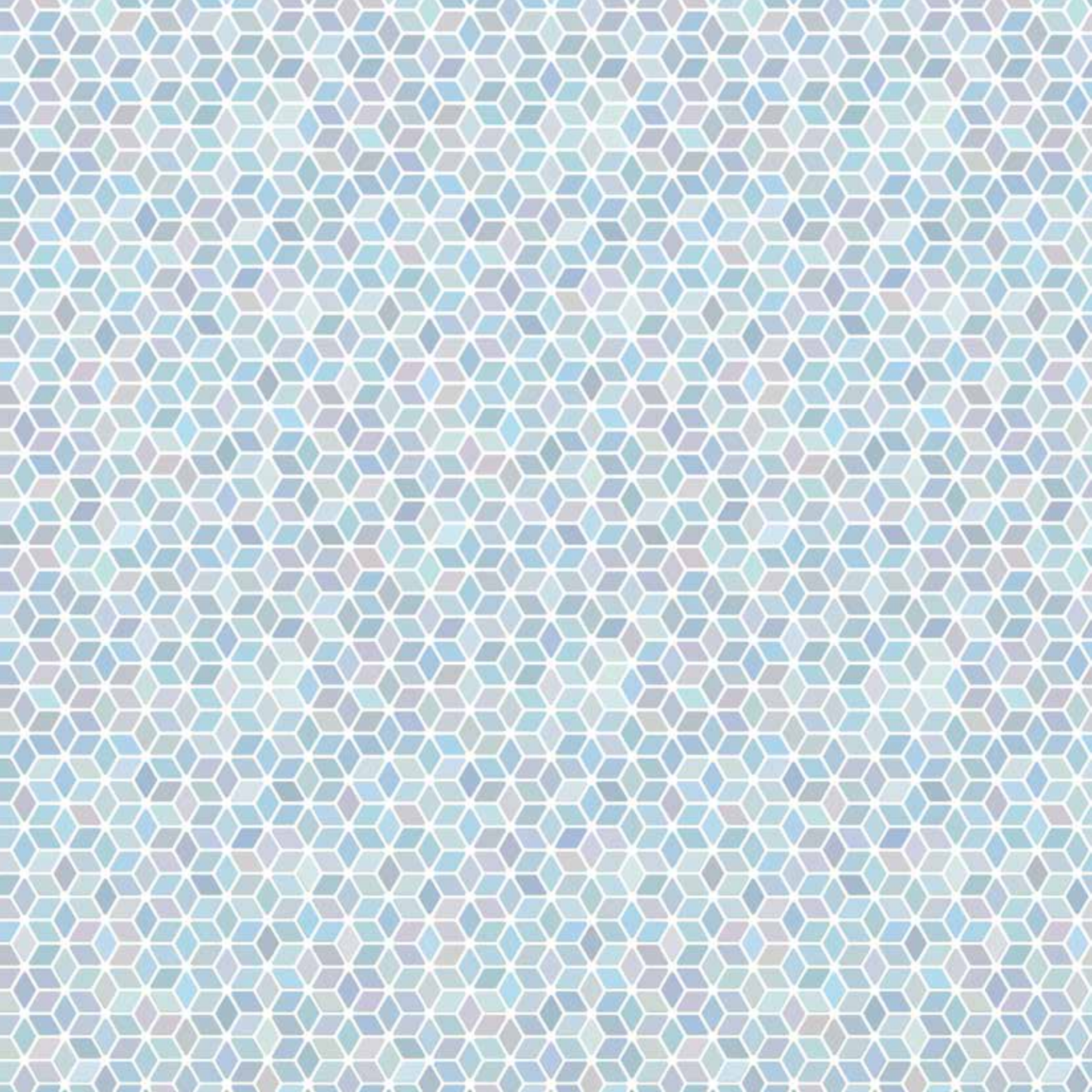




Eastern
Partnership





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Eastern Partnership



The European Neighbourhood Policy and the Eastern Partnership are the European Union's priorities. Poland plays a very important role in them. The Eastern Partnership helps partner countries make a strategic choice: whether they want to follow a pro-European orientation. To help them achieve this, we are offering an institutional framework which brings these countries closer to the European Union.

José Manuel Barroso

President of the European Commission
Łódź University, 11 October 2010.

The Eastern Partnership is a historic opportunity for Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. For the first time, these countries have been offered a chance of closer political and economic integration with the European Union.

Irrespective of whether they aspire towards full European Union membership, or choose closer cooperation with the EU, they can count on support in launching far-reaching reforms at home. This is a breakthrough – previously, only countries applying for EU membership could count on such massive assistance.

This ambitious programme is based on EU values such as freedom, democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights. These values are known to have given Europe the longest period of peace and prosperity in the history of the continent. Now the European Union wants to share this success with its Eastern neighbours.

