

Welcome to the
CSO Newsletter

January 2024

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Foreword

**Dear reader,
Happy New Year and welcome to the CSO Newsletter!**

In this issue we reflect on our activity at the end of 2023, namely our support for Ukraine and Ukrainian refugees, news from COP28 and the EBRD President's visit to Türkiye's earthquake zone. In light of the International Day of People with Disabilities, we also reflect on the EBRD's internal and external work to support people with disabilities.

Last year was another challenging one for civil society organisations (CSOs) across our regions.

CSOs navigated several crises and promoted social justice – from advocating for human rights to addressing environmental concerns, they remain key agents of change. Their ability to mobilise communities, influence policies and hold governments accountable contributes significantly to the ongoing development and resilience of societies in the face of crises.

Looking ahead to the first months of 2024, we are happy to announce the election results for

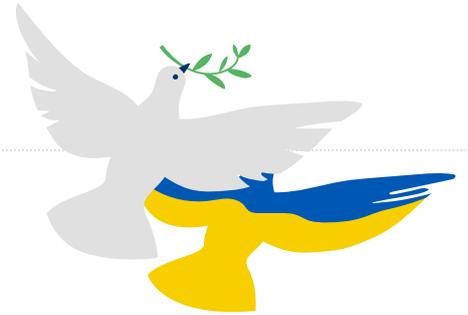
the new CSO Steering Committee, which will act as an additional platform for civil society engagement.

We are also looking forward to finalising our new approach to civil society engagement later this year.

Lastly, we provide an update on the Civil Society Programme for the 2024 EBRD Annual Meeting in Armenia in May.

Happy reading!
The CSE team

POLICY ACTIVITY



Continuing our support for Ukraine

Our unwavering support for Ukraine continues as the war enters its second year.

In October 2023 our Environment and Sustainability Department brought together a group of key occupational health and safety stakeholders to identify opportunities to increase the protection of Ukrainian workers during the war.

The event included participants from private-sector businesses, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), trade unions and occupational health and safety associations across sectors. Ukrainian participants, who joined remotely, included representatives from the Ministry of Social Policy, Ministry of Economy, State Labour Inspectorate, State Emergency Service and the president of trade union PROFBUD.

Follow-up actions agreed during the workshop included organising a virtual workshop with IOSH Rural Industries Group and knowledge-sharing activities with experts from the United Kingdom, who will hold workshops for businesses, municipalities and local consultants on how to manage materials that contain asbestos.

In November 2023 we published a short documentary that follows the stories of four Ukrainian refugees who have settled in Croatia, eager to rebuild their lives and contribute to their new communities. In early 2023 the EBRD's Civil Society Engagement team – in partnership with the SVOJA Association and the Solidarna Foundation, and with funding from the TaiwanBusiness-EBRD Technical Cooperation Fund – initiated a project targeting the broader participation of Ukrainian refugees in the labour market, with a focus on the private sector.

At around the same time, the Bank also approved additional assignments under its human capital response programme for Ukraine. The programme aims to deliver support that is aligned with employers' most pressing human capital needs.

Lastly, at the end of 2023 our shareholders approved a resolution to increase the Bank's paid-in capital by €4 billion. The additional capital will help to provide significant and sustained investment for Ukraine and support EBRD priorities across all our regions.



Stand
with
Ukraine

WATCH THE DOCUMENTARY



READ ABOUT THE CAPITAL INCREASE



International Day of People with Disabilities

Sunday 3 December marked International Day of People with Disabilities. We are committed to diversity and inclusion throughout all our internal practices and financing operations at the EBRD.

The Bank's employee disAbility Network has been running since 2018. It aims to create an inclusive and accessible work environment that encourages innovation and strengthens morale. We embrace the inclusion of people with disabilities and we believe diverse teams drive creativity.

We also work to support the economic integration of people with disabilities outside the Bank. In Ukraine, for example, we are working with several companies to develop professional reintegration programmes for war veterans returning to work, including those with disabilities and psychological injuries.

