



## Black Sea NGO Newsletter, No.3, June 2009

The [Black Sea NGO Newsletter](#) is a direct outcome of last year's Black Sea NGO Forum. 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.

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)

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## **NGOs in Times of Crisis: Themes for discussion - Black Sea NGO Forum 2009**

As a result of the call for themes for discussion for the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the Black Sea NGO Forum we received the following proposals from Armenia, Azerbaijan and Romania:



1. Effectiveness of the governmental support programmes which have addressed to NGO sector during crisis (e.g. Azerbaijan case);
2. How to build common module to monitor NGO projects compliance with community development and policy impact?;
3. Anti-crisis fundraising measures for NGOs in Black Sea Region: new cooperation opportunities and the shaping of the unique database to donor-civil society contact;
4. The issue of sustainability of the actions for reducing and preventing crisis negative impacts on vulnerable groups. What can the NGOs, governments and donor organizations do jointly?
5. Cooperation of NGOs and local self governing bodies in the support of social services and assistance to vulnerable groups;
6. NGOs and central authorities' partnership issues in the area of social services provision;
7. How young people are affected - as a vulnerable segment of the population - by the crisis? How can NGOs contribute to diminishing the negative effect of this?;
8. What types of programmes/projects should NGOs focus on in order to provide a better social inclusion for young people during this period (e.g.: youth empowerment projects of the Life Long Learning programme);
9. What direction should NGOs take for collaborating with business during the crisis (e.g.: cooperation on social entrepreneurship).

The invitation to propose themes for discussion is still open. Please send your suggestions to [forum@BlackSeaNGO.org](mailto:forum@BlackSeaNGO.org).

## **News highlights: Azerbaijan - NGO Amendments put Civil Society at Risk**

After a week of intense lobbying and activism, opponents of controversial draft amendments that would restrict non-governmental organizations' activities in Azerbaijan scored a minor victory June 19, when parliament postponed a scheduled vote on them.

Controversial amendments that would impose new restrictions on non-governmental organizations (NGOs) could force numerous local and international NGOs in Azerbaijan to cease operations. Some activists go so far as to say the amendments, if passed, would throttle civil society development in the country.

The proposed change that has garnered the most attention both in and outside of Azerbaijan is a requirement that NGOs limit their foreign funding to 50 percent. This would create overnight a situation in which almost every foreign-funded NGO would be in non-compliance with the law, experts say.

Other controversial measures include prohibiting foreigners from creating NGOs, imposing a five-year ban on NGO activity for those who violate the law, and restricting the geographic scope of where NGOs may operate. To be considered "nationwide," an NGO must have branch offices in at least one-third of Azerbaijan's 69 administrative regions. Experts fear that the "nationwide" definition will all but eliminate programs outside of the capital city.

The cumulative effect of the changes will allow Baku to keep close tabs on NGO activity. With little or no local philanthropy, NGOs could also be forced to look to the Azerbaijani government to fulfill the 50-percent-local-funding requirement. Dependence on the government would, of course, give officials leverage to influence NGO activity.

Non-governmental organizations operating in Azerbaijan already face a myriad of opaque registration requirements.

Delays in the registration process have resulted in several decisions against Azerbaijan in the European Court of Human Rights. To opponents, the June 19 vote on the NGO amendments appears the culmination of that process.

On 11 June the directors of approximately 50 NGOs conducted an emergency meeting about the proposed changes to the Azerbaijan Republic law on non-governmental organizations which will consider by the Milli Mejlis (parliament) in an extraordinary session of Milli Mejlis that is scheduled to take place on 19 June.

Participants in the meeting agreed to form the "Civil Society Defense Committee". Ten members were selected to be on a working group to organize actions of protest against the

proposed changes to the Azerbaijan Republic law on non-governmental organizations. On June 18, a group of approximately 300 NGO leaders and activists gathered in Baku to discuss the draft law at a forum organized by the Civil Society Defense Committee mentioned above. Several leaders called for public protests in front of parliament.

Although a mass protest did not take shape, local NGO activists, international organizations and foreign diplomats did place enormous pressure on the government to pull - or at least to delay - voting on the bill. Many opponents criticized the lack of open debate about the amendments and the apparent rush job for scheduling a vote on the draft bill only 10 days after the amendments were submitted. Parliament will next meet on June 30.