The pace and scope of reforms depends primarily on the partner countries themselves. The most ambitious societies may count on political support and additional funds. The effect could produce a genuine civilization leap and the future attainment of stability, security and prosperity comparable to that enjoyed by countries of Western Europe. On what condition? That partner countries modernize their economies and build democratic institutions.

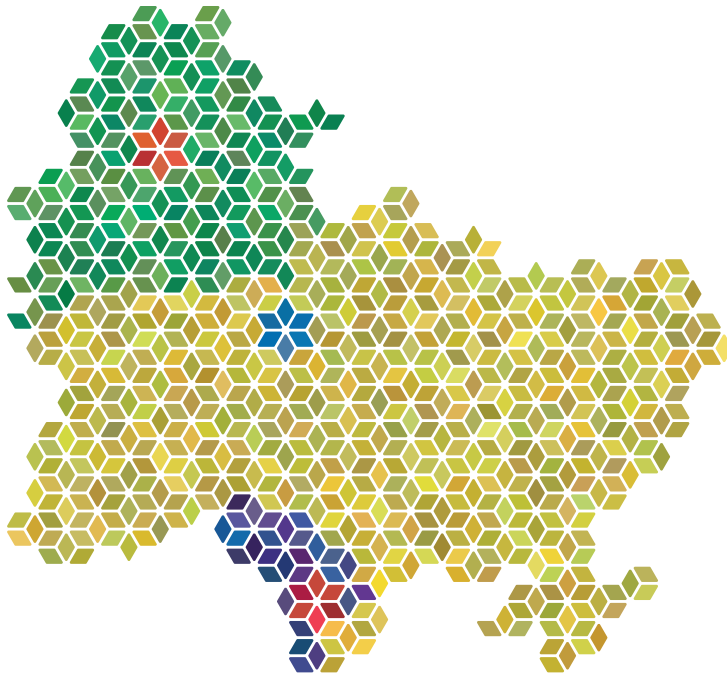
Deepened cooperation will be possible thanks to new association agreement between the EU and partner countries. They will replace the existing agreement on partnership and cooperation.

The Eastern European countries are considered as one region on account of their common historical experiences, their economic ties and the similar economic problems facing them. Yet this does not mean that the EU does not take into account their political and cultural differences. On the contrary: the EU consistently supports cultural and ethnic diversity in the region. Cooperation under the Eastern Partnership also helps Eastern partners tighten their mutual relations, increase trust and level out differences in development.

Many of the Eastern Partnership's initiatives are already being implemented. A key measure is to facilitate travel of partner countries' citizens to the European Union. The first such step is the gradual easing of visa regimes and reduction of visa fees, and in the longer-term perspective – abolishing visas. Programmes are being initiated to enhance the administrative and institutional capabilities of partner countries, which is the precondition for launching effective reforms. So-called flagship initiatives are also implemented, among them integrated border management and support for SME development.

International financial organisations have come to appreciate the historic importance of the Eastern Partnership and its great potential. Countries outside the European Union have also expressed an interest in supporting EaP projects.





Poland, which together with Sweden authored the Eastern Partnership project, has relied on its own experiences of economic and political transformation. This is why the programme attaches great importance to the development of the civil society as the driving force behind democratic change. It is also due to this that the Partnership values the development of an effective and transparent administration, which guarantees effective reform and implementation of the rule of law.

From the very outset of its democratic changes, Poland aimed to establish the best possible relations with its

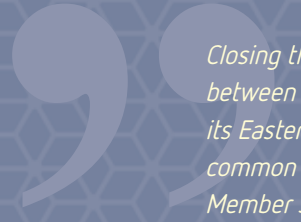
Eastern neighbours. It also advocated formulating a coordinated European Union policy for these countries. The Eastern Partnership crowns these efforts. Not surprisingly then that the enhancement of this policy was one of the priorities of the first Polish Presidency of the European Union Council in 2011.

International support in the process of effective institution building played a key role in Poland's transition. The European Union is now offering this kind of support to partner countries, in the form of not just experience sharing, but also substantial financial assistance.





History



Closing the economic and social gap between the European Union and its Eastern neighbours should be a common concern of European Union Member States and Europe as a whole. Otherwise, political and social forces could come to the fore and if that happens we can be sure that the West will also be affected.

Radosław Sikorski

Minister of Foreign Affairs
of the Republic of Poland

Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine are European not only in the geographic sense, but also in the historic and cultural one.

