

**EU-UKRAINE
CIVIL SOCIETY
PLATFORM**



**ПЛАТФОРМА
ГРОМАДЯНСЬКОГО
СУСПІЛЬСТВА
УКРАЇНА-ЄС**

**16th meeting
Brussels, 10 December 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 recommendations to the relevant authorities. The 16th meeting of the CSP was co-chaired by Marcin Nowacki from the European Economic and Social Committee and by Oleksander Shubin from the Federation of Trade Unions of Ukraine.

The CSP discussed

- the ongoing negotiation process on Ukraine's accession to the European Union;
- the reconstruction of Ukraine through Ukraine Facility instruments under pillars II and III;
- the current challenges and prospects for the Ukrainian agricultural sector in the context of EU enlargement.

The CSP members highlighted some progress in the above-mentioned areas, despite the large-scale killing and destruction caused by the ongoing unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine.

The CSP members jointly:

1. welcomed the launch of negotiations on Ukraine's accession to the European Union, as well as the Commission's 2024 Enlargement Package published on 30 October 2024, in particular the screening of ongoing reforms in Ukraine;
2. reaffirmed the urgent need for measures aimed at increasing energy resilience and strengthening the stability and defence of Ukraine's energy infrastructure; welcomed the adoption of crucially important environmental and climate laws underlining the urgent need to ensure the intersectoral integration of measures on the environment and climate;
3. insisted on the active participation of civil society in decision-making processes at both national and European level, and proposed holding social partners' summits before key EU-Ukraine meetings to ensure that the positions of trade unions, employers and civil society organisations are taken into account at the early stages of policy development, thereby contributing to increasing the transparency of decision-making;
4. appealed to the official bodies of the EU and Ukraine to provide more consistent support for the participation of civil society organisations in the activities of working groups for the preparation of Ukraine's proposals under the relevant sections of the EU negotiation framework, and emphasised that the incorporation of the provisions and norms of the EU *acquis* into Ukrainian law was a priority for both government agencies and civil society organisations;
5. insisted on consulting Ukrainian farmers and medium-sized enterprises on issues concerning the development and harmonisation of agrarian policy, legislation, production practices, and trade;

6. drew attention to the need for direct, barrier-free involvement of Ukrainian small and medium-sized businesses and civil society organisations in the implementation of projects under the Ukraine Facility, with the support of international financial organisations;
7. noted that science, education, technology and innovation could make a considerable contribution to the rebuilding and the social and economic development of Ukraine, and encouraged the authorities to invite non-government organisations, think tanks and academic institutions to play a direct part in economic development projects as well as in the implementation of an innovative strategy of national economic and social development;
8. emphasised the need to continue to take into consideration the critical status of the Ukrainian economy as result of the ongoing war of aggression and to apply a special regime to Ukrainian exports in accordance with the force majeure provisions;
9. stressed that the reconstruction of Ukraine and its accession process provided an opportunity to create and provide decent jobs as well as to comply with sustainable development goals in the process and ensure respect for social dialogue and the role of the social partners; emphasised the need to receive technical support from international organisations, in particular the ILO, in order to bring Ukrainian regulations in line with international standards and best practices;
10. drew attention to the need to ensure the inclusiveness of the labour market, including the creation of support programmes for veterans returning from the front, and emphasised the importance of providing them with rehabilitation, retraining and social protection;
11. called on the Parties to provide institutional and financial support for the EU-Ukraine CSP, in order to ensure the active participation of reliable, representative and professional civil society organisations in the process of planning, implementing and monitoring future and ongoing reforms relating to Ukraine's recovery and EU integration.

APPENDIX to JOINT DECLARATION

of the 16th meeting of the EU-Ukraine civil society platform held Brussels on 10 December 2024

Following the meetings of the EU-Ukraine Civil Society Platform held in 2023 and 2024, and ahead of 17th meeting of the CSP, which will mark the 10th anniversary of the CSP and which, provided there is a favourable security situation, is to be held in Ukraine, the CSP members decided to reiterate the key issues to be reviewed at the following meeting and point out that in 2023 and 2024 they had agreed to:

