

# guide

minority  
rights  
group  
europe



MINORITIES NETWORK  
EASTERN PARTNERSHIP

## Minority Rights Advocacy in the EU: A Guide for NGOs in Eastern Partnership countries



By Zsafia Farkas and Nataliya Novakova

This publication has been produced with the assistance of the European Union and the International Visegrad Fund. The contents of this document are the sole responsibility of Minority Rights Group Europe and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union.



Minority Rights Group International (MRG) is a non-governmental organization (NGO) working to secure the rights of ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities worldwide, and to promote cooperation and understanding between communities. MRG has consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), and observer status with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights. MRG is registered as a charity, no. 282305, and is a company limited by guarantee in the UK, no. 1544957.

#### Authors:

Zsófia Farkas is the Managing Director of Minority Rights Group Europe and has been working on European advocacy for years.  
Natalya Novakova works as a researcher for MRGE.

ISBN 978-1-907919-77-0 This guide is published as a contribution to public understanding. The text does not necessarily represent in every detail the collective view of MRG or its partners. Copies of this guide are available online at [www.minorityrights.org](http://www.minorityrights.org) and [www.minorities-network.org](http://www.minorities-network.org)

Copies can also be obtained from Minority Rights Group Europe Budapest office. Address: 68 Ulloi ut, Budapest 1082, Hungary.

Cover page: Georgian minority organizations advocacy visit at the European Commission in Brussels, 2015  
Credit: MRG

Minority Rights Group Europe, 2015  
All rights reserved

This publication has been produced by the the Eastern Partnership (EaP) Minorities Network. The network so far unites about 80 minority organizations and civil society leaders across Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. EaP Minorities Network is open to activists and civil society organizations, including ethnic, linguistic, national, religious minorities, indigenous peoples and visible minority communities.

We believe that minorities play a crucial role in contributing to building pluralistic and democratic states based on human rights and fundamental freedoms and we want to give them a voice and see their opinions reflected within the Eastern Partnership process.

More about the network:

[www.minorities-network.org](http://www.minorities-network.org) and [www.facebook.com/EasternPartnershipMinoritiesNetwork](https://www.facebook.com/EasternPartnershipMinoritiesNetwork)

# Abbreviations

<b>AA</b>	<b>Association Agreement</b>
<b>COREPER</b>	<b>Permanent Representatives Committee</b>
<b>CSF</b>	<b>Civil Society Forum</b>
<b>DG</b>	<b>Directorate General</b>
<b>EC</b>	<b>European Commission.</b>
<b>EaP</b>	<b>Eastern Partnership</b>
<b>EEAS</b>	<b>European External Action Service</b>
<b>EIDHR</b>	<b>European Instrument of Democracy and Human Rights</b>
<b>ENP</b>	<b>European Neighbourhood Policy</b>
<b>ENPI</b>	<b>European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument</b>
<b>ENI</b>	<b>European Neighbourhood Instrument</b>
<b>ENGO</b>	<b>European non-governmental organization</b>
<b>EU</b>	<b>European Union</b>
<b>FCNM</b>	<b>Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities</b>
<b>INGO</b>	<b>International non-governmental organization</b>
<b>MEP</b>	<b>Member of the European Parliament</b>
<b>MRG</b>	<b>Minority Rights Group International</b>
<b>NGO</b>	<b>Non-governmental organization</b>
<b>OSCE</b>	<b>Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe</b>
<b>UN</b>	<b>United Nations</b>



# Introduction

Over recent years, the European Union (EU) has become the most influential player in the Eastern Partnership countries (EaP). It is both a prominent development actor and a relevant political force in the region. For EaP countries' minorities this is a particularly hopeful process; with some EaP countries successfully signing Association Agreements with the EU, this relationship provides both the carrot and the stick for the states to put their international commitments into practice and effectively improve the situation of their minorities.

In the course of Minority Rights Group International's (MRG's) work with partner minority and human rights non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the need was articulated for the publication of a guide to the EU for minorities. This was explained by the lack of a minority-specific tool for approaching the EU, and the fact that both general and NGO-specific knowledge on the EU is lacking among NGO practitioners as the EU still remains a distant and complex entity.

In response to this need, this publication, *Minority Rights Advocacy in the EU: A Guide for NGOs in the Eastern Partnership Countries* was conceived, with the aim of empowering minority and human rights activists from EaP countries to advocate successfully in the EU for the effective inclusion of minority issues in their country, and the protection and promotion of minority rights in the region. The guide is published in the framework of the EaP Minorities Network (ENPI/2012/304-332) EU-funded project. A number of guides published by MRG and other NGOs, which also systematically discuss advocacy opportunities and strategies within related international fora, are available at [www.minorityrights.org](http://www.minorityrights.org)

This publication is about minority rights advocacy in the institutional setting of the EaP and the EU. It comprises three sections. The first focuses briefly on the definition of advocacy in general and minority rights advocacy in particular from an NGO perspective in the EU setting. The second maps out the institutional framework in which advocacy takes place, assesses advocacy opportunities in the EU institutional setting in more detail, considering the major EU institutions together with the related national actors, and suggests appropriate advocacy strategies for each institution (the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union, the European Commission [EC], European External Action Service and Civil Society Forum, EU Delegations and EU

member states' embassies in the countries). Finally it lists contacts and resources for successful advocacy in the third section.

This guide refers to minority rights and minorities, much-contested concepts which lack a universally accepted definition. Thus a few words about the terminology are in order here. For the purpose of this guide, 'minorities' refers to non-dominant ethnic, national, religious and linguistic groups in a state, whose members show, if only implicitly, a sense of solidarity directed towards preserving their culture, traditions, religion or language.<sup>1</sup>

Minority rights go much beyond the minimum understanding of culture and language. In MRG's view, minority rights are based on four key pillars:

- (1) protection of existence
- (2) protection and promotion of identity
- (3) non-discrimination
- (4) effective participation.

It is the hope of MRG and the authors that this guide will serve as a useful resource for minority rights advocates from EaP countries in their effort to mainstream minority rights in the relationship with the EU, thus contributing to change and the improvement of the position of the most vulnerable groups in their societies.

# 1. Minority rights advocacy in the EU

## 1. 1. What is advocacy? A working definition of minority rights advocacy

The term ‘advocacy’<sup>2</sup> was originally associated with a legal representative who spoke on behalf of a client in a court of law. Today, advocacy is understood in many different ways by organizations and individuals. In general, advocacy refers to *systematic action for social change*. It may include speaking, writing or acting in support of a cause, demanding a change to benefit the lives of many or simply focusing on legal and policy reform. A wide range of approaches to advocacy have been developed by NGOs. These approaches are informed by different values and ideas about how power and politics operate and how social change occurs, and they pursue different goals.

There is no single definition of advocacy. Therefore, organizations carrying out advocacy find it useful and efficient to agree on their own working definitions. This has helped them in planning their advocacy activities and enhanced their transparency, public accountability and credibility.

Working definitions of advocacy can be generally, but not exclusively, centred on the following questions:

- (1) What is advocacy for?
- (2) Who does it?
- (3) Where is it located?
- (4) What major strategies are applied?

## What is advocacy for?

Advocacy can aim to achieve *changes in legislation, policy and practice* of a wide range of organizations, including governmental, supra-national or intergovernmental ones, and more; it can pursue *changes in the social, political and legal environment* in order to make it more transparent and participatory; it can be focused on *changes in the attitudes and behaviour* of certain groups or the general public.

