

ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE REGIONAL NETWORK FOR ACCESSION - ECRAN

MEETING REPORT

Activity 1.1

REGIONAL PLANNING AND CAPACITY BUILDING MEETING 2015

Date: June 02 – 05, 2015

Hotel: Park Inn by Radisson Brussels Midi

Place Marcel Broodthaers 3, B-1060 Brussels, Belgium

Brussels



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List of abbreviations

AM	Annual Meeting
CAN	Climate Action Network
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
EC	European Commission
ECF	Environment and Climate Forum
ECRAN	Environment and Climate Regional Accession Network
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
GW	Green Week
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
RM	Regional Meeting
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
PM	Preparatory Meeting
WP	Work Plan



I. Background/Rationale

Regional Meeting provided platform to discuss outcomes of Environment and Climate Forum (ECF) activities/events and to evaluate involvement of the civil society in the approximation process (with the focus on environment and climate area). The meeting also served as a platform for dialogue of the civil society with the representative of the European Commission. In addition, space was allocated for work plan update, common work on the ECF outcomes and discussions on the future of the EU – NGO dialogue.

The meeting was organised back-to-back with 2015 Green Week (GW), providing ECF NGOs with the opportunity to participate at the selected GW sessions and use the participation at the event for further capacities development, knowledge and know-how gathering, as well as for networking with other stakeholders.

II. Objectives of the meeting

Key objectives of the meeting were:

- (i) To evaluate implemented, on-going and planned activities and provide feedback for the ECF team and individual NGOs (i.e., preparatory meetings, internal cooperation within the network, participation at ECRAN work groups);
- (ii) To discuss progress in development of the key ECF related materials and plans (i.e., NGO position on the Progress Report, agenda for upcoming Annual Meeting and related materials);
- (iii) To support regional and international networking of the ECF NGO members through participation at the Green Week 2015, the biggest annual conference on European environment policy.

Participants: Representatives of 21 NGOs selected for ECF-ECRAN, representative of the European Commission, ECF Support Team and ECRAN experts.

The achieved results of the meeting were the following:

- Increased knowledge base, capacities and networking of the ECF NGOs through active participation at the Green Week 2015;
- Development of the outline for upcoming training modules;
- Inputs for the 2nd Annual Meeting agenda (September/October 2015);
- Outline and roadmap for *2015 NGO Position Document on the country Progress Reports*;
- Draft version of *Points for the Commissioner* document;
- Endorsed Work Plan for 2015/2016.