1. welcome the start of negotiations on Ukraine's accession to the European Union, support the Ukraine 2024 Report of the European Commission published on 30 October 2024, and emphasise the readiness of Ukrainian and European civil society to provide expert support and monitor the implementation of the EU's Ukraine Facility financial support programme on an inclusive basis;
2. consider it necessary to create 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 given the opportunity to verify such use in full transparency;
3. emphasise the unwavering adherence to the principle of rebuilding the country based on the best international experience and the latest technologies, standards of decent work and sustainable development;
4. condemn the terrorist attacks by the Russian Federation that caused the large-scale destruction of Ukraine's critical energy infrastructure and led to a critical situation in Ukraine's energy sector;
5. emphasise the urgent need to create a decentralised, diversified and innovative green energy system, while ensuring the protection of infrastructure using modern means of air defence and the restoration of electricity generation, heat supply, and critical infrastructure facilities;
6. call on the EU Member States to demonstrate solidarity by supporting efforts to protect Ukrainian energy facilities, as well as to support and/or promote measures aimed at increasing energy resilience, strengthening stability, and building/rebuilding Ukraine's energy infrastructure;
7. call for coordinated action to maintain and monitor the sanctions regime, stop imports of Russian oil and gas, nuclear materials and technologies, and limit the participation of the Russian Federation in international organisations and events;
8. insist on a complete and long-term cessation of imports of Russian gas (including LNG) and a general cessation of trade with the Russian Federation in the energy sector in order to weaken the ability of the Russian Federation to pursue its military aggression;
9. call for the recognition of the actions of the Russian Federation and Rosatom as nuclear terrorism, in particular 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 to stop Rosatom from building new nuclear power plants in any country and to terminate any cooperation with Rosatom, including participation in international bodies;
10. emphasise the need to strengthen the EU's assistance to Ukraine in demining the territory, in order to prevent an increase in the number of human casualties after the end of hostilities and to

create the conditions for the restoration of safe living conditions, as well as to support the elimination of dangerous environmental pollution, which should be a priority;

11. point out that the European Union is constantly updating its legislative framework, and call for measures to harmonise Ukraine's national legislation with that of the EU, given that the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement remains a key element of Ukraine's European integration and promotes significant political, economic and social reforms;
12. support the initiative of the Government of Ukraine to include representatives of the CSPs in the working groups preparing for the process of negotiating Ukraine's accession to the EU.

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

13. emphasise the need to uphold the rule of law and call for the effective functioning of institutions that should guarantee human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to national minorities and vulnerable groups, and respect for diversity;
14. stress the need for greater involvement of civil society in the development of democratic governance;
15. emphasise the need to improve law enforcement practices to ensure strict observance of intellectual property rights;
16. recommend analysing the success of the judicial reform in previous periods and its achievements, in particular the effectiveness of the adopted legislative changes, as a basis on which to make appropriate adjustments to the reform plan, specifically in terms of introducing common indicators for assessing the integrity and compliance with the professional ethics of judges;
17. call on all parties to develop joint policies and implement educational programmes aimed at preventing and combating discrimination and intolerance and promoting equality;
18. call for coordinated efforts to stop massive human rights violations by the aggressor country in the occupied territories, murders and violence committed against Ukrainian women, children and prisoners of war, and to ensure the return of Ukrainian citizens forcibly detained on Russian territory;
19. call for efforts to release the captured workers of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant and to stop violations of labour rights, in particular the use of forced labour, the destruction of trade unions and employers' organizations, and the coercion of workers into joining fake Russian trade unions in the occupied territories in the energy sector, utilities, railways, education, etc.

On Ukraine's European integration, the CSP members:

20. appeal to the official bodies of the EU and Ukraine to provide more powerful support for the participation of civil society organisations in the activities of the working groups active in preparing Ukraine's proposals under the relevant sections of the EU negotiation framework;
21. emphasise that the incorporation of the provisions and norms of the EU *acquis* into Ukrainian legislation is a priority for both government agencies and civil society organisations;
22. appeal to the European Commission to provide a grant to finance the activities of the EU-Ukraine civil society platform;

23. emphasise the need to identify ways to encourage Ukrainians living in the EU to participate in international and European networks of civil society organisations that are in favour of EU integration, and to strengthen cooperation between EU and Ukrainian players;
24. once again emphasise the need to develop effective communication and interaction between authorities at all levels and civil society, implementing the best European practices and principles of open dialogue, comprehensive consultations, and accountability;
25. consider it necessary to establish a monitoring mechanism on the part of civil society organisations (the CSP) to monitor the Ukraine Facility in terms of the compliance of projects financed by this instrument with the requirements of European integration;
26. propose to create a network of centres of expertise for communities in order to address the issues of recovery and compliance of projects with the requirements of European integration;
27. emphasise the need to strengthen the status of civil society organisations as a platform for discussion and formation of a common position of civil society representatives in the process of negotiating Ukraine's accession to the EU.