What sets them apart from European Union countries is mainly the level of economic development and of democracy. These differences were deepened by the post-war division and became visible after the waves of eastward EU enlargement in 2004 and 2007. Bearing in mind their own economic and political transformation, new EU members – especially the Visegrad Group countries (Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia) and the Baltic countries (Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia) – strongly advocated putting together an ambitious proposal for deeper cooperation and assistance to their neighbours in their reform processes. These countries knew best that without strong support the process of building democracy and a free market economy can be extremely toilsome. They were also aware that in facing the prospect of modernization, it helps to have the right sort of external motivation. That is why they jointly argued that the European Union should offer its partners in the East the kind of cooperation that will convince them to pursue more ambitious reforms. Otherwise, the region will continue to be exposed to all sorts of crises that it will find difficult to cope with alone. As a result, the neighbouring

European Union could also feel their negative impact.

Bound by historical, cultural and economic links, European Union Member States have for years been interested in forging closer ties with their nearest neighbours. Through the so-called Barcelona Process, they have been engaged in cooperation with the Mediterranean countries as early as 1995. Nine years later, all countries situated close to EU borders were covered by the European Neighbourhood Policy. This was the first cohesive EU initiative for economic modernization and political reforms in these countries. But in order to see a prompt elimination of development disproportions between Western and Eastern Europe, the potential opportunities of this common policy had to be enhanced.

Successive Polish governments have consistently supported the modernisation efforts of Eastern partners. It may even be said that Poland has been at the forefront of countries that have encouraged them to implement political and economic reforms and to modernize their societies. The European Union was also engaged in many activities aimed at enhancing ties with the region, but it did so without a consistent vision of how its cooperation with its Eastern neighbours should look like.

An important step enabling the forging of a common EU policy towards this region



Armenia



Georgia



Azerbaijan



Moldova



Belarus



Ukraine

was Germany's initiative of European Neighbourhood Policy–Plus, put forward during its Presidency of the EU Council in 2007. Soon afterwards, Poland – with the support of Sweden – began work on the concept of a cohesive political initiative addressed to Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. Its aim was to send a strong signal that irrespective of the debate going on inside the European Union on further eastward enlargement, its Member States want to assist their neighbours with reforms. Poland was concerned that the lack of such an initiative could lead to a new division of Europe – into privileged countries and those left behind.

In constructing the project, Poland and Sweden decided to take advantage of the European Neighbourhood Policy, but at the same time create a more ambitious initiative. The existing selective support for reforms in Eastern Europe, often without a long-term plan, was to be replaced with a broad offer of comprehensive support for modernization and reform. It was decided that this would be possible only thanks to far-reaching economic and political integration of partner countries with the European Union.

In order to win the support of all of the EU Member States, in May 2008, Polish Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski and Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt presented their project at a meeting of the heads of the EU diplomacy. This helped the initiative to begin developing dynamically. In June of the same year, the European Council unanimously accepted the Polish–Swedish proposal and requested the European Commission to draft the details of the Eastern Partnership. By Decem-

ber 2008, the European Commission had presented concrete proposals concerning the Eastern Partnership. In its Communication, the Commission found that “stability, better governance and economic development on the eastern borders are of vital interest to the European Union.” It also pointed out that the Member States experienced in transformation processes are to play a key role in the Eastern Partnership project. In March 2009, the European Council unanimously expressed its support for “the ambitious Eastern Partnership project” which thus became an integral part of the European foreign policy. In the conclusions of the March summit the Council assured that the promotion of stability, good governance and economic development in the East is of strategic importance to the European Union as a whole.

The launch of the Eastern Partnership would not be possible without the commitment of the Czech Republic,

The Eastern Partnership is based on the common sense of responsibility and equality of all partners. It is also based on common values. I am glad that I can announce this in Prague in the year of the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Iron Curtain.

Mirek Topolánek

Prime Minister of the Czech Republic
Prague, 7 May 2009.



2nd Eastern Partnership Summit, Warsaw, 29-30 September 2011; from left: José Manuel Barroso – President of the European Commission, Herman Van Rompuy – President of the European Council, Donald Tusk – Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland, Viktor Orbán – Prime Minister of Hungary.

which made it one of the priorities of its EU Presidency. On 7 May 2009, the initiative was officially launched at a Prague summit attended by the representatives of all EU Member States and the six partner countries. In addition to the heads of state or government, the heads of major EU political institutions, including the European Parliament and the European Commission, were also in attendance. Also present were representatives of financial institutions that provide support to the Partnership.