III. Agenda and sessions

Day 1: June 2, 2015

<p>Registration, Opening, agenda</p> <p>9:30-10:00</p>	<p>The meeting started by presentation and adoption of the agenda, short introduction of the participants and by update on the recent development and activities within the ECRAN/ECF project.</p> <p>The activities in the recent period were based on the Work Plan and its 3 main areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Public Participation in the EU accession process; (2) NGO Capacities Development; and (3) Effective Dialogue at the national and regional level. <p>Activities/Tasks implemented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ECF has been successfully progressing as a horizontal component of ECRAN - Focus is on planning and implementation of the activities at the regional and national level; - 2014 Annual Meeting (building on the outcomes of the 1st Round of in-country Preparatory Meetings); ▪ Two training modules delivered: 1st Training Module (Technical aspects of the EU accession process: Improving the knowledge base on scope and opportunities for civil society involvement), 2nd Training Module (Climate Change); ▪ Organisation of the 2nd Round of in-country Preparatory Meetings (April – May 2015). <p>In the second part of the opening session upcoming tasks/issues were outlined:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Organisation of Regional ECF meeting (back to back with 2015 Green Week, June 2-5, 2015) with the objective to provide feedback to activities and update of the WorkPlan; ▪ Input into country progress reports as the main challenge in the upcoming period (ECF will deliver common statement containing country chapters by the end of June 2015); ▪ Improvement of reporting of ECRAN/ECF activities back to other NGOs in the countries involved and to civil society in general; ▪ Initiation of preparatory work for the 2nd Annual Meeting by opening NGO discussion on topics and issues to be presented and discussed - The 2nd Annual Meeting is tentatively scheduled for the last quarter of 2015 ▪ Delivery of 2 remaining training modules, ▪ The ECF NGOs will actively follow the ECRAN activities and together with project team identify and suggest NGO experts for the ECRAN Working Groups events. ▪ Key challenge in the upcoming period: 2nd Annual Meeting
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	<p>Outcome: <i>Agreed agenda and regional meeting approach.</i></p> <p>Deliveries: <i>2 presentations from the opening sessions (Appendix 1 and 2).</i></p>
BLOCK 1: From Preparatory Meetings to Progress Reports, 10:00	<p>NGOs facilitated group work (Andjelka Mihajlov and Richard Filcak – facilitators)</p> <p>Goal: In June 2015, the ECF will facilitate common national positions of the civil society on the achievements in accession process in 2015 (the inputs will be made available to EC and ECRAN experts to support the process of developing the Progress Reports for 2015 for each beneficiary country, except Croatia).</p> <p>The session brought in inputs from 2015 PMs outcomes per country and summary of national and regional points for the ECF position on the 2015 Progress Reports. The main goal of the session was to agree on the template for the country reporting, structure and content of the 2015 NGO position document, as well as a road map, roles and responsibilities.</p>
Block 1, continuation, 11:30	<p>Outcome:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Agreement has been reached that ECF CSOs will coordinate preparation of one document (as presented in Background document) per country, based on the discussion at Preparatory Meetings and further communication between CSOs.</i> ▪ <i>ECF CSOs will collect cases/examples for as many out of the 9 areas of the reports as possible (i.e., Horizontal issues, Air quality, Waste management (including mining waste management), Water quality, Nature protection, Industrial pollution and risk management, Chemicals, Climate change, and Civil Protection).</i> ▪ <i>CSOs should, where possible, focus on public participation aspects relating to the adopted policies and EC directives.</i> ▪ <i>The country chapters will start with overall evaluation for the country progress on the pre-defined scale. The first part is dedicated to general evaluation of the country progress from the NGO perspective, using the leading question: How would you evaluate general situation in your country in terms of progress towards accession? Were there some milestones (positive/negative) recently reported? Name and describe internal (i.e., in the country) and external (i.e., EU, global, regional) factor having influence on the progress/regress.</i> <p>Deliveries: (1) Presentation on Progress Reports process and opportunities, (2) <i>Reporting template for NGOs (Appendix 3 and 4).</i></p>

BLOCK 2: Building blocks for the 2015 Annual Meeting, 14:00	<p>The group work focused on the topics and elements to be discussed and presented at the 2015 Annual Meeting.</p> <p>Following preparatory steps at the country level, the organisation of Annual Meeting will include at least the following involvement and actions from the NGOs:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Annual Meeting agenda development (August-September 2015); 2) Cooperation in preparation of the meeting materials (e.g., presentations, points for the discussion with DG ENV and DG Climate, case studies to be
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	<p>presented, points for Commissioner and other NGO inputs to the discussions development (August-September 2015);</p> <p>3) Organisation and delivery of the meeting in close collaboration with the EC and ECF NGO forum representatives (October/November 2015)</p> <p>Preparation of meeting report and dissemination of information from the Annual Meeting to the broad NGO community and other relevant stakeholders (November/December 2015);</p> <p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Draft outline of topics for the 2015 Annual Meeting; - Draft of the Points for Commissioner document. <p>Additionally, it has been decided, that part of the Annual Meeting will be focused on establishing relations with the European Parliament and will provide space for meeting with DG desk officers of the respective countries. Project team will process outcomes of the session into 1st draft of the Annual Meeting 2015 draft agenda, which will be subsequently consulted with the NGOs and the EC.</p>
<p>BLOCK 3: NGOs Get together Session II, 16:00</p>	<p>The session was devoted to NGOs self-facilitated group work. NGO facilitator has been appointed for each of the groups, focussing on the following discussion topics:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Experience from the ECF so far, NGO expectations from the project follow up. How to optimally use ECF, synergies, drivers and opportunities. Evaluation of progress and challenges. 2. Using ECF as a tool for regional cooperation development, interlinkages with other NGO activities. Preparation of topics to be discussed with the EC planned for day 4 of the Regional Meeting. <p>Outcome: <i>The session was aimed for strengthening role of the NGOs in the ECF self-management. The outcomes of the session were presented on Friday at the meeting with the EC.</i></p>
<p>ECF and 2015 Green Week, 17:00</p>	<p>Green Week 2015 Nature – our health, our wealth (The biggest annual conference on European environment policy)</p> <p>Main theme: nature and biodiversity.</p> <p>Presentation of Green Week agenda and sessions, linkages with ECF work and expected contribution to NGO activities. NGOs were asked to actively participate at the selected Green Week sessions. Their impressions and experience gained through the participation at the Green Week have been elaborated in detail on day 4 of the Regional Meeting. The agreed guiding criteria for evaluation of the benefits gained through the participation at the selected Green Week sessions were the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Where do you see GW participation contribution/benefits for your/your NGO work?</i> 2. <i>What are the issues, policies, and initiatives having direct/indirect impact on the Western Balkans and Turkey in the upcoming period and is there a role for</i>



