

Berlin, 20 September 2022

“Expanding Cooperation with Civil Society
in the Eastern Partnership Countries and Russia”

The programme Expanding Cooperation with Civil Society in the Eastern Partnership Countries and Russia (Eastern Partnership programme) enables civil-society organisations to play their part as key stakeholders and important partners of governance. What is more, it allows them to support the ongoing transformation processes in these countries. The Federal Government supports measures that **establish or expand durable civil-society cooperation structures between stakeholders from Germany and the Eastern Partnership countries or Russia. The focus here is on cooperation and the equitable distribution of labour between the German and foreign project partners.** This spans the entire range of cultural and education policy projects (with a focus on media, academia, education including vocational training, culture, language and work with young people).

Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine in contravention of international law marks a caesura, however. The war has shaken the region, and its impacts can be felt in all Eastern Partnership programme countries – in terms of security and domestic policy, and also economically. The civil societies of these countries have also been affected. The Eastern Partnership programme will therefore also be adjusted with this watershed in mind.

Our main interest is the preservation and, at the same time, reconstruction of democratically oriented civil-society structures, above all in Ukraine – including those in temporary exile. We want at the same time to strengthen democratic resilience and tackle disinformation as both of these aspects contribute to stable societies. Exchanges, cultural policy measures for discourses relating to shared values and human rights, and projects supporting the academic, vocational and socio-political education of young people can also encourage greater social engagement. We will also foster the links between host societies and arrivals and promote multilateral projects that take this aspect into account.

I. All projects must pursue at least one of the following overarching objectives:

- 1. *Strengthening pluralism and resilience* – in order to promote pluralism of opinion and the media and to tackle disinformation.**

The concept of pluralism is a key and constituent element of modern democracies, whose legitimacy primarily lies in the recognition of and respect for the wide range of opinions, interests and goals found in society.

Projects are supported that promote the establishment and furthering of pluralism of information, opinion and the media and which tackle disinformation and increase resilience. Particular consideration will be given to projects that seek to build up society's resilience against unreliable and false information by strengthening and training media stakeholders and improving access to high-quality, pluralist (local) media. Moreover, journalists and media professionals are to be supported also in temporary exile in order to enable them to continue to go about their work.

2. *Promoting the discussion of values and human rights – with a view to deepening mutual understanding.*

Exchange and cultural projects can be funded under this goal in particular. Within the bounds of what is currently feasible, we will promote encounters for exchanging views on fundamental values such as respect for human rights, the legitimacy of the administration, the independence of the judiciary, the right of the individual to life and self-determination, as well as the principle of majority rule. Standing up for these values together also promotes mutual understanding within the Eastern Partnership region as well as awareness of these countries in Germany.

Measures that teach and enhance the values mentioned above through civil-society exchange or cultural policy measures and which promote networking of civil societies in the partner countries are eligible for funding.

3. *Creating future prospects and democratic transformation – to strengthen democracies, tackle corruption, support the process of EU accession and to facilitate individual educational opportunities.*

Under this objective, initiatives can be supported that strengthen democratic efforts seeking to create secure social future prospects for all. Especially in Ukraine, our priority is supporting transformation processes and the preservation and reconstruction of civil-society structures that have been destroyed by Russia's war of aggression. Projects that are also focused on the accession to the EU of Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia in the future can make a targeted contribution to this. Academic, professional and socio-political training and further training measures that encourage greater social engagement are also eligible for funding. Structures of (civil) society are to be preserved in fields in which they are exposed to particular difficulties.

4. *Supporting dialogue and rapprochement – confidence-building measures for overcoming regional conflicts in the future.*

Measures that deploy instruments from the fields of culture and education in unresolved regional conflicts and have an impact in terms of preventing or overcoming crises, thereby laying the foundations for understanding in the future, are eligible for funding. In 2023, this funding goal is focused on the countries of the Southern Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan and

Georgia), as well as on the Republic of Moldova. In the course of Russia's war of aggression, people from Ukraine, Russia and Belarus, among others, have left their home countries and settled in other Eastern Partnership countries because they faced threats and repression on account of their views. Projects that address the aspect of bringing these people together with the (civil) society in their new home countries are also eligible for funding.

II. In the funding year 2023, projects focusing on one of the following objectives will be given priority in the selection process:

Counteracting disinformation programmes and false narratives

- This includes projects that counteract disinformation campaigns and fake news, promote media literacy on the part of non-digital natives and foster independent consumption of media.

Climate change education and sustainability

- This includes projects that contribute to the creation of an overall social awareness of the climate crisis, that network climate activists, make their voices heard and thus enshrine the issue of sustainability in the civil societies of the countries involved in the project.

Support for and networking of women

- This includes projects that raise awareness of women's social engagement and their networking with other civil-society stakeholders. As part of a feminist foreign policy, it is important to the Federal Government to involve all population groups in political decision-making processes. This also applies to the ongoing unsatisfactory representation of women both inside and outside the political sphere.

Supporting Ukrainian civil society via Youth for Europe

- This includes support in temporary exile as well as the (re-)construction and digitalisation of civil-society structures in the country of origin. With a view to supporting the EU accession efforts of Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, we will support projects that help to tackle corruption and promote democracy.
- Exchange formats and measures supporting encounters between young people with a focus on Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, as well as Armenia and Azerbaijan, are another priority.

Supporting democratic Russian and Belarussian civil society

- This applies to projects with Russian and Belarussian civil society that are committed to a democratic, liberal foundation of shared values.

Feminist foreign policy: vulnerable groups, rural areas

- This includes projects that work with vulnerable civil-society stakeholders and vulnerable groups, such as children and young people, people with disabilities and LGBTIQ individuals.
- Projects that have an impact outside urban agglomerations/in rural areas are also part of this.

Formal requirements (please see FAQ for further information):

Civil-society cooperation projects are eligible for funding if they take place in **Germany, France, Poland, the countries of the Eastern Partnership** (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine) **or Russia** and involve at least two project organisations. Projects/individuals/organisations in temporary exile are eligible for support.

Only civil-society projects are supported, i.e. stakeholders outside the field of governance and business.

The funding in question is project funding. This means that it is subject to the principle of an annual budget. As a rule, the projects should therefore be concluded over the course of 2023, i.e. **by 31 December 2023**. The Federal Foreign Office can only approve projects that run into the next calendar year in exceptional duly substantiated cases.

The minimum funding amount is 50,000 euro; there is no maximum funding amount.

Project outlines (in German or English) can be submitted from 20 September to 21 October 2022 exclusively via the website

<http://oepr.diplo.de>

Further [information and instructions](#) on how to submit project outlines can also be found on this website. We regret that subsequent changes to project sketches or submissions at a later date are not possible.

Should you have any questions, please first consult the FAQ. If you have any questions not answered by the FAQ, please contact Division 601 of the Federal Foreign Office, which will be happy to help. Please send an email to 601-oepr@diplo.de or directly to the responsible colleague:

Ms Lena Graziano: +49 (0)30 1817 2148 / 601-2-1@diplo.de (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Russia)

Ms Julia Luther: +49 (0)30 1817 4272 / 601-2-4@diplo.de (Republic of Moldova, Ukraine)

Mr Daniel Demele: +49 (0)30 1817 97104 / daniel.demele@diplo.de (Russia)

Should you experience any **technical difficulties** using the website <http://oepr.diplo.de> please contact Ms Graziano directly (tel: +49 (0)30 / 1817 2148, email: 601-6@diplo.de).