*Minority rights advocacy* aims at all the above listed changes. Building on the legitimacy of human rights gained through the United Nations (UN) and regional conventions, it works to:

- implement existing minority rights and expand them to respond to new forms of discrimination and indignity;
- create institutional/formal channels of minority involvement in the process of changing legislation, policies and practices making the process of decision-making and implementation more participatory;
- change majority–minority relations through transforming public attitude and behaviour

## Who does it?

This question is, in fact, about participatory advocacy. It relates to the way advocates see the role of their ‘client group’ in the management of their own affairs in a given political context.

Depending on the level of participation of the ‘client group’ in the advocacy process, three types of advocacy are distinguished, namely:

- advocacy done *for* the relevant people
- advocacy done *with* the relevant people
- and advocacy done *by* the relevant people themselves.

The choice of approach very much depends on the given political circumstances. However, in general, advocacy done *by* the relevant people is considered to be the most empowering scenario since, in this case, those who participate make decisions and choices. The proponents of *participatory advocacy* hold that stakeholders or relevant rights-holders need to be involved in the advocacy process through clear and transparent processes whatever their level of participation.



By definition, *minority rights advocacy* has to be participatory as participation is a minority right. Participation can be of different levels ranging from gathering and passing on information through consultation, collaboration to empowerment, and it has to be based on the maximum possible involvement of minorities under the given political circumstances.

## Where is it located?

This question is about the multiple levels of advocacy, including local, national, regional and global. Today, most advocacy activities are carried out on more than one level of policy making as the various levels are closely interconnected. This multi-level advocacy entails multi-layered systems of communication and feedback to make sure that input is included from all levels. For instance, global-level advocacy has to include local input to maintain its credibility and relevance.

Effective *minority rights advocacy* is multi-level as it is about the national and local implementation of regional and global standards, as well as about local and national minority input into regional and global standard-setting.

## What major approaches and methods are applied?

NGOs use two major approaches to advocacy, namely: *direct policy influence* and *capacity-building in advocacy*. Within each approach, a mix of methods is used.

Direct policy influence aims at changes in policy, legislation or procedures, as well as their implementation. It uses lobbying, campaigning, education and awareness-raising, as well as consultancy. Capacity-building aims at developing the capacity of other groups and organizations to influence policy themselves. This can involve, among others, supporting and strengthening grassroots organizations, networks and movements, as well as facilitating debates between policy-makers and citizens or interest groups.

Minority rights advocacy embraces both directly influencing policy and capacity-building as non-dominant minorities are politically marginalized and economically deprived, and solidarity and assistance is needed to restore social justice in their countries.

A somewhat simplified working definition of minority rights advocacy for the purpose of this guide could be summarized as follows: *Minority rights advocacy acts for the*

*implementation and expansion of minority rights through participatory lobbying and campaigning as well as capacity-building for the benefit of non-dominant minority groups at all levels of government including local, national and international levels.*

Having reached a working definition of minority rights advocacy, the major stages of designing an advocacy plan can be looked at. These are as follows:

- (1) *Identify the issue* by answering the question: What is the problem that needs to be addressed through advocacy?
- (2) *Understand and analyse the problem* by looking at the root causes and effects of a problem.
- (3) *Draft the aims and objectives* by answering the question: What do you want to change?
- (4) *Understand the advocacy environment* by: (a) identifying all stakeholders who will be affected including your allies and opponents and (b) identifying your target audience who can make the changes laid out in your objectives.
- (5) *Identify your capacity* by answering the question: What resources and skills do you have and what are your limitations?
- (6) In the light of previous analysis: *review and finalize your aims and objectives.*
- (7) *Devise your plan*: draft a written advocacy plan to set out: your goal and objectives; activities, including monitoring and evaluation; the timeline; the budget; the risks and assumptions involved.
- (8) *Put your plan into practice and monitor as well as adjust your plan.*
- (9) *Evaluate!*

## 1. 2. NGO advocacy in the EU: opportunities and distinctive features

The emergence of a civil society at the European level is connected to the development of the 'political union' initiated by the Maastricht Treaty in 1992 as more policy areas of great importance to citizens were transferred to the European level. This generated the need for civil society groups to engage at a new level. Over the last decade many NGOs have organized themselves as European networks, providing input for the European policy-making process. NGOs and regional networks from EaP countries have established, or soon will establish, their own representation or join forces with existing alliances to carry out advocacy at the supra-national institutions of the EU such as the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum Secretariat in Brussels.

## The major institutional setting of advocacy

The unique system of multi-level governance of the EU presents NGOs with a vast number of advocacy opportunities. The following table lists the major relevant institutions in their multiple locations.<sup>3</sup>

Institutions	Brussels, Strasbourg, Luxembourg	Member states	EaP countries
Locations			
<b>EU institutions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ European Parliament</li> <li>■ European Council</li> <li>■ Council of the European Union</li> <li>■ European Commission</li> <li>■ European Court of Justice</li> <li>■ the European Central Bank</li> <li>■ the Court of Auditors</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ EU Delegations</li> </ul>
<b>National institutions of member states</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Permanent representations of member states to the EU</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Relevant departments of foreign ministries or ministries dealing with European issues and human rights, as well as cultural ministries and justice and home affairs</li> <li>■ Agencies or governmental departments dealing with minority issues and development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Embassies of EU member states</li> </ul>
<b>NGOs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Minority rights ENGOS (European NGOs)</li> <li>■ Human rights ENGOS</li> <li>■ Development ENGOS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Minority rights INGOs (international NGOs)</li> <li>■ Human rights INGOs</li> <li>■ Development INGOs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Minority rights NGOs</li> <li>■ Human rights NGOs</li> <li>■ Development NGOs</li> </ul>

## Distinctive features of advocacy in the EU and recommended strategies

Advocates need to develop an excellent understanding of the EU’s complex system of policy-making and legislative procedure to be able to identify the specific challenges it poses and address them in their strategies. Some of the recommended advocacy strategies emanating from the distinctive features of the EU system of governance are:

Distinctive features of the EU system of governance	Recommended advocacy strategies <sup>4</sup>
<p>It is multi-level: national, supra-national and sometimes sub-national agencies share decision-making powers in one policy field</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Map out a decision-making process from the very beginning to its end. In this process, national and EU institutions have to be handled together, simultaneously, not separately or sequentially. Understand the relationship between process and policy outcome and target the right people at the right time and at the right segment of the decision-making process.</li> <li>■ Third-country nationals have to build up strong working relations with relevant EU member states’ officials to effectively influence the decision-making process.</li> </ul>
<p>There is a high degree of functional segmentation that results in different policy-making patterns and styles across the various policy fields</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Study the decision-making process, style and culture of each segment (Directorate-General or Parliamentary Committee, for instance).</li> <li>■ Identify and make use of the imperfect communications characteristic within and between EU institutions.</li> <li>■ Remember that there are important distinctions between the three categories of EU decision-makers, namely European Commission (EC) officials are bureaucrats representing EU interests; the Council of the European Union is mainly populated by diplomats who promote national interests; Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) are politicians accountable to their constituency. However, all three types of decision-makers tend to prefer face-to-face meetings over lunch briefings or other forms of casual advocacy. They also highly value written briefings, conferences, seminars, workshops and site visits, albeit to different degrees.</li> </ul>

Distinctive features of the EU system of governance	Recommended advocacy strategies <sup>4</sup>
<p>The political debate is essentially based on expert knowledge rather than political argument to try to persuade a broad European public</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Base your positions on facts rather than emotions. This requires well-crafted arguments supported by robust data coupled with an analysis of opposing views. Prepare well-focused and short briefing materials, and make sure you relate your data to the relevant social and political choices that decision-makers must face. Bear in mind that politicians and officials make their choices in different contexts (political and technical).</li> </ul>
<p>There is a strong legal dimension that has a marked influence on the policy process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Be familiar with the EU law and legislative procedures, and look for legal rules to achieve your objectives.</li> </ul>
<p>There is constant and rather speedy decision-making</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ If you cannot be in Brussels constantly, empower those NGOs that are based there to represent of your issues. Search for allies and become part of coalitions whenever possible.</li> </ul>
<p>It is a fairly transparent system, or at least it is much more transparent than most national administrations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Be clear about who you are and whom you represent. Make sure you can evidence your representativity.</li> </ul>
<p>It is a system that manages diversity in culture, language and thought</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Recognize this and where possible use it to your advantage.</li> </ul>

Finally, it is important to recall that advocacy at the supra-national level cannot be divorced from national and local-level advocacy. Brussels-based advocacy makes sense as an integral part of an intervention strategy that can strongly link the local level with the national, supra-national and international contexts, and ensures that all results achieved at various levels are conducive to reasonable impacts on the lives of the ultimate beneficiaries.