We also support firms in the food retail, garment manufacturing and airport sectors of other economies to diversify their workforces through best practices for recruiting, engaging and integrating workers with disabilities.



The EBRD's technical support programmes aim to benefit hundreds of workers and set a precedent for best practices across a range of economic activities. They do this by providing holistic assistance to employers, workers and their communities, helping to establish inclusive and trauma-informed human resources practices and mitigate risk through clinically informed best practices.

POLICY ACTIVITY

The EBRD President visits Türkiye



Türkiye was struck by devastating earthquakes in 2023. During her recent visit to the country, EBRD President Odile Renaud-Basso visited the earthquake-affected region and witnessed the extensive destruction and immense needs. The earthquake exacerbated challenges in the south-eastern region, affecting education, employment, supply chains and housing.

The President's meetings with municipalities and small and medium-sized enterprises revealed the growing infrastructure demands and ongoing struggles for recovery. The visit to temporary living spaces underscored the urgent need for sustained donor support, as NGOs highlighted a decrease in international funding amid persistent challenges in maintaining normality.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all the stakeholders involved, particularly the NGOs, whose unwavering commitment is a lifeline to the affected communities.

The EBRD and Bloomberg Philanthropies to work together



During COP28, the EBRD announced its partnership with Bloomberg Philanthropies.

This partnership will work to advance the phasing out of coal and the mobilisation of capital for the clean energy transition across the Western Balkans and the southern and eastern Mediterranean region.

Together, the EBRD and Bloomberg Philanthropies will provide holistic investment and policy support, as well as technical assistance for a rapid and just transition from coal to clean energy sources.

**FIND OUT MORE ABOUT
THE PARTNERSHIP**



Civil Society Programme at the EBRD Annual Meeting 2024



Join us for the Civil Society Programme at the 2024 EBRD Annual Meeting from 14 to 16 May in Yerevan, Armenia. This year, the theme of the Business Forum is “Delivering impact together”.

The 2024 Civil Society Programme, which will take place in hybrid format, is designed to provide an opportunity for dialogue between civil society stakeholders and the EBRD Board of Directors, the President, senior management and staff.

The Civil Society Programme will feature, among other things:

- the Board of Directors' meeting with CSOs
- the EBRD President's meeting with CSOs
- a high-level open panel
- a CSO-led panel.

More information will be available in February. Stay tuned and check out our social media accounts.

New CSO Steering Committee announced



At the end of 2023, we completed the selection process for the new [CSO Steering Committee](#).

The [new members](#) were announced in January 2024 and include CEE Bankwatch Network, the Center for International Private Enterprise, Concordia Romania, the Georgian Society of Nature Explorers “Orchis”, the Eastern Alliance for Safe and Sustainable Transport, the International Accountability Project, the Women Entrepreneurs Association of Türkiye (KADIGER), MENA Fem, Movegreen, the Open Contacting Partnership, Oxfam Great Britain, Save the Children and Transparency International Ukraine.

The Steering Committee will act as a platform for enhanced dialogue and collaboration between the EBRD and civil societies.

OVERVIEW OF CSE ACTIVITY

The CSE team had held the following activities as of 31 December 2023:

- 20** country/sector strategy consultation meetings
- 12** presidential CSO meetings
- 11** senior management CSO meetings
- 8** events/external activities
- 6** Board meetings with CSOs

EBRD PUBLICATIONS



EBRD LAUNCHES NEW ENERGY SECTOR STRATEGY



EBRD 2023 TRANSITION REPORT



EBRD ADOPTS NEW APPROACH TO NATURE



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LOOKING AHEAD



- Our **Morocco country strategy consultation** will run until 26 February 2024.
- Our **current and upcoming country and sector strategies** will be available on our dedicated consultation page.

HAVE YOUR SAY

Review our open consultations



ACCESS PROJECT INFORMATION



Environmental and Social Policy and Access to Information Policy consultation



NEW COUNTRY STRATEGY FOR SERBIA



NEW COUNTRY STRATEGY FOR SLOVAK REPUBLIC



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