



News Summary – Issue 3 (28.02.2014)

Dear members, friends and supporters of the EU-Russia Civil Society Forum,

The EU-Russia Civil Society Forum wishes to share with you its latest developments through the News Summary – the *ad hoc* communication format briefly reporting news and updates of the Forum's activities. **Have a look at the third issue of the News Summary!**

CSF received EU-Grant – sub-granting programme starts soon

As you may have already read in our last information letter from January, at the end of December 2013 the EU awarded the EU-Russia Civil Society Forum a grant to fund the further development of the Forum. The 1st February marked the start date for the project, which includes a wide range of actions supporting civil society in both Russia and the EU. The German-Russian Exchange acted as the Consortium lead organisation in the grant application process and will coordinate project activities alongside the other Consortium members: *Agency for Social Information, the Netherlands Helsinki Committee, the Public Verdict Foundation and the Stefan Batory Foundation* as well as *IREX Europe* as an associate partner. You can read an initial outline of the planned areas of work on the [CSF-website](#).

We are pleased to announce the upcoming opportunity for the Working Groups to apply for the sub-granting programme with their projects (max. 6 projects – one for every Working Group - with an amount of about 15-16,000 Euro each). The call for applications will be open in the middle of March. The project should be nominated, as agreed at the General Assembly in The Hague, by the Working Groups' coordinators. We kindly encourage the coordinators of each working group to launch preparatory communication about project ideas and its implementation with their respective Working Groups.

Kick-off Meeting of Consortium Members

Currently the Steering Committee is conducting interviews with several candidates who applied for the position of the Executive Director of the CSF. The selection of the PR/Financial Manager is also ongoing. In the middle of March both positions will be decided. The newly established secretariat and all the members of the consortium will have a two-day **kick-off meeting in Moscow on 3-4 April 2014**. During the meeting, the secretariat and the consortium members will outline in more detail forthcoming projects running until the end of the year, will summarise the first interim results as well as update and reconsider the strategic planning and implementation of the Forum's projects.

The 5th General Assembly in Tallinn

We are excited to officially inform you that the EU-Russia Civil Society Forum has received confirmation from the **Open Estonia Foundation** about their support and generous donation for the 5th General Assembly. The 5th GA will take place in Tallinn at the end of the year. The organizers of the General Assembly will be chosen through the open-tender procedure, which will be announced soon by the secretariat of the Forum after agreeing the formal conditions with the EU.

Letter to the Ambassador of the EU-Delegation to Russia

The coordinator of the CSF working group “Democratic Institutions” Stefanie Schiffer, supported by the Steering Committee and on behalf of the CSF, sent a letter to the Ambassador of the EU-Delegation in Russia, Vygaudas Usackas, regarding insufficient political and direct financial support for civil society organisations in the Russian Federation by the European Commission.

In his answer the Ambassador says: “The EU has been underlining the importance of enabling a vibrant civil society in Russia. In the context of shrinking budget and resources, the EU at least has been able to maintain the level of support for civil society in Russia. I realise that there may be absorption capacity for more, but that is the best the EU Headquarters are able to achieve for now. Hopefully in the future the EU will be able to increase support further.”

We will be very glad to receive your response and any proposal on our common work.

With best wishes,

The Steering Committee and Secretariat of the EU-Russia Civil Society Forum

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