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Sources:

Kenan Aslanli (Public Finance Monitoring Center Azerbaijan)

Human Rights Watch:  
<http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2009/06/16/human-rights-watch-letter-president-azerbaijan-regarding-draft-amendments-ngos>

EurasiaNet:  
<http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insightb/articles/eav061709.shtml>

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### **Policy: The Swedish Presidency of the European Union**

From 1 July to 31 December 2009, Sweden will hold the six-month rotating presidency of the European Union, chairing EU summits (the European Council of EU heads of state and government) and meetings of the Council of Ministers.



Sweden follows the Czech EU Presidency and has committed to continue the Eastern Partnership initiative launched this year in Prague.

One of the main objectives of the Swedish EU presidency would be addressing the global economic crisis in a way that allows the EU to emerge "in a stronger position" from the turmoil. Sweden is very much engaged in addressing the climate change agenda, preparing for the Copenhagen climate change summit, which is expected to thrash out a successor to the Kyoto Protocol next December. Sweden is strongly committed to taking bold decisions to address the climate change challenge.

Focusing on the environment and competitiveness, Sweden aims to deepen cooperation in the Baltic Sea region, following in the footsteps of the French Presidency in the Mediterranean and the Czech Presidency for the Eastern Partnership. Stockholm stresses that its regional approach is "micro-regional" compared to the other recent initiatives, and that it will include EU members only, not countries at the Union's periphery. The aim is to use existing EU policies in the most efficient manner, ensuring that the region in no way isolates itself from the Union. It is also pragmatic, as the Baltic Sea is one of Europe's most polluted.

In the field of external relations, the Swedish Presidency set the following key priorities: developing the Eastern Partnership and reinforcing democracy building in EU external relations, and continuing the enlargement process.

Stockholm is preparing the 'implementation phase' of the EU's Eastern Partnership, launched on 7 May in Prague, which will establish the various structures envisaged by the plans. In terms of broader Neighborhood Policy, Sweden is expected to oversee the development of the new ENP Action Plans, with particular emphasis on policy reform, good governance and human rights. There are plans for an EU-Russia summit in Sweden during the Swedish Presidency, as well as for an EU-Ukraine summit in Ukraine. Sweden hopes that the EU will decide in the autumn to lift visa requirements for countries which have met the conditions (Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia, according to reports). Sweden is a major international donor in the Black Sea region.

Sweden is expected to emphasize the importance of democracy building in the EU's external relations. Sweden made a considerable impact on the EU's broader human rights agenda during its last presidency in 2001 and this topic will also have a high importance in 2009. According to the Swedish Presidency "international law, human rights, democracy and the principle of the rule of law must permeate external policy".

As year 2009 marks the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, on 6-7 July some 150 NGOs, government representatives, international organizations and EU institutions will meet in Solna, near Stockholm, to discuss issues related to this year's theme, which is the rights of the child and combating violence against children. The Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the European Commission will co-host the meeting. The meeting aims to take a closer look at the rights of the child, more specifically at corporal punishment of children, EU Guidelines on the Rights of the Child and their application as regards violence against children, and the issue of violence against children in societies that are affected, or have been affected, by conflict.

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## **News: Eastern Partnership - Civil Society Forum**

Civil society and non-governmental organisations play a crucial role, within their societies, in providing policy input, following new initiatives and in holding governments accountable. They can be active actors in promoting democratic and market-oriented reforms based on shared values, i.e. respect for democracy and human rights, the rule of law, good governance, principles of market economy and sustainable development. These are also the values and objectives of the European Neighbourhood Policy, including the newly created Eastern Partnership.

In its *Communication of December 2008* the European Commission proposed “to support the further development of Civil Society Organisations” (CSOs) and, in particular, “to establish an **Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum** to promote contacts among CSOs and facilitate their dialogue with public authorities”.

To ensure transparency of the process leading to the establishment of the Civil Society Forum, all interested parties were invited to provide their opinion. The consultation process started on 25 March and was closed on 25 April. Some 40 contributions were received, mainly from civil society organisations based in the Eastern Partner countries but also from several EU-based organisations. A reasoned analysis of the contributions received can be found under *Results of the consultations with CSOs and NGOs*.