## The context of NGO participation in the EU decision-making process

Given the complex and pluralistic nature of the EU environment and the vast number of NGOs in Europe that wish to engage with European-level policy-making, many NGOs have organized themselves in umbrella networks at a European level according to their sectoral interests. These networks enhance the NGOs' credibility as they represent their local and national members and constituencies. In addition, they help them maximize their effectiveness when they influence the EU agenda, shape legislation and provide policy alternatives.

There is no European NGO network that works specifically on minority rights. However, there are several networks that address minority rights in their work, which are open for NGOs from the EaP to join. A list of these networks is presented in section 3.

EU institutions have increasingly acknowledged the role of civil society in their work. NGO input has been mostly valued by the EU for its expertise as well as for linking the EU with its local constituency and strengthening thereby its poor democratic legitimacy. Some structured forms of cooperation between various institutions and NGOs have been developed in the framework of the *Civil Society Forum*.

## 1. 3. European Neighbourhood Policy: background

Through its European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), the EU works with its southern and eastern neighbours to achieve the closest possible political association and the greatest possible degree of economic integration. This goal builds on common interests and on values – democracy, the rule of law, respect for human rights, and social cohesion. The ENP is a key part of the EU's foreign policy.

The ENP, in the EU's own words, 'is a broad political strategy which has the objective of strengthening the prosperity, stability and security of Europe's neighbourhood in order to avoid any dividing lines between the enlarged EU and its direct neighbours'. The EU has bilateral agreements (either Partnership and Cooperation Agreements or Association Agreements) with each of the 16 neighbourhood partner countries,<sup>5</sup> which involve a programme of assistance, including financial assistance, aimed at 'creating an area of shared values, stability and prosperity, enhanced co-operation and deeper economic and regional integration by covering a wide range of co-operation areas'. Priorities in each country differ, but the EU's core principles, including the rule of law, market economy, developing democratic institutions, border security and equality feature prominently in the assistance programme to each country.

Regional and multilateral cooperation initiatives include the EaP (launched in Prague in May 2009), the Union for the Mediterranean (the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, formerly known as the Barcelona Process, re-launched in Paris in July 2008) and the Black Sea Synergy (launched in Kiev in February 2008).

Bilateral Action Plans between the EU and each ENP partner (12 have been agreed so far) set out an agenda of political and economic reforms, with short- and medium-term priorities of three to five years, working towards democracy and human rights, the rule of law, good governance, market economy principles and sustainable development.

The implementation of the ENP is jointly promoted and monitored through committees of the European External Action Service (EEAS) and EU Delegation staff. Sub-committees promote and monitor progress. The EU publishes ENP Progress Reports each year in March. They can normally be found them by searching the home page of the External Action Service: [http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/documents/progress-reports/index\\_en.htm](http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/documents/progress-reports/index_en.htm)

At the last review of its ENP in 2010–11, the EU introduced the more-for-more principle: the EU will develop stronger partnerships and offer greater incentives to countries that make more progress towards democratic reform: that is, free and fair elections; freedom of expression, of assembly and of association; judicial independence; action against corruption; and democratic control over the armed forces.

The EU carried out the last review of the ENP, including public consultations, from March to July 2015 with partner countries, international organizations, social partners, civil society and academia. More than 250 contributions were received.

On 18 November 2015, Federica Mogherini, the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy for the EC presented the main lines of the review of the ENP, spelling out the EU's new approach to its eastern and southern neighbours.

*'We should switch from the idea that the European Union is at the centre, surrounded by the neighbouring countries, to the idea of a new partnership based on cooperation', said Mogherini. "A stronger partnership with our neighbours is key for the European Union, while we face many challenges within our borders and beyond," Mogherini added.*

*'Mogherini singled out the five pillars of the work that has started: "First, focus on economic development and job creation; second, cooperation on energy; third, security; fourth, migration; fifth, neighbours of the neighbours."*

*"In the reviewed ENP the EU will focus on areas that matter most. The stabilization of the region, in political, economic and security-related terms, will be at the heart of the new policy. The EU's own stability is built on democracy, human rights and the rule of law and we will continue to make the case for these universal values."*

For more information on the European Neighbourhood Policy, see: <http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/>



### Possible advocacy issues – a non-exhaustive list

- The following is a non-exhaustive list of issues which minority rights advocates from EaP countries may wish to consider and take forward:
- establishment of structured channels of communication between minority civil society, national authorities and the EU in the EaP countries
- joint definition of political criteria for Association Agreements on minority rights and the anti-discrimination framework by minority communities, national governments and the EU for the countries which have not started negotiations yet, with indicators
- joint definition of national development priorities so that minorities too can benefit from EU aid
- participatory design, planning, implementation and evaluation of EU-funded programmes with publication of results
- the codification of minority rights at the level of the EU and expansion of the interpretation of the existing anti-discrimination legislation
- disaggregated data on funds designated for minority-related projects in the EaP, as well as details of what proportion of these funds stay in the region and reach recipients.

## European Neighbourhood Policy: funding

The European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) (2007–13) targeted sustainable development and approximation to EU policies and standards, supporting the agreed priorities in the ENP Action Plans as well as the Strategic Partnership with Russia. It has been replaced by the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI). The new ENI, with a budget of €15.4 billion, provides the bulk of funding to the 16 partner countries for the period 2014–20.

Under the ENI, four types of programme are supported:

- (1) bilateral programmes for the neighbourhood countries;
- (2) regional programmes for the East and the South;
- (3) an ENP-wide programme mainly funding Erasmus for All, the Neighbourhood Investment Facility and the Umbrella programmes;
- (4) cross-border cooperation programmes between member states and neighbourhood countries.

In the spirit of differentiation, for partner countries who have agreed with the EU an Action Plan or an equivalent document, the programming process has been streamlined and a Single Support Framework (SSF) adopted. The Action Plans or other equivalent documents represent the key points of reference for setting the priorities for EU support to these partners under the ENI.

For the remaining partner countries, the programming documents take the form of Strategy Papers and Multiannual-Indicative Programmes. This approach applies also to regional, ENP-wide and cross-border cooperation programming.

For more on financing the ENP, see: [http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/documents/financing-the-enp/index\\_en.htm](http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/documents/financing-the-enp/index_en.htm)

## 2. Institutions: advocacy opportunities in the institutional setting of EU policy-making

This section looks at the major EU institutions, as well as related national institutions, in terms of available advocacy opportunities, contacts and recommended advocacy strategies and tools in more detail.