At the conclusion of the summit, the leaders adopted the **Prague Declaration**, which became the basic founding document of the Eastern Partnership. The

document states that the Eastern Partnership is based on common interests and obligations. It will be developed jointly, in a fully transparent manner. The basis of the Eastern Partnership are commitments relating to the respecting of the principles of international law and fundamental values such as democracy, rule of law, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as the principles of market economy, sustainable development and good governance. The main objective of the EaP is to create the necessary conditions to accelerate the process of political association and economic integration between the EU and the partner countries concerned. The participants of the summit



Jerzy Buzek – former President of the European Parliament, “Eastern Partnership Conference: Towards a European Community of Democracy, Prosperity and a Stronger Civil Society”, Warsaw, 29 September 2011

agreed that the foundation of the Eastern Partnership will be to deepen bilateral cooperation aimed at concluding association agreements between the EU and interested partner countries that are able to fulfil the necessary requirements. The new agreements will create deep and comprehensive free trade areas. As mentioned, open markets and economic integration are essential to sustainable economic and political development of the partner countries. Moreover, the EaP also aims to strengthen ties between the partner countries and encourage them to settle disputes peacefully. The declaration stresses that the initiative will promote the mobility of the citizens of the partner countries through the conclusion of visa facilitation agreements, with the long-term objective being the complete abolition of visas. The Eastern Partnership also aims at strengthening energy security by developing international cooperation with regard to long-term, stable and secure supply of energy and energy raw materials. It is also aimed at improving energy efficiency and boosting the use of renewable energy sources.

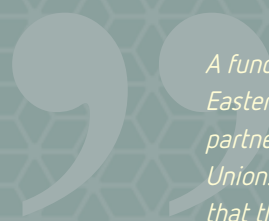
The first working meetings of representatives of the European Commission, the EU Member States and the representatives of the six countries involved in the project were held just one month after the Prague summit, while the first formal meeting of Foreign Ministers of the Eastern Partnership countries was held in December 2009. The practical implementation of the policy was thus initiated.





Bilateral cooperation

- support for reforms
- association agreements
- free trade areas



A fundamental issue in terms of the Eastern Partnership initiative is to bring partner countries closer to the European Union. After all, we must bear in mind that this is not just about economic cooperation, but also about the growth of values which have served as the basis of European integration.

Angela Merkel

German Chancellor, Eastern Partnership Summit
Warsaw, 30 September 2011.

The main objective of the Eastern Partnership is to strengthen bilateral cooperation of the partner countries and the European Union, both at political and economic levels.

The EU initiative takes into account the fact that Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine are at different stages of implementation of reforms. Moreover, they have different plans for deepening ties with the West. Some of them are only interested in tighter cooperation; others aspire to full EU integration. The Eastern Partnership gives them the opportunity to individually select their degree of integration. It is only up to them whether they make a strategic choice and tie their future to the countries that, due to the free market and democracy, are at the forefront of the most developed countries in the world.

Support for reforms

The condition for the introduction of ambitious reforms and enhanced cooperation with the European Union is the functioning, within the individual partner countries, of properly prepared public administration institutions. Therefore, the Eastern Partnership includes the implementation of **Comprehensive Institution Building programmes (CIB)**. This is a completely new initiative, which so far has not existed in the European Neighbourhood Policy. By improving administration the partner countries will better cope with meeting the obligations arising from the new agreements with the European Union.

The development of efficient institutions helped countries such as Poland on the path to European Union membership. This process could not, however, be possible without external support. That is why the European Commission invested considerable financial and human resources in reforms in the candidate countries. Suffice it to say that nearly one-third of its funding from the PHARE funds, which covered Poland since 1990, was allocated to the development of a performing government administration, responsible for the implementation of EU rules and standards. EU support enabled the development of an independent civil service, the implementation of ambitious reforms and the strengthening of democratic institutions, which in turn made it possible to efficiently conduct complex accession negotiations. They were crowned with the accession of Poland to the European Union on 1 May 2004. Today, Poland is a reliable partner in the European Union and steadily consolidates its position among the strongest EU countries.

Using this experience, the Eastern Partnership puts emphasis on strengthening institutions in the partner countries. The creation of an effectively functioning and transparent administration guarantees the best possible use of EU assistance and financial costs. Over EUR 170 million has been allocated to the Comprehensive Institutional Building Programme (2011-2013). As a result of an in-depth assessment of the functioning of the administration in the individual partner countries, a detailed list was drawn up comprising key government institutions which need to be reinforced for efficient cooperation with the European Union.



Most of the individual partner countries have prepared their Institutional Reform Plans and the first projects have already been initiated. The individual EU Member States may render additional financial and advisory support, especially since some of them have vast experience and excellent experts in this field.

But the building of democratic and free-market institutions will be successful only once the partner countries fully engage themselves in this process. A significant role can be played not only by politicians and officials, but also by civil society institutions. They should monitor the implementation of reforms and ensure that state institutions become more transparent and efficient in operation, and that the officials and politicians sitting in them are responsible, competent and honest. In order to facilitate these tasks, so-called contact points have been established in the European Union and the partner countries, where interested organisations can obtain information on how to get involved in the above-mentioned construction of well-functioning institutions, which determine the project's success.