In the Eastern Partnership joint declaration, the Prague Declaration, from 7 May 2009, “the participants of the Prague Summit invited the European Commission to develop and propose modalities for the establishment of a Civil Society Forum of the Eastern Partnership”. On June 29 the Commission invited all interested parties, i.e. grass roots organisations, trade unions, employers’ organisations, professional associations, NGOs, think-tanks, non-profit foundations, national and international CSOs/networks and other relevant Civil Society actors, to submit their Expressions of interest to participate in the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum.

The deadline for submission of expressions of interest is set at 31 August 2009.

The submission of the expressions of interest is a necessary step in the selection process to participate in the EaP Civil Society Forum. The participation itself will be decided at later stage following the transparent criteria, as listed in the invitation.

The European Commission, together with the EU Presidency and the European Economic and Social Committee, will organise the launch of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum in **mid-November 2009 in Brussels**.

For more information visit:

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

Source: DG External Relations, European Commission

## News: Black Sea Joint Operational Programme 2007-2013 is now open

The first call for proposals under the Black Sea Joint Operational Programme 2007-2013 has just been opened by the Joint Managing Authority. The deadline for submitting project proposals is 12<sup>th</sup> of October 2009 at 16:00 (local Romanian time).



Cross-border cooperation projects will be financed within this call, in the areas of sustainable economic development, tourism, nature and environment protection and cultural cooperation, areas that correspond to the three priorities of the Programme.

The indicative amount of ENPI funds available under this first call is 3.642.506 EUR, and Turkey participates with IPA funds amounting to 1.488.223 EUR. The cofinancing of the EU is 90 % of the total eligible costs at project level.

The eligible area of the Programme is extended to 10 countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, R. Moldova, Romania, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine.

Eligible applicants are: central public authorities (E.g.: Ministry of Environment), local/regional public authorities (e.g. city councils), body governed by public law (contracting authorities as defined by the national legislations transposing Directive 2004/18/EC on public procurement), associations formed by one or several national, regional or local public authorities or one or several bodies governed by public law, public undertakings as defined in Directive 2004/17/EC, other non profit organizations, Euro regions, EGTC.

The projects will be jointly submitted and implemented by partnerships that will always involve partners from one or several Member States (Bulgaria, Greece, Romania) and from one or several partner countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, R. Moldova, Russia, Ukraine) and/or Turkey. Participation of Turkish partners is only possible in tripartite projects involving at least one partner from a Member State and one partner from a partner country. The maximum number of partners involved in each project partnership is 10.

For more information about the Joint Operational Programme “Black Sea 2007-2013” and about the first call for proposals please visit:

[http://www.blacksea-cbc.net/index.php?page=DOCUMENTS\\_GUIDELINES](http://www.blacksea-cbc.net/index.php?page=DOCUMENTS_GUIDELINES)

## **Future events: Black Sea 2007-2013 Partnership Forums**

The Ministry of Regional Development and Housing, Romania, acting as Joint Managing Authority, the Ministry of Regional Development, Bulgaria, acting as National Info Point, the Odessa Oblast State Administration, acting as National Info Point and the Regional Capacity Building Initiative, have the pleasure of inviting you to the “**Black Sea 2007-2013” Partnership Forums**, taking place in Varna on 23<sup>rd</sup> of July, and in Odessa on the 4<sup>th</sup> of August 2009.

The aim of the partnership forums is to promote widely the launch of the first call for proposals and to raise awareness of the stakeholders as regards the opportunities brought by the programme for a sustainable economic and social development in the area.

Also, the partnership forums aim to create the opportunity for potential applicants and partners to meet other partners and share project ideas. The contents of the application pack will be outlined at the event and there will be the opportunity to foster project ideas through workshops organized per priorities of the programme.

To help in finding partners, if you wish to have your project idea publicized at the Partner Forum you can also complete and send a [project idea form](#).

The number of participants is limited to 150 persons per partnership forum; therefore, please confirm your participation at the event by fulfilling the registration form for [Varna](#) and the registration form for [Odessa](#) until 17<sup>th</sup> of July.

For any additional information please contact Ms. Ana Gheorghe: [blacksea-cbc@mdrl.ro](mailto:blacksea-cbc@mdrl.ro)

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## **Initiatives in the Region: Fruitfull Armenia Contest**

FruitFull Armenia proudly presents its 5<sup>th</sup> annual edition.



FRUITFULL ARMENIA CONTEST is an initiative to encourage incentivize the presentation of innovative proposals and the development of young Armenian talents from around the world, in order to envision the growth of Agriculture and Agro-industry Production, Commerce and Marketing, Finance, and Infrastructure areas in the Republic of Armenia.