### **Some specific advocacy tools at the disposal of minority rights activists:**

- face-to-face meeting with responsible officials and/or their deputies
- participation in expert and consultative groups, as well as relevant workshop and conferences organized in Brussels
- initiating and attending hearings, organizing exhibitions in the under the patronage of an MEP
- inviting relevant EU officials to participate in national or regional workshops, conferences and trainings
- regular publication and dissemination of position papers to relevant national, international and supranational officials as well as NGOs
- editing and disseminating periodic English-language newsletters to EU Delegations and other relevant EU and national institutions, as well as NGOs and ENGOs
- sending open letters or declarations to the relevant fora, such as the EU Presidency
- initiating email campaigns on an issue of particular importance at the right stage of decision-making and tailoring it to the particular features of the targeted audience/institution
- joining NGO alliances and campaigns on an issue of importance
- participation in relevant UN, Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and Council of Europe fora
- submission of shadow reports and information to international treaty monitoring bodies and other relevant agencies.

## 2. 1. The European Parliament

In the system of EU political institutions, the European Parliament represents the EU's citizens and is directly elected by them. In principle, the Commission proposes new laws, and the Parliament and Council adopt them. The European Parliament oversees operations of the European Commission (EC) and cooperates with national parliaments. Among the areas of responsibility of the parliament are: budgetary process, economic policy, migration, foreign policy and so on.

As the European Parliament is one of the key policy institutions of the EU and it specifically deals with foreign policy and human rights, it is one of the focal points for advocacy for minority rights.

There are several premises for engagement with the European Parliament.

### Human rights debates

Each Thursday of the Strasbourg plenary session the European Parliament holds debates on violations of human rights across the world. Debates might serve as a tool for raising awareness of a particular issue among a European audience. Also, as the result of the debate, the European Parliament can adopt a resolution addressing one of the member governments, or external actors, calling for change in particular policy, or the ending of the human rights abuse. Although the resolutions are of declarative nature and do not have binding power, this is still an important tool of exerting political pressure on violators.

To put your issue on the agenda you should reach out to the Sub-committee on Human Rights (see more details below).

### Hearings

Each committee, or a group of committees, has a right to organize a hearing with experts to work on a particular subject. Most committees organize regular hearings to hold discussions on key issues. Hearings often attract the attention of journalists, policy-makers, experts and the wider audience. It is a good tool for raising awareness of your issue and engaging European policy-makers in further activity for your cause.

## Committees

In order to do the preparatory work for the European Parliament's plenary sittings, the MEPs are assigned to a number of specialized standing committees. There are 20 parliamentary committees. The parliamentary committees meet once or twice a month in Brussels. Their debates are held in public. The committees draw up, amend and adopt legislative proposals and own-initiative reports. They consider EC and Council of the European Union proposals and, where necessary, draw up reports to be presented to the plenary assembly.

There are several committees in the European Parliament that are relevant for minority rights advocacy. The most important are Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Sub-committee on Human Rights. However, in particular cases it might be useful to engage with Committee on Development as well.

### Committee on Foreign Affairs

For minority rights advocacy matters it is important to notice that the Committee on Foreign Affairs is responsible for:

- all legislation, programming and scrutiny of actions carried out under the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights, the European Neighbourhood Instrument, the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance, the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace and the Partnership Instrument for cooperation with third countries, and the policies underpinning them;
- monitoring the ENP and follow-up on ENP Annual Progress Reports;
- issues concerning democracy, the rule of law, human rights, including the rights of minorities, in third countries and the principles of international law.

Thus, many issues related to minority rights in the EaP countries fall under the area of responsibility of the Committee on Foreign Affairs. NGOs can become important source of knowledge and information for the committee on the state of minority rights in the EaP countries. NGOs can provide policy advice to the committee and in this way shape its agenda and decisions.

## Sub-committee on Human Rights

Being a part of Foreign Affairs Committee, the Sub-committee on Human Rights deals specifically with human rights issues abroad, which makes it the first and the most relevant contact for the minority rights advocacy.

The sub-committee's main responsibilities include all matters relating to human rights, the protection of minorities and the promotion of democratic values, while its geographical remit covers countries outside the EU. The main objectives of the sub-committee involve ensuring that human rights are at the forefront of European foreign policy and mainstreaming human rights across all policy areas. The sub-committee aims to react to human rights violations around the world as swiftly as possible by giving a voice to the people most affected.

Thus, the sub-committee can be approached with the idea of holding hearings on a particular issue, to initiate a debate or prepare a European Parliament resolution, or address the European External Actions Service to push a particular issue higher up the agenda.

## Committee on Development

Together with the Committee on Foreign Affairs, the Committee on Development is engaged in relations with the third countries, overseeing the aid and assistance provided to them. In many cases the objectives of EU aid and development assistance are tied to the promotion of democracy and human rights. In this regard, the Committee on Development might be interested in learning more about the minority rights situation in your country. Including particular demands related to minority rights as a condition for your government receiving aid could become a powerful tool for change.

## Special Rapporteurs

Committees often appoint Special Rapporteurs who are responsible for preparation of draft legislation on particular topic. The Committee on Foreign Affairs has rapporteurs responsible for particular regions and countries. You can reach out to the rapporteur on your country and inform him/her about your cause and explain why it should be on the agenda of the European Parliament. To find out who is the person responsible for your country, region or issue you can go to the website of the European Parliament,

and in the Committees section select Foreign Affairs Committee, then ‘Work in Progress’. Scrolling through the list of issues you will find the ones related to your country or, for instance, the ENP. There the rapporteur’s name and contact details will be mentioned. Special Rapporteurs also visit the country they are responsible for and hold civil society consultation meetings. Also the European Parliament often appoints a Shadow Rapporteur – someone who represents the opposition and is responsible for providing an alternative view on the issue. You can reach out to both regarding your issue and explain how it is related to the topic they are working on. This can get your topic on the agenda of the European Parliament.

## Joint parliamentary committees

MEPs also participate in delegations to various parliaments outside the EU. Joint parliamentary committees are set up with candidate countries. The following are the ones for the EaP countries:

Delegation to the EU–Ukraine Parliamentary Cooperation Committee

Delegation to the EU–Moldova Parliamentary Cooperation Committee

Delegation for relations with Belarus

Delegation to the EU–Armenia, EU–Azerbaijan and EU–Georgia Parliamentary Cooperation Committees

## How to engage the European Parliament in your advocacy effort:

- Identify your issue.
- Check if it can be aligned with the current activity of particular committee.
- If yes, reach out to the committee, find out who is the relevant Special Rapporteur and contact him/her, providing background information and policy advice.
- It is often useful to find allies. If you need to engage particular MEPs, you may want to look at which country they represent. After identifying their constituency, you can look for human rights organizations in that country and approach them to ask if they will join in with efforts to advocate for your issue and address the MEP.
- Identify the MEPs who are involved with the issues you are working on. You can do this by checking the committees, joint-parliamentary committees or inter-parliamentary delegations the MEPs sit on
- Contact the relevant MEPs to ask for an appointment. MEPs email addresses and telephone numbers are on the European Parliament website, but they rarely read their emails. It is best to ring their offices and arrange for an appointment with their personal assistants. The list of personal assistants can also be found on the European Parliament website. Alternatively, you can ask for the assistance of an established ENGO to help you establishing contact.
- Briefing an MEP: at a minimum, by briefing an MEP about your issue, you raise awareness of the specific problems your community faces. This is a good way to lay the foundations of a longer-term working relationship. However, if your issue is sufficiently relevant, the MEP can raise it under a specific item of the agenda of the parliamentary debate.
- Addressing MEP rapporteurs: the committees of the European Parliament compile reports which then are adopted by the Parliament. These reports shape European policies. Each report is the responsibility of a rapporteur who is one of the committee's MEPs.
- Contribute to the European Parliament's annual Human Rights Report: the MEP responsible for compiling the annual Human Rights Report requests information from NGOs to contribute to his/her report on the implementation of human rights in the EU's programmes (including good practices). Provide relevant information to be included in the report, even if the deadlines are often extremely short.
- Participate in roundtables on specific issues organized by ENGOs or other institutions in the European Parliament: these meetings are normally held with the support of several MEPs and with the participation of relevant officials from the EC and the Council of the European Union.



