharest by the Romanian Ministry of Regional Development and Housing - acting as Joint Managing Authority.



Aiming to contribute to a stronger and sustainable economic and social development of the regions of the Black Sea Basin, the programme runs under the European Neighborhood & Partnership Instrument (ENPI) of the EU. There are 10 participating countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Moldova, Russian Federation, Turkey, Ukraine, Romania, and Greece.

The programme's three specific objectives are:

- Promoting economic and social development in the border areas
- Working together to address common challenges
- Promoting local, people-to-people cooperation

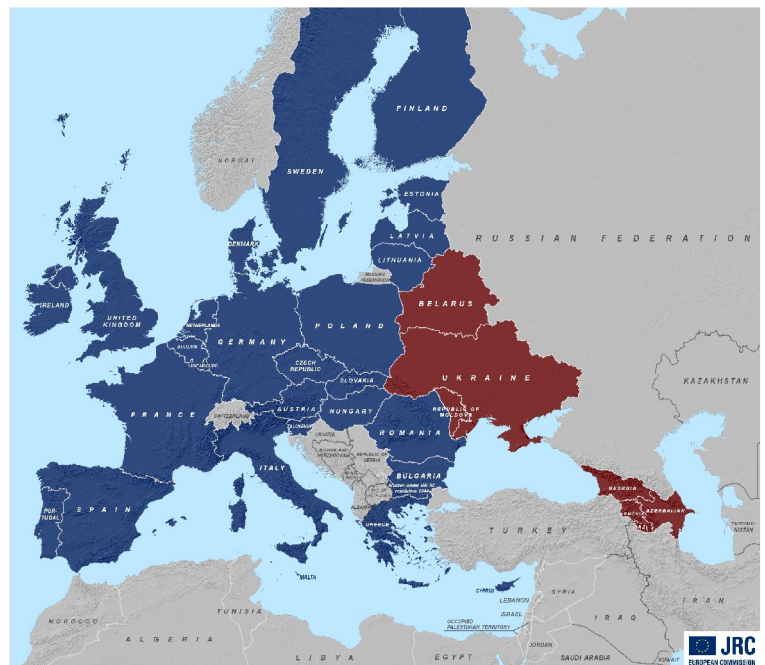
For more information visit <http://www.blacksea-cbc.net/index.php?page=HOME>

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## **Political Developments: The Eastern Partnership – a Project to be Launched between the EU and Eastern Neighboring Countries**

Today's ambitious proposal for the Eastern Partnership represents a step change in the EU's relations with its Eastern Partners as it aims at enhancing cooperation both on bilateral and multilateral level. Building on the successful work already accomplished within the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) the Eastern Partnership (EaP) aims to be a policy based on a differentiated approach with each partner and dedicated to supporting each individual country to progress in its own way and at its own speed.

There are 6 countries concerned in the region: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. The level of Belarus' participation will depend on the overall development of EU-Belarus relations.



On 7 May 2009 a summit will take place in Prague, where a political declaration establishing the Eastern Partnership is expected to be adopted. The summit will be attended by the EU-27 Heads of State or Government and representatives of the Eastern Partnership countries. On this occasion the international conference "Eastern Partnership: Towards Civil Society Forum" will be held in advance in order to facilitate dialogue of civil society of EU Member States and Eastern Partnership countries on the importance, content and practical implementation of the initiative and formulate specific recommendations for its dynamic development.

For more information on EaP visit

[http://ec.europa.eu/external\\_relations/eastern/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/eastern/index_en.htm)

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### **Focus on NGOs: Strengthening the involvement of Moldovan, Ukrainian and Romanian civil society organizations in the ENPI programming**

Civil Society Development Foundation (CSDF - Romania) runs a project entitled "Strengthening the involvement of Moldovan, Ukrainian and Romanian civil society organizations in the ENPI programming" in partnership with two eastern countries organisations: CONTACT Center from Chisinau (Republic of Moldova) and the Bukovinian Center of Reconstruction and Development from Cernauti (Ukraine). The project is supported by Soros Foundation Romania through the „East-East Partnership Beyond Borders Program”.



Two seminars have taken place so far: one in Romania - „Consulting the Civil Society for the European Neighborhood Policy Instrument (ENPI) Programming” and the other one in Ukraine: “ENPI – a new instrument of financing”. More than 40 representatives of non-governmental organizations from Romania, Republic of Moldova, Ukraine, Georgia and Armenia have attended the two events, which have proved to be interesting and useful at the same time for supporting the cooperation among civil society organizations in the region.