"We recognise the Eastern Partnership as an effective mechanism which will help us meet our ultimate goal, which is the closest possible integration of Georgia with the European Union."

Giorgi Baramidze
Deputy Prime Minister of Georgia
Europe-Ukraine Forum
Kiev, 8 April 2010.

Association agreements

Stronger cooperation of the partner countries with the European Union will be made possible thanks to the conclusion of new association agreements, which will replace the existing partnership and cooperation agreements. The Agreements, which include many new areas of cooperation and create strong political ties, will become the basis for further implementation of EU legislation and standards in the partner countries. They will also provide the partner countries with a privileged position in relations with the European Union. Such agreements can be signed only with those partners who decide to make far-reaching commitments to the European Union. The precondition of the commencement of negotiations and the subsequent strengthening of relations is good progress in the field of democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights.

Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas

Apart from forging closer political ties, association agreements also include provisions relating to the creation of **Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas (DCFTAs)**. The condition is that partner countries meet the relevant criteria and commit themselves to introducing free market principles. Indeed, the European Union assumes that open markets and economic integration contribute to the rapid economic development and increased prosperity, and that the creation of stronger trade ties increases the chances of a lasting political stability.

The free market is one of the greatest achievements of the European Union, which has put much effort in the

economic integration of its Member States. Customs controls have been abolished, and procedures and regulations have been simplified and standardised. People, goods, services and money move freely, like in the same state. According to data from the European Commission, the common market has helped create several million jobs in the EU and generate hundreds of billions of euros of additional income. Companies selling on the EU market have unlimited access to almost 500 million consumers. As a result of the abolition of trade barriers and opening up national markets, more enterprises can compete with each other. For consumers, this means lower prices and greater choice.

Through agreements on Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas the Eastern Partnership countries have the possibility of economic integration with the market, and thus enjoy the same benefits that have ensured the rapid and constant development of Western economies. The partner countries will be able to benefit fully from the influx of EU investment and capital, as well as access to modern technology necessary for conducting modernisation processes. The agreements will cover trade in goods and services, and alignment of the regulations of the partner countries to the EU standards. But, for obvious reasons, such economic integration is subject to a number of conditions. One of them is membership in the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

Mobility and security

Visa liberalisation is a priority for all partner countries and is the area in which they wish to enhance most rapidly bilateral cooperation with the EU. Countries that are ready to introduce the relevant legislation and EU



Vladimir Filat – Prime Minister of Moldova and
Cecilia Malmström – Commissioner for Home Affairs

standards can count on facilitated visa procedures, including the reduction or abolition of issuance fees and, in the longer term, visa-free travel for these countries' citizens. To this end, it is nonetheless necessary to introduce reforms that will facilitate travel for citizens of the partner countries, but also guarantee stability and security at the borders of both the six partner countries and the European Union. That is why the Eastern Partnership includes projects covering the fight against illegal migration and the establishment of integrated border management systems. EU aid includes, among others, the establishment of high quality control procedures at the borders. In order to achieve this, an appropriate infrastructure is needed, such as the adequate number of border points, high quality documents, a sufficient degree of computerisation, as well as effective systems



Participants of the inaugural meeting of the Conference of the Regional and Local Authorities for the Eastern Partnership (CORLEAP), Poznan, 8 September 2011

for data protection. For the EU countries to be able to open their borders to citizens of the partner countries, it is also necessary to increase the effectiveness of police and justice systems, especially in the fight against corruption and organised crime. Finally, it is also necessary to conclude agreements to allow the readmission of illegal immigrants.

Energy security

Support for reform in the energy sector is one of the main tasks of the Eastern Partnership. Deepening cooperation in this field can help increase energy security in both the partner countries and the European Union.

The future of our Eastern neighbours largely depends on how they solve their energy problems. It is common knowledge that most of them have obsolete infrastructure and are often dependent on imported raw materials. There also are non-market, unclear rules for the functioning of the energy markets, which can foster corruption, and the very high power consumption (e.g. gas consumption in Ukraine and Belarus per capita is among the highest in the world). These factors severely reduce the efficiency and, in turn, the competitiveness of these countries' economies.

The fact that the Eastern Partnership countries are given the ability to integrate their energy markets with

the EU market thus gains in significance. Investments in infrastructure and harmonisation of legislation help to strengthen collaboration and provide an opportunity to enter into long-term contracts for the supply and transit of energy. Eastern Partnership initiatives also put emphasis on increasing energy efficiency and renewable energy sources. This will help reduce dependence of the partner countries on imported raw materials. The money thus saved can be used for other investments aimed at deepening their development.

Supporting economic and social development

Income per capita in some Eastern Partnership countries is ten times lower than the EU average. The European Union can help reduce these differences by supporting the economic development. The Eastern Partnership projects will also help reduce development disparities between the regions of the partner countries and the partner countries themselves. This is a key issue – after all, the richest country has a GDP per capita over two times higher than the poorest one. It is extremely important to compensate for these differences, as the lack of economic, social and territorial cohesion hinders cooperation.