## Testimony:

Ukrainian minority organization attend a hearing on 'European funds for Roma health integration', Brussels, March 2015



Credit: MRG

'It was crucial for my organization to attend this meeting. I had the opportunity to present the Roma minority's situation and challenges in Ukraine to EU decision-makers and European NGOs. I talked about anti-discrimination legislation and the effect of decentralization on the situation of Roma, and the recent discrimination and hate speech incidents in Ukraine. It was very professional audience and other NGOs and EU officers posed very thorough questions regarding the situation. I was also informed about EU policies and other states' approach to Roma issues. I made a lot of contacts with other Roma NGOs from the EU that will be very useful for further projects and collaboration.

**Zola Kondur, Roma Women Fund 'Chiricli'**

## 2. 2. The European Council and the Council of the European Union

The European Council is one of the 7 EU institutions. However, it is not one of the EU's legislating bodies, so does not negotiate or adopt EU laws. Instead its main role is to determine the EU's general political direction and priorities - essentially setting the policy agenda for the EU.

Traditionally, this is done by adopting conclusions during each European Council meeting. These conclusions identify specific issues of concern for the EU and outline particular actions to take or goals to reach. European Council conclusions can also set a deadline for reaching agreement on a particular item or for the presentation of legislative proposal. In this way, the European Council is able to influence and guide the EU's policy agenda.

The Council of the European Union represents the member states' governments. Also known informally as the EU Council, it is where national ministers from each EU country meet to adopt laws and coordinate policies. The Council is an essential EU decision-maker. It negotiates and adopts legislative acts in most cases together with the European Parliament through the ordinary legislative procedure, also known as 'codecision'. Codecision is used for policy areas where the EU has exclusive or shared competence with the member states. In these cases, the Council legislates on the basis of proposals submitted by the European Commission. The Council is responsible for coordinating member states' policies in specific fields, such as economic and fiscal policies, employment or education, and defines and implements EU foreign and security policy.

The presidency of the Council of the EU rotates among the EU member states every 6 months. During this 6-month period, the presidency chairs meetings at every level in the Council, helping to ensure the continuity of the EU's work in the Council. Member states holding the presidency work together closely in groups of three, called 'trios'.

On issues of the protection of minorities, advocacy has to embrace both national institutions and the relevant EU bodies, the great majority of which are staffed by delegated national officials. The EU institutions include the Council of the European Union, the European Council and the Presidency in question and the numerous – around 300 – technical or sectoral working groups to which decision-making is increasingly being delegated by the 27 ministers.

The Council of the EU has been the least transparent EU institution with limited accessibility. Its documents are not readily available and, although this is gradually changing, it is still very much the case currently. Therefore, it is easier to reach the Council of the EU through national ministers and other relevant national officials.

The national institutions include the Brussels-based Permanent Representatives of member states staffing COREPER (the Committee of Permanent Representatives) and the national civil servants with a Europe brief in the relevant national ministries as well as in agencies established for the management of EU-related issues. These differ across member states but are often located within the ministry of foreign affairs or an EU ministry in home capitals. Contacts in government institutions or departments dealing with minority issues are very important, as they can inform you about national positions in this respect and may be helpful in establishing high-level contacts.

The Presidency of the Council of the EU can also be an advocacy target for NGOs that can lobby for their issues being included in the six-month agenda. The embassy of the country holding the Presidency in countries of the EaP can also serve as a contact-point and channel for advocacy.

Overall, national ministries in the home capitals of member states, Brussels-based national institutions including the Permanent Representatives, the national staff in the sectoral working groups as well as the embassies of member states in EaP countries can all be approached with your issues.

## 2. 3. The European Commission

As the EC is responsible for initiating and drafting EU policy, it is a key contact for advocates. The European Commission is the executive of the European Union and promotes its general interest. The Commissioners head the various departments or Directorates-General (DGs) which have responsibility for a specific policy area. In addition, Commissioners have their own team of advisers or ‘cabinets’.

Traditionally, the EC works closely together with NGOs and it maintains contacts with them in various ways. It can launch public debates on new policy initiatives through publishing papers and inviting comments and input on them, for example to Review of the European Neighbourhood Policy in 2015 ( see ‘The European Neighbourhood Policy: background’, in section 1). It can maintain regular contacts with NGOs or platforms in certain fields through hearings, as with the platform of

European social NGOs twice a year; or, it can have formalized consultations, like the annual consultation regarding country progress reports.

## Directorate General Neighbourhood and Enlargement

The most relevant DG is the Directorate General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR) responsible for the EU Enlargement and Neighbourhood policy. Although the EC does not play a formal role in association agreement negotiations, it does play a crucial role as a facilitator. Hence, DG NEAR is a key department with regard to making effective use of the incentive of EU relations to consolidate the reform of the minority protection regime in any EaP country.

In DG NEAR, your most important advocacy target is the Directorate Neighbourhood East (Directorate C). In this Directorate, you might arrange meetings with C.1 Department, which is responsible for bilateral relations, or C.2 Department, which is responsible for regional programmes. If your issue concerns one EaP country, for example if a group of minority activists from Georgia pays an advocacy visit to Brussels, you will target officers in C.1 Department. For issues concerning more EaP countries, such as the implementation of anti-discrimination laws across the region, this is the concern of the C.2 Department.

## Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development

The Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO) is responsible for EU external policies and development cooperation policies with third countries. The most relevant department for EaP minority activists is the Human Rights, Gender, Democratic Governance Department (B.1) under Directorate B: Human Development and Migration. The department covers thematic issues such as gender, human rights, minority rights, equality policy, non-discrimination, governance and the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR).

The Civil Society, Local Authorities Department (B.2) is responsible for contacts with civil society and local authorities. If you have joint projects or activities with municipalities in minority regions this department is the most relevant one to turn to. DG DEVCO both responsible for both policy and funding issues in relation to all third countries outside the EU.

## Testimony:

Ukrainian minority organizations meet Dirk Schuebel, Head of Unit, and Boguslav Gertruda, Desk Officer for Ukraine, European External Action Service (EEAS) in Brussels, June 2016



Credit: MRG

'My aim in coming to these meetings was to inform the EC about current political developments regarding the situation of Roma in Ukraine, especially the review and monitoring of the Roma National Action Plan encouraged by the EU. A Roma monitoring group revised the implementation of the Roma Action Plan and published a report, and we wanted to share our findings with the EC. The best way seemed to be through personal meetings with EEAS and DG NEAR. At the meeting, we introduced our five advocacy points based on the report's recommendations and we also talked about the new Roma coalition 'Strategy 2020' that had recently been established, and the new inter-ministerial commission on implementation of the Roma National Action Plan.

Dirk Schuebel found the information very useful and he promised to process the information and our report through EC channels. We also agreed that he will visit our centre in Odessa in a couple of weeks when he is on his next visit to Ukraine.'