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

28. emphasise the importance of developing programmes for the comprehensive restoration of the entire territory of Ukraine, taking into account innovative approaches involving the smart specialisation of regional economic development;
29. encourage the involvement of Ukrainian stakeholders in 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. call on the Government of Ukraine and the European Commission to start discussions on and preparations for an updated EU-Ukraine trade framework for the period until Ukraine's accession to the EU, on the basis of Article 29 of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement, after the expiry of the EU's autonomous trade measures for Ukraine in June 2025;
31. draw attention to the need for direct, barrier-free involvement of Ukrainian small and medium-sized businesses in the implementation of projects under the Ukraine Facility, with the support of international financial organisations;
32. call for a 'common' agricultural policy for Ukraine and the EU, to be formulated in such a way as to ensure the development of small and medium-sized farms in Ukraine in accordance with EU standards and regulations, strengthening the EU's export potential and ensuring global food security;
33. 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;
34. support the development of cooperation between Ukrainian industrial clusters and the EU, with a focus on the reconstruction and recovery of Ukraine;
35. emphasise the need to continue applying the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) to exports from Ukraine in a declarative mode, in accordance with the force majeure provisions, after 1 January 2026;

36. draw attention to the need to formulate recovery plans in Ukraine, taking into account the EU's sectoral and horizontal policies, challenges, and mutually beneficial opportunities for Ukraine's economic integration into the EU single market;
37. emphasise the need for strict adherence to the principle of 'Build Back Better' in restoration projects, based on an innovative approach;
38. call for compliance with sustainability reporting standard;
39. emphasise the need to improve the functioning of the already established instruments of cross-border cooperation, in particular the 'Solidarity Lanes';
40. stress the need to intensify cooperation with the Advisory Group on Trade and Sustainable Development established under the Association Agreement;

On employment and social policy, the CSP members:

41. emphasise respect for social dialogue and the role of the social partners, which is the basis for democratic processes and the development of a stable society, and call for attention to be paid to improving labour legislation through social dialogue, which ensures the right to strike and engage in collective bargaining and expands the coverage of collective agreements;
42. emphasise the need to strengthen social dialogue in Ukraine through institutional support for trade unions and employers, and emphasise the importance of EU financial assistance in order to support social partnership, which should become the basis for creating decent jobs, facilitate the return of labour migrants, and prevent labour outflow;
43. emphasise that deregulation and liberalisation, as well as approaches aimed at reducing the 'social burden' that do not ensure social progress, should not be used as a basis for reforms; also note that Ukraine's competitiveness should be based on high social and environmental standards;
44. emphasise that every public procurement announcement must contain conditions for compliance with international social and labour standards, particularly so as to promote the creation of high-quality jobs characterised by fair wages and working conditions and supported by collective bargaining agreements;
45. welcome investment in the reconstruction of Ukraine, provided that decent jobs are created and that sustainable development goals are achieved in the reconstruction process;
46. insist on the active participation of civil society in decision-making processes at both national and European level, and propose holding social partners' summits before key EU-Ukraine meetings to ensure that the positions of trade unions, employers and civil society organisations are taken into account at the early stages of policy development and to increase the transparency of decision-making;
47. emphasise the need to engage the technical support of international organisations, in particular the ILO, in order to bring Ukrainian regulations into line with European standards and best practices.;
48. draw attention to the need to ensure the inclusiveness of the labour market, including the creation of support programmes for veterans returning from the front, and emphasise the importance of providing them with rehabilitation, retraining and social protection;

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

49. call for urgent joint action to prevent a humanitarian catastrophe, to restore and/or develop critical energy infrastructure, electricity and heat generation capacities, and to increase the technical capacity to import electricity from the EU to Ukraine;
50. emphasise the importance of the European Commission's recommendations in the Enlargement Reports on Ukraine's environmental and climate policy and the need for their proper and strict practical implementation;
51. welcome the adoption by the Ukrainian Parliament of crucially important laws on integrated prevention and control of industrial pollution and the law on the basic principles of state climate policy, as well as the progress made in primary and secondary legislation to pursue reforms in the area of waste and water management;
52. stress the need to complete the reform of state environmental control;
53. emphasise the need to improve the state environmental policy and strengthen the capacity of the state administration to ensure the cross-sectoral integration of environmental and climate measures, as well as the implementation and enforcement of the already adopted parts of the EU acquis, and the need to significantly strengthen administrative and inspection capacity in the environment and climate sector;
54. urge that steps be taken to ensure civil society obtains access to environmental information and that it participates in decision-making, which has worsened due to martial law, especially in Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) procedures; points out that 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 the sequence of all interrelated permit procedures at legislative level;
55. welcome the initiation of a dialogue platform between the Parliamentary Committee on Environmental Policy and civil society organisations that serves as a good tool for wide discussion of the key problems of environmental policy;
56. draw attention to the importance of restoring nature, including protected areas, water bodies and soils, as an integral part of post-war reconstruction initiatives planned and implemented at international, national and local level;
57. draw attention to the need to include green reconstruction indicators in the monitoring of the implementation of the Ukraine Plan, as well as the proper implementation of the planned reforms, the cross-cutting impact of the environmental and climate component, appropriate financing of environmental and climate projects, and the reconstruction of infrastructure, industry and buildings based on the principles of decarbonisation, climate neutrality, and energy efficiency;
58. call on the EU to provide effective support to strengthen the physical protection of energy facilities in Ukraine, including nuclear power plants, from Russian attacks;
59. invite relevant EU companies to help Ukraine build decentralised energy and heat generating capacities to replace those destroyed by Russia;
60. emphasise the importance of the action plan for the implementation of the Energy Strategy of Ukraine until 2050, which is mandatory for all state bodies, as well as the importance of

expanding the list of mechanisms for state support for renewable energy in communities, stimulating the development of energy cooperatives that take measures to ensure the autonomy of electricity supply through the development of small distribution systems on the ground, and promoting the use of advanced technologies in the installation of power systems.