	<i>ECF to play?</i>
Wrap up and conclusions, AOB, 17:30	Richard Filcak, facilitator Closing of the day and wrap up of the main conclusions and tasks for the remaining of the meeting.

Day 2: June 3, 2015

Full day participation of ECF NGOs at the 2015 Green Week sessions (according to GW program and individual selection of sessions)

ECF NGOs participated at the following sessions:

- Reconnecting with nature and biodiversity: thinkers and doers;
- The future of nature;
- Investing in nature;
- Nature protects;
- Opening Session: Nature - our health, our wealth;
- Nature in our seas;
- Jobs and growth through green infrastructure;
- Forests for society.

Most of the ECF NGOs attended evening workshop: *From the Iron Curtain to the European Green Belt*. Mr. Toni Vidan (representing Croatian NGOs in the ECF) was one of the panellists for the session and presented projects in the South-East Europe.

Day 3: June 4, 2015

Full day participation of ECF NGOs at the 2015 Green Week sessions (according to GW program and individual selection of sessions)

ECF NGOs participated at the following sessions:

- Farming for diversity;
- Nature & health;
- Is EU nature legislation fit for purpose?
- The support of the Common Agricultural Policy for nature-based tourism
- Linking cultural and natural capital;
- Workshop: Mid-Term Review of the Biodiversity Strategy;
- Innovating cities with nature;
- Natura 2000 as a source of regional identity and values;
- Healthy soils for wealthy Europe;
- Reconciling nature and economic activities;
- Communicating nature & biodiversity: from awareness-raising to citizen engagement;
- Evening events: Best LIFE projects awards.