**Volodymyr Kondur, Deputy-Chair, Roma Human Rights Centre, Odessa, Ukraine**

## 2. 4. European External Action Service

The EEAS is the EU's diplomatic service. It helps the EU's foreign affairs chief – the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy – carry out the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy.

The most relevant department for EaP countries is Directorate III B – Russia, Eastern Partnership, Central Asia, Regional Cooperation and OSCE.

This Directorate is under Geographical, Multilateral and Global Affairs Departments / MD III – Europe and Central Asia. Directorate III B: Russia, Eastern Partnership, Central Asia, Regional Cooperation and OSCE is divided into regional cooperation (III.B.1) and bilateral cooperation (III.B.2). The bilateral department is concerned with any issue that is relevant to your country in relation to the EU while the regional department deals with issues regarding the entire EaP region.

The second relevant department in EEAS is MD VI: Global and Multilateral Issues Human Rights and Democracy (Directorate IV/A). This department is under Geographical, Multilateral and Global Affairs Departments. This department would be open to hearing about your issues regarding general human rights violations, human rights policies in your country such as human rights action plans, anti-discrimination policies, laws on minorities, the situation of minorities in your country, reports, surveys regarding minorities, and EU human rights instruments such as the EIDHR programmes and their implementation. So if, for example, you participate in an EIDHR EU-funded programme or have up-to-date data on the situation of minorities in your country, this department will be your first contact point.

### How to engage EC in your advocacy effort:

- Meet with the relevant Heads of Unit or country desk-officers in Brussels and brief them about your issues:
  - Identify the relevant department in DG NEAR and EEAS.
  - Arrange meetings with key officials in DG NEAR and EEAS. They are civil servants and very open to personal meetings in Brussels. Look for their email and phone number on 'Who is Who in the EU' and contact directly. They will respond in a week and offer you an appointment.
  - When you ask for appointments: introduce your organization, specify the purpose of your visit, send materials in advance, be brief and straight to the point, and say what you want from them.

- For the visits: set a maximum of three advocacy messages you want to raise, write and outline of your speech in advance, bring your business cards and leaflets, prepare data and figures about your minority (population, poverty data, access to health and education data, recent media news, etc.).
  - Write a follow up email asking for a response, repeating the issues you agreed on or asking for more contacts or information.
  - Although personal contact and face-to-face advocacy are important, effective advocacy does not necessarily require a permanent presence in Brussels. You can send your position papers, comments or recommendations to the relevant EC officials via email or post. Make sure, you submit the information in question to the EU Delegation and relevant government officials in your country as well.
- Give input to the annual progress reports:  
The EC issues the annual Progress Report in March each year.<sup>7</sup> The reports are based on wide consultation with the countries' relevant ministries, key stakeholders and NGOs. The information is collected by the Delegations and the EEAS. Your information will be channelled most effectively if you convey your information using both. The EEAS opens consultation (mainly online platform) in early September every year. You have to look for this channel either on EEAS website or the Civil Society Forum newsletter. When using the online platform, you just have to compile a short text (a maximum of 5 pages including recommendations) and send it to them. No specific format or template required. You can also reinforce this written submission through personal meetings with EEAS officers or by sending the information to the EU Delegation in your country and posting it on your organization website.
- Send your shadow reports, position papers and written interventions prepared for intergovernmental organizations, e.g. UN treaty bodies or the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM) Advisory Committee, to your contacts.
- Invite the relevant officials to some of your activities, if you organize events in Brussels, especially if they are funded by the EC. They often deliver presentations, participate in debates or in NGOs' trainings, as needed.
- Find out when Commissioners will be visiting your country and try to organize a meeting with them. Your national contacts could help you make an appointment or, if this is not possible, ask the local EU Delegation or your Brussels-based contacts, including EC officials or MEPs, to help you with this.

**Remember:** your issue or human rights issue is one of hundreds of issues on the agenda of the officer you meet with. You are competing for their attention for your problem. The key to success is to (a) be up to date regarding political developments regarding your country and the EU, (b) use evidence, data and figures, and (c) be brief and informative.

## 2. 5. The Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum

The EaP Civil Society Forum is the main consultation forum for dialogue between the EU institutions and civil society in the EaP countries. The EaP Civil Society Forum is a unique multi-layered regional civil society platform aimed at promoting European integration, and facilitating reforms and democratic transformations in the six EaP countries. It provides a forum for exchange and consultation, allocates grants for members and also distributes information about the EaP. The forum works in four thematic working groups:

- (1) WG1: Democracy, human rights, good governance and stability
- (2) WG2: Economic integration and convergence with EU policies
- (3) WG3: Environment, climate change and energy security
- (4) WG4: Contacts between people

Their website, one of the first reference points for civil society in the region, is in Russian and English (<http://eap-csf.eu/>).

The Civil Society Forum has two main access points for minority activists:

The first is the Civil Society Forum Annual Assembly, which provides the opportunity to be a participant in the forum. You will be entitled to vote on key decisions and recommendations to the EU. This is a fully funded opportunity for activists to participate and contribute to the forum. You have to apply for participant status in the assembly each year. The application is open from March to April and is advertised on the forum website and in the newsletter. If you fill out an application, the Forum Steering Committee and other bodies will select and approve your participation based on a number of criteria.

Once you are selected, you should prepare any material necessary for your participation. Usually the forums are held in November each year in one of the EaP countries. The assemblies are huge forums, with more than 200 participants, several working groups and side events. <http://eap-csf.eu/en/annual-csf-assemblies/assembly-2015/>

Second, each EaP country has its own National Platform to unite civil society in the country and channel its voice toward the EU. National Platforms have their own



regulation, but if your organization is active in European matters, your application for membership will be accepted. National Platforms are key actors in consultations between the EU and domestic civil society, and have great influence, both on the EU and on your country's policies. National Platform coordinators facilitate the platforms' work. Your organization could feed information into National Platform work, recommendations and meetings with the EU regarding EU policies, Action Plans and the monitoring of Association Agreements.

### **How to engage the EaP Civil Society Forum in your advocacy effort:**

- Apply to and participate in the EaP Civil Society Forum annual assemblies.
- Actively participate in your country's National Platform work to have your say about the relations between the EU and your country, and to influence national policies.
- Actively participate in your working group's work throughout the year.

Most probably you will engage with WG1: Human Rights or WG4: Contacts between people. A specific sub-group on anti-discrimination and minorities was established in 2014, so you might want to join this group work. They develop their annual action plan every year. Join in with your events, reports and activities, and inform the other members. Also you can organize events in the sub-group framework or ask for assistance from the working group coordinators. Coordinators' contacts are available at:

<http://eap-csf.eu/en/working-groups/wg1-democracy-human-rights/>  
<http://eap-csf.eu/en/working-groups/wg4-contacts-between-people/>

- Send your shadow reports, position papers and written interventions to the Secretariat of the Civil Society Forum.
- Organize events in Brussels or in the Civil Society Forum Assemblies with forum support.
- Use the Civil Society Forum to channel your message to EU decision-makers and to create alliances among other civil society organizations.

## Testimony:

Eastern Partnership Minorities Network representatives and first-time participants in the Civil Society Forum Annual Assembly in Chisinau, Moldova, October 2013



Credit: MRG

‘I have been working for Yezidi minority’s rights and well-being for years. My community suffers from multiple discrimination and poverty in Armenia. I joined the network to get connected with other minorities and find solutions for our issues together. I participated at the 5th Civil Society Forum in Chisinau for the first time in 2013 to share my community experience and reach out to NGOs and decision-makers from the region.’