A third seminar on a closely related topic (“ENPI: new opportunities for the NGOs from Moldova, Ukraine and Romania”) will be organized in Moldova at the end of this month.

For more information about the project contact: [valentin.burada@fdsc.ro](mailto:valentin.burada@fdsc.ro)

## **Highlights: GYLA Makes Statement on Recent Developments in Georgia**

Georgian Young Lawyers Association (GYLA) has responded to the recent developments in the country and considers that the current situation often goes beyond the framework set by the law. The recent facts of violence against citizens and journalists, severe clashes between demonstrators and strangers, the police inactivity regarding these facts and physical or moral abuse of the peaceful rally participants by the MIA high officials is a clear evidence.

Under the circumstances Georgian Young Lawyers Association:

- Calls upon the authorities to immediately investigate each fact of severe attacks against peaceful citizens. Unless otherwise, taking into account that for the time present the Georgian authorities haven't carried out any activities to identify the perpetrators and none of the cases has been investigated, GYLA casts objective doubts that the aforementioned individuals act through the encouragement, support and consent of the representatives of the authorities.
- Calls upon the opposition to secure each of its supporter's activity within legal framework. At the same time GYLA reminds the opposition that deterring journalists' activity or any kind of violence against media worker is absolutely inadmissible however unacceptable the information or the interpretation of facts is to the opposition or the rally participants.
- Calls upon media to precisely, objectively and timely cover current developments and to draw more attention to the coverage of specific facts or the interpretation of facts. Even though the journalists shall not be imposed responsibility for the load of affirmation regarding the precision of evaluative discussion the objective coverage of facts and events as well as the protection of the presumption of innocence of specific individuals is journalists' chief commitment.

Source: [http://media.ge/eng/page.php?m=news\\_detailed&id\\_num=4061](http://media.ge/eng/page.php?m=news_detailed&id_num=4061)

For more information about GYLA visit:

<http://www.gyla.ge/?display=index&lang=eng>

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## **Funding Opportunities:**

### **Joint Operational Programme "BLACK SEA 2007-2013"**

1st Call for Proposals

**Deadline for submission of proposals: 31st of July 2009**

The Black Sea JOP covers three priorities. Each of the three priorities is further broken down in a number of Measures, as presented in the following table:

Priority 1: Supporting cross border partnerships for economic and social development based on common resources

Priority 2: Sharing resources and competencies for environmental protection and conservation

Priority 3: Supporting cultural and educational networks for the establishment of a common cultural environment in the Basin

More details and guidelines for applicants: [http://www.blacksea-cbc.net/index.php?page=DOCUMENTS\\_GUIDELINES](http://www.blacksea-cbc.net/index.php?page=DOCUMENTS_GUIDELINES)

### **Black Sea Trust for Regional Cooperation**

Black Sea Trust for Regional Cooperation is inviting proposals from organizations and institutions in the countries of the Wider Black Sea Region on the Trust's three programs: civic participation, cross-border initiatives and Eastern Links. Applicants may find descriptions of the Trust's programs here:

[http://www.gmfus.org/template/page.cfm?page\\_id=324](http://www.gmfus.org/template/page.cfm?page_id=324)

### **The East East: Partnership Beyond Borders Program**

The East East: Partnership Beyond Borders Program is implemented by the Soros foundations. Applications are received and reviewed by Open Society Institute Assistance Foundation–Armenia, Open Society Institute Assistance Foundation–Azerbaijan, Open Society Institute–Sofia, Open Society Georgia Foundation, Soros Foundation–Moldova, Open Society Foundation–Romania, International Renaissance Foundation–Ukraine, Open Society Institute Assistance Foundation–Turkey. For detailed informations on how to apply please contact these organizations. A full list of links and contacts can be found here: <http://www.soros.org/about/foundations>

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In case you have information on current and future activities, events, partnerships and funding opportunities that you would like to share, please send it to the Black Sea NGO Newsletter team: [forum@BlackSeaNGO.org](mailto:forum@BlackSeaNGO.org)

The Secretariat of the Black Sea NGO Forum is currently ensured by the Civil Society Development Foundation (FDSC) [www.fdsc.ro](http://www.fdsc.ro)

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