Day 4: June 5, 2015



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<p>ECF and the 2015 Green Week, 9:30 – 10:30</p>	<p>Richard Filcak, facilitator</p> <p>Round table discussion brought in reflections on the Green Week sessions attended by the ECF representatives. The participants got the opportunity to learn on the new trend in the EU nature and biodiversity development and the implications these new trends would have on the ECRAN region as a whole and its participating countries.</p> <p>Outcome: <i>The participants positively evaluated organisation of the Regional Meeting back-to-back with the 2015 Green Week and highlighted their positive experience with the programme and sessions. The suggestion has been made to again organise next Regional meeting back to back with Green Week, while NGOs will in advance explore possibilities how to use Green Week for improving visibility of the region in the EU/Brussels. It has been suggested that participation at the next Green Week, should allow for the possibility to present selected regional projects in the individual thematic sessions, or organisation of dedicated special stand for the ECF project, providing thus NGOs for space to present activities and outcomes. The ECRAN ECF project team will further explore options for implementation of these suggestions.</i></p>
<p>BLOCK 4: Open floor discussion of NGOs with EC, 10:30 – 11:30 (followed by coffee break)</p>	<p>Round table of the ECF NGOs with the EC representative Ms. Madalina Ivanica (DG ENV)</p> <p>The NGO presented their perspective on the activities implemented so far by the ECRAN/ECF, lessons learned and evaluation. Substantial part of the session was focused on the discussion related to ideas for ECRAN ECF follow up.</p> <p>Outcomes of the session: Ms. Madalina Ivanica (DG ENV) presented NGOs with update on the current state of the ECRAN project implementation and state of play for the project follow up.</p> <p>NGOs presented their evaluation of the EU-Dialogue in its present form. The ECF NGO representatives are of the opinion that merging the dialogue with ECRAN provided new opportunities in terms of access to information and collaboration with ECRAN experts and public administration in the beneficiary countries, however, certain advantages are also lying with having the dialogue as a separate and independent project. Since there are numerous capacity-building activities in the region, the ECF should focus on its main goal – i.e., stimulating dialogue at the national and regional level.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cooperation with Green 10 NGOs (EU MS NGOs) was evaluated as beneficial. Hence, for the next Annual Meeting, the project team will plan broader involvement of the EU MS NGOs in the programme development and/or implementation; ▪ Positive evaluation of the second round of in-country Preparatory Meetings have been provided by the ECF NGOs; ▪ ECF NGO representatives expressed the need for longer preparatory period for the Annual Meeting, in order to properly formulate specific points for the draft agenda. It was agreed to focus substantial part of the meeting on organising visit to the European Parliament and meeting with Parliament members; ▪ NGOs agreed to prepare their position on the project follow up and suggestion of possible amendments/changes. The position paper will be



	<p>delivered to the EC by the end of August 2015.</p> <p>Ms. Madalina Ivanica (DG ENV) assured ECF NGO representatives, that the Commission listen to their opinions and suggestions and that there is still space to accommodate changes to the follow up project and its ToR.</p> <p>Outcome: <i>Outcomes of the session are summarised in the meeting highlights and conclusions.</i></p>
<p>BLOCK 5: Work Plan update, 12:00- 13:00</p>	<p>Richard Filcak, facilitator</p> <p>The session focused on planning for the 2015/2016: Activities, timeline, outcomes and responsibilities.</p> <p>Outcome: <i>Outcomes of the session are summarised in the meeting highlights and conclusions.</i></p>



IV. Highlights from the meeting and conclusions

The meeting ended up with 2 sessions (*Open floor discussion of NGOs with EC and Work Plan update*) and adoption and approval of key decisions on project continuation, future progress and outcomes, as well as timeline for next planned events. These are following:

- **NGO position on the Progress Reports**

The final deadline for NGO contribution for progress report is 20 June 2015 when ECRAN ECF expert will deliver the individual inputs received from the respective ECF NGOs from the beneficiary countries in one comprehensive document to the EC. Project team will finalise the template for the countries (based on the outcomes of discussions at the regional meeting) and send it to the ECF NGOs by the 8 June 2015. The NGOs will thus get 10 days to consolidate their inputs and ECF team 2 days to consolidate these positions into one document.

- **Training Modules**

NGOs suggested focusing project activities in the second part of 2015 and 2016 to enhancing the regional dialogue and networking. It has been perceived that NGOs in the region are participating sufficiently in the on-going capacity building activities organised by other initiatives in the region. Therefore it has been suggested that remaining resources for this part of ECRAN are invested into organisation of the networking activities, limiting initially planned capacity building activities. It has been agreed that the two training modules planned for the second half of 2015 will be cancelled. The resources will be redirected to the organisation of longer Annual Meeting (3 days meeting) and final Regional Meeting in 2016. In addition, one final training module will be organised in 2016 (topic yet to be decided, possibly combined with the study visit depending on the selected topic).

- **2015 Annual Meeting**

Agenda for the 2nd Annual Meeting will be prepared in collaborative manner with the ECF NGOs, building on the outcomes of discussions held during the Regional Meeting. Draft agenda should be defined for 3 days programme, allocating time for visit to the European Parliament, session with the Commissioner (or a high level DG ENV and DG Climate representative), meetings with desk officers and ECF NGO internal discussions.