**Boris Tamoyan, Sinjar Yezidi National Union, Armenia**

## 2. 6. EU Delegations in EaP countries

The EU has Delegations in all capitals of EaP countries. EU Delegations implement the EU's foreign policies, liaise with key stakeholders and monitor the implementation of Association Agreements in the host country. The Delegations analyse and report to Brussels on the developments in their host countries. Also, the Delegations are in charge of development aid administration and building contacts with local partners, in particular with civil society.

Each Delegation has special department dealing with politics, civil society and human rights. In EaP countries they are:

- Armenia – Political, Economic, Press and Information Section  
(current head: Dr Dirk Lorenz)
- Azerbaijan – Political, Economics and Press & Information Section  
(current head: Toralf Pilz)
- Georgia – Political, Press and Information Section (current head: Radosław Darski)
- Moldova – Political and Economic Section (current head: Wicher Slagter)
- Ukraine – Political Section (current head: Hannes Schreiber)

Respective sections are in charge of political dialogue in general and relations with civil society in particular. They often hold conferences and other events devoted to particular policy issues, and employees of these sections are also responsible for the administration of aid, or grant programmes.

Human rights norms in general and minorities' rights in particular are one of the cornerstones of EU policy. The EU is bound by UN treaties and regional legislation on human rights. Thus promotion of human rights standards in the neighbourhood is one of the priorities of EU Delegations. This makes heads of the EU Delegations and heads of political sections key stakeholders for advocacy efforts of civil society organizations. Also, the Delegations can be partners for NGOs in transmitting the message of local civil societies to the European leadership.

When addressing EU Delegations it is important to keep in mind that the Delegations in EaP countries are responsible for assessing the progress made towards the objectives of the Action Plans and Association Agendas. Minority rights issues constitute a part of the democracy and good governance section of the Association Agreement. This means that if you are able to align your advocacy issue with the Association Agenda it will get more attention from the representatives of the Delegation. Each year, the

## Testimony:

Moldovan minority organizations meet HE Ambassador Tapiola, EU Delegation in Moldova, October 2015



Credit: MRG

‘One of the most important and impressive meetings was the one with HE Ambassador Tapiola, EU Delegation in Moldova. HE Ambassador met us in the EU Delegation premises and it was very remarkable for everyone. He presented recent EU–Moldova developments, the support offered by the EU for Moldovan development, including civil society engagement. He appreciated our project’s initiative to set a platform for dialogue with national and international decision-makers and was pleased to acknowledge the high level of participants’ knowledge about EU matters. The project beneficiaries asked questions of interest to them, prepared and discussed well ahead in the online Facebook group, ranging from energy security to the territorial integrity of the state. As the meeting was before the elections, the questions related to the agenda for the future and continuation of the pro-European vector was part of the discussion.’

**Dimitry Lecartev, Association of Ukrainian Youth in Moldova ‘Zlagoda’**

Delegation prepares the progress report and you can provide the officers with necessary information, or engage in the preparation of the report. The government of your country is interested in achieving the progress, which gives you additional leverage to getting your issue resolved.

The main source of support for the activities of NGOs aimed at human rights protection or promotion comes through the European Instrument for Democracy and Human

Rights (EIDHR), which has financed a wide variety of projects, both through large projects managed from Brussels and through the micro-projects which are managed directly by the EU Delegations. Recurring themes in the EIDHR programme have been protection of the rights of vulnerable groups of population (children, women, elderly people, victims of domestic violence, ethnic minorities, Internally Displaced People). You can monitor the calls for proposals from EIDHR published at Delegations' websites and apply for funding. Also, you can reach out to the managers in your local Delegation and explain that your issue is aligned with EIDHR objectives and ask for cooperation.

### How to engage the EU Delegation in your advocacy effort:

- Identify your issue.
- Check whether it falls within Association Agreement agenda or ENP priority.
- Write letter to the head of the Delegation and/or the head of the political section specifying the link between your issue and European policy.
- Make a follow-up call asking for response and if there are any activities (conferences, workshops, reports) aligned with your topic.
- Suggest how you can contribute to the EU Delegation's work on the topic.
- Schedule a meeting with officers working on your topic and provide them with information from the field and policy suggestions.
- Find out what public events are on the schedule of the EU Delegation in your country, attend the events and establish contacts with responsible managers.
- EU Delegations provide the bulk of information in *regular reports* to DG Enlargement which then compiles the reports. It is therefore essential that you make sure that you are involved in the consultations prior to the release of country reports. Forward your feedback on the actual regular report to the relevant EC staff, together with your concrete recommendations for its improvement, if this is the case.
- Send your shadow reports, position papers and written interventions prepared for intergovernmental organizations, such as UN treaty bodies or the FCNM Advisory Committee, to your contacts.
- Invite the relevant officials to some of your activities, especially if they are funded by the EC. They often deliver presentations, participate in debates or attend trainings, as needed.
- If you find that the relevant EC official is not familiar with minority rights and the situation of minorities in your country, invite him/her to the trainings organized by your organization or another NGO or INGO to deliver a presentation and get acquainted with minority representatives.

**Remember:** your project is one of hundreds of issues on the agenda of the EU Delegation in your country. You are competing for attention to your problem. The key to success is to get manager motivated. This can be done by:

- demonstrating that your case is outstanding and important (especially grave violation of human rights; violation of *jus cogens* norms – that is, mass atrocity committed by the government; threat to people’s lives);
- demonstrating that the activity of your organization is able to advance a project which the EU is involved in anyway (i.e. providing information or analysis of an issue on which EU officials have to report or hold negotiations with government of your country).

## 2. 7. Embassies of EU member states in EaP countries

Besides the EU Delegations, embassies of EU member states are an important gateway to European policy. Traditionally, the most active embassies engaged in human rights are the embassies of Germany, Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Finland and Hungary. These embassies usually have departments working on political and human rights issues. However, as minority rights is not part of the *EU legislation* and the member states’ positions on and support for this issue can differ significantly, it is important that to carry out advocacy with embassies strategically relevant to your issue. Sometimes they can give out small grants. Embassies are also connected to the development agencies of their countries, for example, SIDA in Sweden and GTZ, Fridrich Ebert Stiftung and so on in Germany.

### How to engage the embassy of EU member states in your advocacy effort:

- Identify your issue and see if it can be aligned with the embassy’s projects in your country.
- Find out the name of responsible officer.
- Invite relevant staff from embassies to your events. This can raise your profile but also you can ask the invitees to deliver presentations on their country’s minority-related experiences.
- Write him/her an email describing your issue and show how the embassy’s project can benefit from cooperation with your organization, or how your problem falls within the policy priorities of the embassy in your country.
- Ask if the embassy runs small grants projects on your topic.
- Analyse the priorities of foreign policy of this country. Are human rights one of the priorities for this country? Do they care more about development (then maybe you can point to the need for development of rural indigenous communities).
- The embassy can provide you with contacts you need. They can get you the contact information of an MEP you wish to meet in the home capital or they can provide you with a list of organizations which deal with minority issues or the contact information of minority organizations.