In the 5<sup>th</sup> Fruitfull Armenia Contest may take part young people of 18-30, with knowledge of Armenian and English languages, who were born in the Republic of

Armenia or are affiliated with the Armenian community in blood as well as all young Armenians willing to participate in the contest.

Participants should be young eager Armenians from all backgrounds, including universities, investigation centers, farms, industries, small and medium enterprises, marketing, *among many others*, wishing to express their hopes and knowledge and to specifically present a revolutionary project involving new methods, ideas, formats for the Republic of Armenia in any of the areas referenced above in order to find the Fruitfull Armenia Talents.

The contest is open from April 1st 2009 up to September 5th 2009 and it will be concluded in October 2009 when the Awardees Ceremony will take place.

FruitFull Armenia is an independent not-for-profit initiative established to foster the development of the farming and food processing market sectors in Armenia in order to consolidate a broader base of prosperity for the rural community and to contribute to the Country's growth by identifying, targeting, developing and supporting business prospects based on social respect and business ethics.

For more information please visit: [www.fafarmenia.org](http://www.fafarmenia.org)

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### **Open call: Four EVS Projects in Moldova**

The International Committee of Citizen Diplomacy (ICCD) has increased the number of projects for EVS volunteers in Moldova to four:

1. CulturalLearn
2. Rural Youth development
3. Fostering Youth Entrepreneurship in Moldova
4. Activating civil society from the inside



All projects will begin on the 1<sup>st</sup> of December 2009 and end on the 31<sup>st</sup> of August 2010.

A number of 20 volunteers is needed.

For more information you can contact Mr. Igor Barakov (EVS Program Coordinator): Phone/Fax: +373 22 731402; [evs@civildiplomacy.org](mailto:evs@civildiplomacy.org) or refer to the projects' description document attached to the newsletter (*Open CALL for EVS volunteers in Moldova*).

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## **Recent events: Development Education Summer School 2009 (DESS)**

DESS is an yearly event organized by DEEEP (Development Education Exchange in Europe Project) in partnership with European NGO Confederation for Relief and Development (CONCORD).



This year the Development Education Summer School took place in Romania, at Cheile Grădiștei (near Braşov) and it was coordinated by PATRIR (Romania), with the support of the Romanian NGDO Platform (FOND). Around 90 participants from all over the world came to Romania for this important event and attended different activities such as working groups, thematic sessions, open space and cultural evening.

The title of the Summer School was “Recognizing, motivating, engaging Young People as Actors in Development Education, Campaigning, Advocacy” and tackled four specific themes:

1. Migration and Multiculturalism
2. Environment and Sustainable Development
3. Gender Equality
4. Media and Development

The aim of the Development Education Summer School 2009 was to allow participants to gain a full picture over the existing role and future possibilities and challenges that young people from the EU have to dialogue with their friends in the South and influence the global efforts of effective and responsible international development cooperation.

This weeklong event proved to be a very important learning and sharing experience among the participants, addressing possible actions and methods that would enable the participation of young people as recognized actors in world-wide poverty eradication and the fight against social exclusion.

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## Funding Opportunities:

### Joint Operational Programme “BLACK SEA 2007-2013”

*Deadline for submission of proposals for the 1<sup>st</sup> Call for Proposals: 12<sup>th</sup> of October 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)

### Youth in Action Programme: Action 3 - Youth in the World

‘Youth in the World’ seeks to deepen mutual understanding, tolerance and intercultural awareness among young people within the Union and beyond.

This Action supports various projects with EU Partner Countries, with a special focus on its neighbouring regions - Eastern Europe and Caucasus, the Mediterranean region, and South-East Europe. Sub-action ‘Co-operation with EU neighbours’ focuses on developing ties with partner countries that are part of the European Neighbourhood Policy, along with the Russian Federation and countries from South-East Europe. Reinforcing youth co-operation in these regions will ultimately also contribute to boosting democracy and civil society in the involved countries, as well as to empowering young people to play an active role in their societies. Youth exchanges for young people aged between 13 and 25 are covered under this sub-action, along with training and networking projects.

For more information visit:

[http://ec.europa.eu/youth/youth-in-action-programme/doc86\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/youth/youth-in-action-programme/doc86_en.htm)

### 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 information 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>