The European Union has huge experience in this domain. Within the EU, areas with a lower degree of development are covered by the EU's Cohesion Policy, which helps to support the development of infrastructure, economic potential and human resources in the most deprived regions. Partner countries may thus make use of the experience and mechanisms of

economic and social policy of the European Union. The Pilot Regional Development Programmes, implemented within the framework of the Eastern Partnership, will thus be modelled on the EU's Cohesion Policy and will focus on local needs in the area of infrastructure and human capital, and on supporting small and medium enterprises.

Cooperation of regional and local governments plays a key role in the effective use of opportunities offered by the Eastern Partnership. Previous experience of cooperation of the EU regions and cities with partners from the East represents great untapped potential. Local governments from the EU Member States can – also in the future – play an important role in strengthening democracy, accelerating socio-economic transformation and creating efficient public administration in partner countries.





Multilateral cooperation

- four thematic platforms
- flagship initiatives



As a country whose Eastern border is also the Eastern border of the European Union, we view the East with unwavering attention and friendliness. We are in favour of consistently developing cooperation and good relations with our closer and more faraway neighbours covered by the Eastern Partnership initiative, which aims to bring Eastern European countries closer to the EU through political association and ever deeper economic integration.

Bronisław Komorowski
President of the Republic of Poland
Annual Meeting with the Diplomatic Corps
Warsaw, 21 January 2011.

A new form of deepening ties with the partner countries, which to date had not existed in the policy towards the European Union's neighbours, is multilateral cooperation.

As mentioned above, the pace and scope of the reforms are dependent on the will of the individual partner countries. Participation in joint programmes, initiatives and forums of cooperation will have an additional mobilizing effect. Joint action awakens the spirit of competition and speeds up reforms. The partner countries can observe how they fare against their neighbours and the positive changes taking place in countries that decided to take advantage of possibilities offered by the Eastern Partnership. But joint actions primarily have a pragmatic dimension. They can learn from each other through meetings and exchanges of experiences, thus avoiding many mistakes. As a result, it will be easier to reach the main goal of the Eastern Partnership, which is to achieve the fastest and the most efficient adaptation of the existing standards to the EU standards, and thus to deepen bilateral ties of individual partner countries with EU Member States.

To ensure efficient cooperation it is necessary to have regular meetings at the highest level. Every two years, meetings of the leaders and heads of governments of the EU Member States and the partner countries are held, while their foreign ministers meet every year. Since 2012, the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy have been



The Eastern Partnership Academy of Public Administration, Warsaw, 8 October 2012

meeting with the foreign ministers of partner countries in the framework of the Informal Eastern Partnership Dialogues. The Dialogue is also set to cover meetings of sector-specific ministers of partner countries with the relevant EU commissioners.

Actions in the multilateral dimension are conducted under four thematic platforms, whose scope includes the following policy areas:

- **democracy, good governance and stability,**
- **economic integration and convergence with EU policies,**
- **energy security,**
- **contacts between people.**

The concept of operation of the platforms consists in planning, discussing, and coordinating actions. In accordance with the Prague Declaration, meetings of individual thematic platforms are organised twice a year, bringing together senior officials of the ministries involved in the reforms in various spheres. Each platform has adopted a set of realistic priorities, together with an appropriate action programme, and assesses implementation progress on an ongoing basis. The work of the thematic platforms is supported by the following expert panels: on Integrated Border Management, the Fight against Corruption, Improved functioning of the Judiciary, Migration and Asylum, Trade related regulatory cooperation linked to DCFTA, SME Policy, Transport and on Environment and Climate Change. They review and analyse the situation in the partner countries with respect to matters dealt with by the Platforms, and develop recommendations for action and proposals for projects. Complementary forms of multilateral cooperation include trainings, seminars and workshops related to the current activities of the thematic platforms and expert panels.

To be able to see the tangible effects of the Eastern Partnership in both the partner countries and internationally, a number of flagship initiatives have been introduced:

- **integrated border management programme,**
- **support for the development of small and medium enterprises (SME Facility),**
- **regional energy markets, energy efficiency and renewable energy sources,**
- **environmental management,**
- **a system to combat the effects of natural and man-made disasters.**

The implementation of projects under the flagship initiatives will provide the partner countries with a good basis for further dynamic growth in key areas. Therefore, the European Union puts a lot of effort into the smooth implementation of these initiatives.

1.