# 3. Resources and contacts for advocacy activists

## International NGOs and donors supporting minority activities

Eastern Partnership Minorities Network (EaPMN) [www.minorities-network.org](http://www.minorities-network.org)

Minority Rights Group International (MRG) [www.minorityrights.org](http://www.minorityrights.org)

King Baudouin Foundation (KBF) [www.kbs-frb.be](http://www.kbs-frb.be)

European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI) [www.ecmi.de](http://www.ecmi.de)

Open Society Institute [www.soros.org](http://www.soros.org)

European Roma Information Office (ERIO) [www.erionet.org/](http://www.erionet.org/)

International Partnership for Human Rights (IPHR) [www.iphronline.org](http://www.iphronline.org)

## European NGO networks

ENAR (European Network against Racism), a coalition of about 600 ENGOs working to combat racism in all the EU member states [www.enar-eu.org](http://www.enar-eu.org)

HRDN (Human Rights Democracy Network), an informal grouping of a large number of human rights NGOs working at the European level, including Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch <http://www.hrdn.eu/>

CONCORD, a European NGO confederation for relief and development consisting of 10 international networks and 18 national associations from the European member states and the candidate countries, representing altogether about 1200 NGOs [www.concordeurope.org/](http://www.concordeurope.org/)

## Relevant contacts

The Electronic Directory of the European Institutions (EU Who's who)  
<http://europa.eu/whoiswho/whoiswho.html>

## EU Delegations

The EU has delegations in 118 countries, just as states have embassies abroad. Delegations are mainly in charge of promoting European interests throughout the world, but they also play a key role in the implementation of external assistance.

### Delegation of the European Union to Armenia

21 Frik Street, Yerevan 0002, Armenia  
Entrance for visitors: Proshyan Street

Telephone: +374 (10) 54 64 94 ■ Fax: +374 (10) 54 64 95  
Email: [Delegation-Armenia@eeas.europa.eu](mailto:Delegation-Armenia@eeas.europa.eu)

### Delegation of the European Union to Azerbaijan

11th floor, 90A Nizami Street, Landmark III, Baku

Telephone: (+994-12) 497 20 63 ■ Fax: (+994-12) 497 20 69  
Email: [Delegation-Azerbaijan@eeas.europa.eu](mailto:Delegation-Azerbaijan@eeas.europa.eu)

### Delegation of the European Union to Belarus

34A/2 Engels Street, 220030 Minsk  
Republic of Belarus

Telephone: +375 (17) 328 66 13 ■ Fax: +375 (17) 2891281  
Email: [delegation-belarus@eeas.europa.eu](mailto:delegation-belarus@eeas.europa.eu)  
[delegation-belarus-press@eeas.europa.eu](mailto:delegation-belarus-press@eeas.europa.eu) (Press & Information)  
<http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/belarus>



## Delegation of the European Union in the Republic of Georgia

38 Nino Chkheidze Street, Tbilisi, 0102 Georgia

Telephone: (995 32) 294 37 63 / 294 37 69 ■ Fax: (995 32) 294 37 68

Email: [Delegation-Georgia@eeas.europa.eu](mailto:Delegation-Georgia@eeas.europa.eu)

## Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Moldova

12 Kogălniceanu Street, MD-2001 Chişinău  
Republic of Moldova

Tel : (+373 22) 505210 ■ Fax: (+373 22) 272622

Email: [Delegation-Moldova@eeas.europa.eu](mailto:Delegation-Moldova@eeas.europa.eu)

## Delegation of the European Union to Ukraine

101 Volodymyrska Street, Kyiv, 01033 Ukraine

Telephone: +380 (44) 390 8010

Email: [delegation-ukraine@eeas.europa.eu](mailto:delegation-ukraine@eeas.europa.eu)

## Directorate General for Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policy (DG NEAR)

European Commission, DG NEAR, Rue de la Loi 15, B-1049 Brussels

Tel: + 32 229-91111

Website: <http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/>

See ‘Who is who in the EU’: <http://europa.eu/whoiswho/whoiswho.html> to find persons in DG NEAR (to send an email to a specific person in the EC, use the following email address format: lastname@cee.eu.int).

DG NEAR is divided into four directorates:

Directorate A ‘Strategy and Turkey’ ■ Directorate B ‘Neighbourhood South’

Directorate C ‘Neighbourhood East’ ■ Directorate D ‘Western Balkans’

## Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO)

Rue Joseph II 59/Josef II-straat 59, 1049 Bruxelles/Brussels  
Belgium

Tel: +32 229-65802 / 229-93520

Website: <http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/>

## European External Action Service (EEAS)

European Commission, Rond Point Schuman 9A, B-1046 Brussels

Tel: +32 2584-1111

Website: <http://eeas.europa.eu>

See 'Who is who in the EU' <http://europa.eu/whoiswho/whoiswho.html> to find people in the European Commission. (to send an email to a specific person in the EC, use the following email address format: lastname@cee.eu.int).

In EEAS, the relevant department to the Eastern Partnership:

[EEAS – European External Action Service /Geographical, Multilateral and Global Affairs Departments / MD III – Europe and Central Asia / Directorate III B – Russia, Eastern Partnership, Central Asia, Regional Cooperation and OSCE](#)

## European Parliament

European Parliament, The Secretariat, Rue Wiertz, B-1047 Brussels, Belgium

Tel: +32 2 284 21 11 ■ Fax: +32 2 284 90 75

Website: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/portal/en>

See <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/parliamentary-committees.html>

for a list of committees and their members (to send an email to an MEP, use the following email address format: firstinitiallastname@europarl.eu.int).

## Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum

Secretariat of the Steering Committee of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum  
Rue de l'Industrie 10, 1000 Brussels

tel: +32 2 893 25 85

[communications@eap-csf.eu](mailto:communications@eap-csf.eu)

Website: <http://eap-csf.eu/>

Working groups' coordinators:

<http://eap-csf.eu/en/working-groups/wg1-democracy-human-rights/>

<http://eap-csf.eu/en/working-groups/wg4-contacts-between-people/>

## Notes

- 1 Adapted from the Capotorti definition. See, Study on the Rights of Persons belonging to Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, UN Doc.E/CN.4/Sub.2/384/Add.1-7 (1977).
- 2 The term 'advocacy' is often used interchangeably with the terms 'campaigning' or 'lobbying'. In this section, 'advocacy' is used as a more general term, referring more to a methodology that includes methods like lobbying and campaigning. In this context, 'lobbying' is defined as influencing decision-makers through direct, private communication. Campaigning is speaking publicly on an issue with a view to generating a response from the wider public, which in turn puts pressure on decision-makers.
- 3 This section is based on Making It Work: Minority Rights Advocacy in the EU: A Guide for NGOs in Southeast Europe, London, MRG, 2006.
- 4 Some of the recommended strategies are based on the following publications: Burson-Marsteller and BKSJ, The Definitive Guide to Lobbying the European Institutions, Spring 2005 and EUlobby.net, The Lobby Radar, vol.1, no.2, December 2004.
- 5 The 16 countries are: Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia and Ukraine.
- 6 See: EU External Action, 'ENP Review: stronger partnerships for a stronger neighbourhood', 17 Nov. 2015, available at: [http://eeas.europa.eu/top\\_stories/2015/181115\\_enp\\_review\\_en.htm](http://eeas.europa.eu/top_stories/2015/181115_enp_review_en.htm) (accessed 2 March 2016).
- 7 See: [http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/documents/progress-reports/index\\_en.htm](http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/documents/progress-reports/index_en.htm)

# working to secure the rights of minorities and indigenous peoples

minority  
rights  
group  
europe

**Minority Rights Advocacy in the EU:**  
A Guide for NGOs in Eastern Partnership countries

ISBN 978-1-907919-77-0

Copies of this guide are available online at  
[www.minorityrights.org](http://www.minorityrights.org) and [www.minorities-network.org](http://www.minorities-network.org)

Copies can also be obtained from Minority Rights Group Europe Budapest office. Address: 68 Ulloi ut,  
Budapest 1082, Hungary.