1. Inside the Forum

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

On the eve of its fourth General Assembly in The Hague (5-7 October), the EU-Russia Civil Society Forum wishes to share with you its latest news, developments and events.

OPEN CALL FOR PROPOSALS FOR THE EU-RUSSIA CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM

GOOD NEWS > the Development and Cooperation – EuropeAid Directorate of the European Commission has announced an open Call for Proposals for a project on the development of the EU-Russia Civil Society Forum. The Forum Steering Committee is preparing a Concept Note of the project that will be disseminated among Forum members by the end of September, to allow members for reviewing it and be prepared for its discussion and subsequent approval during the General Assembly in The Hague, 5-7 October.

Forum members are encouraged to participate in the preparatory phases of the project proposals: your inputs will help us to prepare a comprehensive application, answering your needs!

Please contact us at info@eu-russia-csf.org.

THE FORUM IN NUMBERS

The Forum is expanding in terms of member organisations:

- 66 members from Russia
- 46 members from EU countries
- 11 international members
- 123 member organisations

New members (since July 2013):
- No more waste, Russian Centre for Development of Volunteerism,
- Russian Forest Trust,
- Sutyazhnik, IREX Europe,
- Riga house in Saint Petersburg,
- Youth Human Rights Group,
- Youth “Memorial”,
- Center for Interethnic Cooperation.

Learn more about Forum members and how to become a member. Check out members projects, Forum’s opinions and Ideas.

FORUM’S UPCOMING EVENTS

- General Assembly, 5-7 October, The Hague: See the section in the spotlight (section 2below).
- Public event, 8 October, Brussels: Organised by the EU-Russia Centre together with the EU-Russia CSF, a discussion on “Civil Society in Russia – can the EU do anything to help?” will be held at the Press Club in Brussels on October 8, from 11:00 until 12:45. The details about the programme, guest panelists and venue are available here.
Public discussion and presentation of a new research report on EU-Russia visa facilitation and liberalization, 5 November, Moscow: the EU-Russia Civil Society Forum and Visa-free Europe Coalition cordially invite you to the Higher School of Economics in Moscow to a public discussion between EU-Russian experts and stakeholders on “Overcoming Borders. The EU-Russia Dialogue on Visa Facilitation and Liberalization”. During the event the Visa Report of the CSF written by visa expert group will be presented, which will be followed by a panel discussion on the future EU-Russia dialogue on visa facilitation and liberalization with the aim to show both civic and political perspective. We look forward to welcoming you in Moscow!

To participate at the public discussion, we kindly ask you to register in advance via e-mail at visaevent@eu-russia-csf.org indicating your name, organisation and contact details.

Contacts: Kristina Smolijaninovaite / Jakub Benedyczak, visaevent@eu-russia-csf.org
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PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES

Participants of the project “Police Transparency in the EU Countries and Russia” are in the process of finalising a Report on the project activities encompassing the legislaton regulating police and law enforcement bodies' transparency in several EU countries and in Russia.

As above mentioned, the Forum Expert Group on “EU-Russia Visa Facilitation and Liberalization” has completed a research report on the processes of visa facilitation and liberalisation between EU and Russia (executive summary). The 50-pages report contains analysis of legal frameworks of EU-Russia visa regime, existing practices, challenges on the way to abolishing visas, and policy recommendations to decision-makers.

2. In the spotlight: General Assembly in The Hague, 5-7 October

On October 5-7, The Hague will host more than one houndred civil society actors from across European Union and Russia at the 4th General Assembly of the Forum.

During sessions on Saturday 5 and Sunday 6 October, open to Forum members and organisations having observer status, the Assembly will address various topics relevant to Russian and EU civil society actors, evaluate the recent developments of the Forum, discuss strategies and activities of the Forum in short- and medium-term perspectives and elect the new Steering Committee.

In the morning public session on Monday 7 October, at the presence of Dutch, EU, and Russian official representatives, as well as the media, a panel discussion will be held together with a presentation of the General Assembly's outcomes. In the afternoon, participants will visit Dutch civil society organizations in Amsterdam. Detailed programme of the General Assembly is available on the CSF website.

The Assembly will be held on October 5-7 at NH Hotel Den Haag, Prinses Margrietplantsoen 100, 2595 BR The Hague. Detailed joining instructions and information about the venue are available on the CSF website.

Learn more about the General Assembly in the interview with Harry Hummel (Netherlands Helsinki Committee).
On August 23-26, the EU-Russia Civil Society Forum Steering Committee together with Eva Rybkova (Project Manager) and Elena Shakhova (coordinator of the Working Group on “Human Rights and Rule of Law”) held a strategy meeting in Helsinki. Participants discussed short- and mid-term strategies of the Forum in light of the external evaluation and in view of the call for proposals (see section 1) and identified the following top priorities and goals for the period 2014-2016:

➢ Strengthen the capacity of the Forum to react in urgent situations in support of members and of civil society; to become a relevant platform for monitoring and supporting civil society actors under pressure;

➢ Develop a wide spectrum of services for Forum members by intensifying contacts and interactions between Forum bodies and its members, to understand different needs;

➢ Develop a long term strategy based on research and consultations with stakeholders that includes: vision, goals and objectives, expected results, activities aimed at achieving these results, systematic documentation and public work, and comprehensive mechanisms of internal evaluation and feedback.

STAY CONNECTED AND SHARE!

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