Democracy, Good Governance and Stability

Platform 1 has adopted the following priority areas of cooperation: **issues of democracy and human rights,**



The Eastern Partnership is built on mutual accountability and responsibilities, and the shared commitment to the principles of democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law. We will leave our partners in no doubt that the EU's acknowledgement of their European aspirations and their European choice goes hand in hand with our expectations for their commitment to progressing towards deep and sustainable democracy.

Catherine Ashton

High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, statement in advance of the Eastern Partnership Summit in Warsaw, Strasbourg, 27 September 2011.



"Young Farmers network – chance to improve the living conditions of youth in rural Armenia" – project implemented in the framework of Poland's development aid

justice, freedom and internal security, and stability and safety. It was decided that its work will focus on improving the functioning of **the judiciary system, public administration reform** and **fighting corruption.**

Although reforms in the partner countries are at different stages of advancement, the countries have similar problems associated with the creation of stable democratic institutions and effective state structures. The experience of the EU Member States shows that the construction of such institutions is most effectively enforced by their own citizens. After all, no one can see failures in the functioning of the state and administra-

tion as well as they do. Independent media are also needed to effectively control the authorities. To critically review the authorities with respect to the fulfilment of their promises, meanwhile, democratic elections are necessary. Therefore, the Eastern Partnership wants to create such conditions that the civil society institutions could increase oversight of public services. Moreover, the partner countries can count on help in reforming their judicial systems. The aim is to streamline the system's operation and strengthen its independence from political influence. The EU attaches considerable importance to the fight against corruption, which paralyses the smooth functioning of the state, hampers the intro-



Seminar in the framework of the Eastern Partnership Countries Ombudsmen Cooperation Programme, Paris, 9-11 May 2012; Dominique Baudis – Ombudsman of the French Republic and Irena Lipowicz – Ombudsman of the Republic of Poland

duction of a market economy, and deters foreign investors. That is why, in the framework of the programme to fight against corruption, the partner countries receive assistance in the preparation of national anti-corruption strategies, followed by their implementation at the level of ministries and other offices. The programme is also implemented by specialised anti-corruption non-governmental organisations. An important role is also played by cooperation with the Council of Europe, engaged in the work of Platform 1.

Platform 1 includes the introduction, among others, of the flagship initiative for an **Integrated Border Management Programme**. The implementation of similar procedures and development of infrastructure in all countries aims to enhance border security, while also

facilitating the movement of passengers and goods. The development of border management systems and the introduction of the EU standards is absolutely necessary to ensure that the Eastern Partnership countries can be covered by the visa-free travel with the European Union in the future. The introduction of the free trade agreement is also conditioned on the introduction of the European standards of border management. The flagship initiative to establish **a system to fight the effects of natural and man-made disasters** is also linked to Platform 1.

2.

Economic Integration and Convergence with EU Policies

The long-term priorities of Platform 2 include: **the approximation of legislation, including trade, financial and macroeconomic cooperation, stimulation of socio-economic development and environmental protection**. Work in Platform 2 is focused primarily on regulatory harmonisation, support for the development of small and medium enterprises (SMEs), and on issues related to environmental protection – among others through expert panels for environment/climate change, trade, SMEs, and transport, set up specifically with this in mind.

Economic integration was central to the formation of the European Union ever since its inception. It provides a similar level of prosperity in the individual countries and binds them together to the extent that any disputes and conflicts are simply not viable. Eventually, the EU aims to conclude agreements

on free trade areas with the partner countries. All of these countries are encouraged to introduce EU standards on trade and investment. This also helps create better conditions for the functioning of business in partner countries, boosts private enterprise, and encourages foreign operators to invest in the partner countries.

The Eastern Partnership strongly supports the development of entrepreneurship in the partner countries, because private initiatives have a chance to become a driving force behind economic development. Therefore one of the flagship initiatives **is the programme enabling the development of small and medium enterprises (SME Facility).**

The European Union wants to make sure that countries that open their markets will derive the maximum benefits and will experience minimum negative effects due to external competition. Therefore, it offers programmes to improve the competitiveness of businesses and economies of the partner countries.

The EaP's multilateral dimension also helps strengthen joint actions between the six countries and the European Union in the field of environmental protection and combating climate change. Cooperation in the field of transport will also be developed. This is necessary for the smooth functioning of the free market and for raising the welfare of residents. It also has great psychological and symbolic importance – thanks to this, Eastern European countries will be able to finally feel physically integrated with the European Union.

3.

Energy Security

Platform 3 has adopted the following priorities: **support for the development of infrastructure and the system of diversification of supply, approximation in the regulatory area and harmonisation of energy policies, and the promotion of energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy sources.**

The Eastern Partnership countries are situated along a strategic energy resource transit route from Russia and Central Asia to Europe. Most of them face similar problems – they have an obsolete energy infrastructure and an energy-intensive economy dependent on imported raw materials. Through the strengthening of energy cooperation they will be able to develop a network of interconnections to enable the provision of mutual assistance in the event of an energy crisis in any of these countries.