In collaboration with the EC, ECF team will coordinate the identification of the appropriate dates for the Annual Meeting, taking into accounts program and schedule of the European Parliament. Once the dates are confirmed, ECF will in collaboration with NGOs and EC identify members of the Parliament to be invited for the meeting.

ECF will coordinate preparation of common NGO position, which will be used for the meeting (i.e., Points for the Commissioner), reflecting discussion at the Regional Meeting and identified issues of importance.

- **Ministerial Meeting 2015**

It was agreed, that NGOs will prepare their common position paper for the Ministerial Meeting. Mr. Metodija Szdov (*Macedonian Greens*) and Ms. Natasa Kovacevic (*Green Home Montenegro*) have been selected to present this statement at the Ministerial Meeting that will be organised on 20 October 2015. ECF Team will support the statement developments, while the 2 speakers will be responsible for its preparation.

- **Other planned activities**



ECF NGOs will prepare by the end of August 2015 their common position on the ECRAN/ECF follow up (i.e., activities, system of management and implementation).

The activities of ECRAN ECF will be finalised with the organisation of Regional Meeting in June 2016 (possibly again back to back with Green Week) and delivery of the 2016 NGO position on progress reports (late June 2016).



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V. Evaluation

Statistical Information

1.1	Workshop Session	ECRAN ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE FORUM: Regional Planning and Capacity Building Meeting 02-05 June 2015, Brussels, Belgium
1.2	Facilitators name	As per agenda
1.3	Name and Surname of Participants (evaluators) optional	As per participants' list

Your Expectations

Please indicate to what extent specific expectations were met, or not met:

My Expectations	My expectations were met		
	Fully	Partially	Not at all
1. Evaluation of implemented, on-going and planned activities and provide feedback for the ECF team and individual NGOs	 (63%)	I (37%)	
2. Discussed progress in development of the key ECF related materials and plans	II (75%)	 (25%)	
3. Increased knowledge base, capacities and networking of the ECF NGOs through active participation at the Green Week 2015	 (31%)	 (63%)	I (6%)



Workshop and Presentations

Please rate the following statements:

Aspect of Workshop	Excellent	Good	Average	Acceptable	Poor	Unacceptable
1. The workshop achieved the objectives set	II (12%)	IIII IIIII II (75%)	II (12%)			
2. The quality of the workshop was of a high standard	II (12%)	IIII IIIII II (75%)	II (12%)			
3. The content of the workshop was well suited to my level of understanding and experience	II (12%)	IIII IIIII (56%)	III (25%)		I (6%)	
4. The practical work was relevant and informative	IIII II (44%)	III (25%)	III (19%)	I (6%)	I (6%)	
5. The workshop was interactive	IIII III (50%)	IIII II (44%)	I (6%)			
6. Facilitators were well prepared and knowledgeable on the subject matter	III (25%)	IIII III (50%)	III (19%)	I (6%)		
7. The duration of this workshop was neither too long nor too short	IIII III (50%)	III (25%)	II (12%)	II (12%)		
8. The logistical arrangements (venue, refreshments, equipment) were satisfactory	IIII IIIII (63%)	IIII (31%)	I (6%)			
9. Attending this workshop was time well spent	IIII III (50%)	IIII I (38%)	I (6%)	I (6%)		
10. Merging the workshop with Green Week Session was an appropriate approach	IIII IIIII (56%)	IIII I (38%)	I (6%)			

Comments and suggestions

I have the following comment and/or suggestions in addition to questions already answered:

Workshop Sessions:

- Must be tailored by our needs;
- Average – more or less;
- Good organized. Interactive with much time dedicated to discussions;
- No need to spend few hours on the agenda of the next meeting too long. Some of the sessions were too long and there was no need for it;
- Sessions were organised good enough, and structure was rigid but effective. Blocks were relevant and good connected.
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Facilitators:

- Richard doing his best;