On healthcare issues, the members of the CSP:

61. emphasise the importance of preserving and modernising the healthcare system and preserving the healthcare workforce, including for people with disabilities, in the context of Ukraine's recovery;
62. emphasise the need for cooperation between the Ukrainian authorities and the EU in the field of healthcare, in particular in the management and prevention of and emergency response to diseases;
63. emphasise the importance of equal access to medical services in the territories adjacent to the combat zone, especially for the most vulnerable sections of the Ukrainian population;
64. emphasise the priority of providing psychological assistance to the population during and after the end of the hostilities;
65. recognise the critical importance of rebuilding healthcare infrastructure destroyed or damaged during the hostilities, ensuring that reconstruction efforts prioritise hospitals, clinics and medical facilities in the regions most affected;
66. emphasise the importance of establishing partnerships with international medical and humanitarian organisations to facilitate the exchange of experience, resources and best practices in the provision and management of medical care.

On learning, education, science, innovation and the information society, the CSP members:

67. note that science, technology and innovation can make a considerable contribution to the rebuilding and the social and economic development of Ukraine in the post-war period, and encourage the authorities to invite non-government organisations, think tanks and academic institutions to play a direct part in post-war economic development projects and the implementation of an innovative strategy of national economic and social development;
68. propose facilitating the development of international scientific networks and partnerships with the participation of representatives of the Ukrainian scientific community for research, especially in the development of effective tools for post-war reconstruction;
69. recognise the leading role of education and training as a system of education and lifelong learning, upskilling and retraining of individuals, combining knowledge, skills, experience, competencies and values, emphasising the role of the system of vocational and higher education and training of young people and adults (employed, temporarily unemployed, war veterans, people with disabilities, and internally displaced persons) and the importance of adapting it as soon as possible to the growing need for workers required for the post-war reconstruction of Ukraine; to this end, call on the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine to adopt the laws 'On Vocational Education', 'On the National Qualifications System' and 'On Adult Education' as soon as possible;
70. note the need to draw up a comprehensive map of Ukraine's research infrastructure following the standards of the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures, based on a

comprehensive audit of the existing infrastructure, accounting for obsolescence and war-related destruction, as well as the needs under the Smart Specialisation Strategy, as this will help prepare for the negotiations on EU membership (Chapter 25 of the *acquis communautaire*), as well as discussions with donors on the most relevant investments in research and innovation-related reconstruction;

71. stress the importance of supporting Ukrainian scientists who remain in Ukraine, and note that violations of the conditions needed to carry out scientific activities require that assistance be provided to support ongoing research efforts in Ukraine as well as increased financial support for remote working contracts, technological and laboratory supplies, digital tools and open access to scientific data and publications;
72. consider as 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;
73. see a critical need for policy measures to support refugee scientists from Ukraine, which should be designed to ensure, from the outset, that they can maintain strong links with their home institutions and fellow scientists so that the brain drain can be rapidly reversed once the war is over, and to ensure scientists' integration and guarantee the continuation of research in Ukraine at the level currently seen in European institutions;
74. emphasise that policies should be geared toward keeping in touch with the diaspora and facilitating contact between Ukrainian institutions and enterprises with members of the diaspora who can provide significant assistance in establishing scientific and business contacts globally;
75. call for the promotion of science in all state programmes aimed at countering propaganda and disinformation, as well as at assessing the damage caused to Ukraine as a result of Russian aggression; reiterate that science plays an essential role in bolstering the intellectual and technological resilience of society, and encourages the involvement of scientists in communicating complex scientific topics where their experience can influence public opinion;
76. note that science, technology and innovation have the potential to contribute to Ukraine's social transformation and green transition in the post-war period, provided that there is enhanced cooperation between academia and entrepreneurs and that this forms part of an innovation-based industrial strategy;
77. stress the need for mechanisms for coordinating assistance and support for higher education and science that meet immediate needs and also take into account long-term planning, in particular for the reconstruction of the Ukrainian higher education and science system, as well as academic and scientific infrastructure after the war;
78. emphasise the importance of bilateral cooperation and cooperation within 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.