



Side event of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum

Panel discussion: "What the Civil Society can do about visas? Facilitation and liberalisation of the EU visa policy towards the Eastern Partnership: NGO advocacy strategies."

29th of November 2011

17:15-19.00

**Polonez Hotel, 36 Niepodległości Str.
Poznań, Poland**

Visa facilitation and liberalisation is both a technical and political process. On the one hand, in order to achieve visa-free travel between the EU and its Eastern neighbours, strict technical criteria must be met by the EaP states. Yet, there should also be ample political will - both on the part of the EaP states to introduce the necessary yet costly and burdensome reforms, as well as the EU states, which need to acknowledge the changes and take the decision to lift the barriers. Civil society has been involved for a number of years in boosting the pace of reforms as well as creating favourable political climate for visa liberalisation.

During this panel discussion we would like to share and discuss different approaches and strategies used by non-governmental organisations advocating the lifting of visa barriers. Our discussion should focus on various forms of advocacy activities aiming at lifting the visa barriers conducted by non-governmental organisations from various parts of Europe. After a brief introduction of the EU visa policy towards the EaP states, representatives of different organisations will present various approaches and strategies, tell about their actions and campaigns, show materials and share their experiences.

We hope that this discussion will serve as an inspiration for organisations willing to get engaged in work on liberalisation of visa policy. It should also become a springboard for ideas for new common projects as well as provide practical advice on how to conduct various projects, actions and campaigns.

Panel discussion:

Andreas Metz, Committee on Eastern European Economic Relations, Germany

Iryna Sushko, Europe without Barriers, Ukraine

Jeff Lovitt, PASOS, Czech Republic

Miroslava Jelacic, Group 484, Serbia

Oleksandr Sushko, Institute for Euro-Atlantic Cooperation, Ukraine

Olga Stuzhinskaya, Office for Democratic Belarus, Belgium

Vadzim Vileita, ByWatch, Lithuania

moderator: Joanna Fomina, the Stefan Batory Foundation, Poland

The debate will be held in English.

The information about the event: Joanna Fomina, jfomina@batory.org.pl



Side event under the official patronage of:



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