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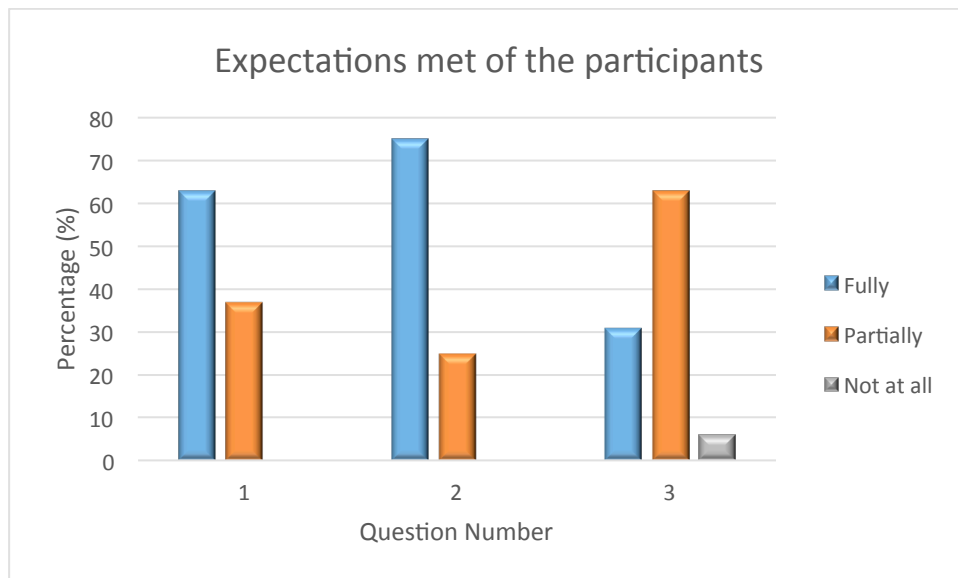
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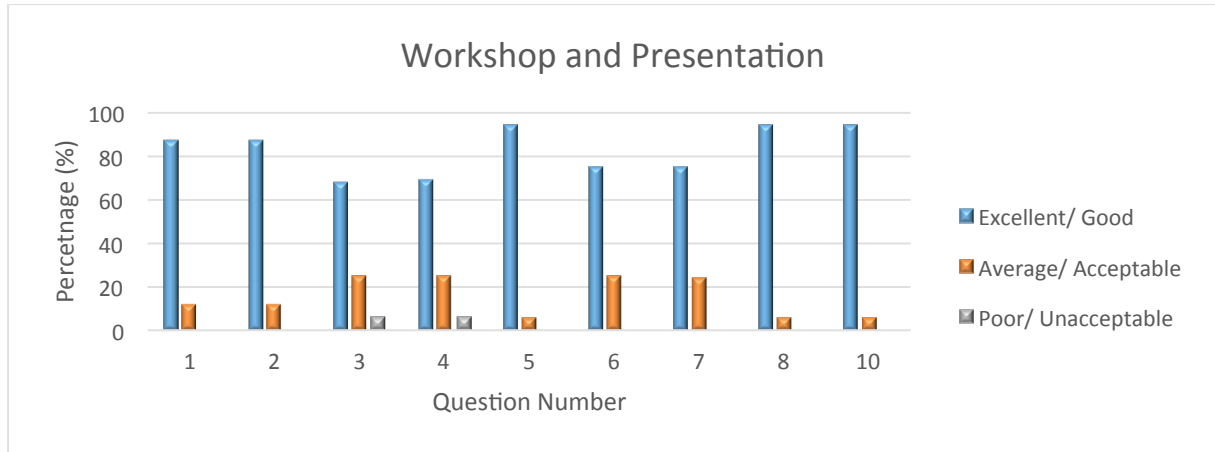
- Richard was excellent,
- Good and useful presentations;
- Ok;
- Informed greatly of theme and structure of sessions, effective in time management and group involvement.

Workshop level and content:

Merging the workshop with Green Week

- Excellent. Next year to promote yourself on the GW;
- It was good for meetings but with donors from EU;
- Great opportunity to speak with environmentalists from different countries and exchange ideas and opinion;
- Very good. Very useful meetings at the part of Green Week;
- Technical level of issues and content was understandable and overall experience was pleasant to have in a foreign language. Merging the workshop with GW is a good idea, only problem was timing of sessions for participation of both.





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