Enhancing energy security requires the diversification of supply of raw materials and higher efficiency in their use. Therefore, the Eastern Partnership puts an emphasis on the diversification of energy resource supplies, energy efficiency, and increased use of renewable energy. But this requires significant investments, so the partner countries can benefit from financial and technology support of the European Union. Through multilateral cooperation, it is possible to implement joint investments at the regional level while lowering their costs.

A strong energy sector in Eastern Europe will build close and long-term cooperation with the European Union.



This will ensure stable supplies and transit, and will provide an opportunity to create a mutually beneficial related and diverse energy market. Of course, the infrastructure itself, even the most modern one, does not guarantee seamless cooperation. It is also necessary to harmonise legislation. The Eastern Partnership thus works towards accelerating the harmonisation of policy and legislation on energy markets with the practice and regulations of the European Union in such areas as electricity, gas, oil, renewable energy and energy efficiency.

4.

People-to-People Contacts

The work of Platform 4 focuses, among others, on issues related to the boosting of **scientific exchanges** (particularly with regard to higher education), the fullest possible implementation of **programmes addressed to young people**, promoting **intercultural dialogue**, and cooperation in the field of **culture**, and on the development of **information society**.

The success of reforms depends to a large extent on the active participation of citizens. Contacts between societies lead to getting to know each other, overcoming stereotypes, the exchange of experience and joint projects. As a result, societies learn quickly how to effectively act for the benefit of their country and its people.

That is why the Eastern Partnership also intends to bring closer together the inhabitants of the partner countries and the EU Member States. Cultural cooperation, civil society building and intercultural dialogue

help establish closer ties between countries. It is the experience of ordinary people and their emotions (and sometimes prejudices) that determine the relationships between their country and its neighbours. Through the Eastern Partnership projects inhabitants of even the most distant regions can get to know and understand each other better, learn one another's ways of thinking, other people's mentality and sensitivity. And this leads to mutual tolerance and easier resolution of emerging conflicts, including political ones, because cultural cooperation also helps to alleviate concerns about losing one's own identity. Such concerns have indeed also appeared in some EU Member States, but in reality they did not turn out to be true. On the contrary, the European Union is investing heavily in the development of culture and promoting the heritage and traditions in the Member States. This is also the case of the partner countries.

For this reason, the European Commission created the **Eastern Partnership Culture Programme**. Its main objective is to strengthen institutions in the cultural sectors in the partner countries. Measures implemented under the Programme are intended to help, among others, in the formulation of the cultural policy, the reform of cultural institutions, the development of conditions facilitating the use of European cultural programmes. Ultimately, the Programme will provide all citizens with access to all the cultural wealth of all countries of the Eastern Partnership and the EU Member States. The priority of the Programme are projects of a regional nature, involving transnational consortiums and supporting the development of cultural tourism, initiatives addressed to children, youth and cultural minorities,



I Culture Orchestra, made up of young musicians from EaP countries and Poland

projects aimed at restoring and conserving monuments, and projects that support the mobility of artists.

Partner countries can count on government-level assistance in reforming their cultural policy but also on financial assistance for their civil society and cultural organisations. With a strengthened cultural sector, the partner countries will be able to create an appropriate offer for their residents and to reach the widest possible audience. Developing cultural initiatives, which are available for all social groups, including the elderly, the disabled and minorities, helps eliminate barriers in

society. Attractive cultural projects are also necessary to promote the Eastern Partnership countries to the outside world and tear down the barriers between them and the West.

A total of 12 million euros have been allocated towards this ambitious programme. Its development and implementation is monitored by a specially created Regional Monitoring and Capacity Building Unit for the Eastern Partnership Culture Programme (RMCB Unit), with its seat in Kiev. The Unit has already begun work on an analysis of the state of the cultural industry in Eastern

Partnership countries. In the near future, it will begin organizing seminars, "round tables" and workshops. In mid-2011, the European Commission also selected 15 projects which will receive financing totalling around 9 million euros in the framework of the implementation of the 2nd stage of the Programme. These projects - covering all Eastern Partnership countries - will be implemented between 2012 and 2015.

The Eastern Partnership also supports contacts between the citizens of the European Union and residents of the partner countries, using e.g. the possibilities offered by the EU's popular programmes, which worked well in enhancing integration with the new Member States. The European Commission has devoted two editions of the Special Action (2009 and 2010) within the framework of the Culture Programme 2007-2013 to cooperation projects with countries including the EaP partners. Cooperation between schools and universities (E-twinning) is being developed. Students can make use of the **Tempus** programme (which aims, among other things, to boost cooperation between higher education institutions in the EU and partner countries) and the **Erasmus Mundus** programme (which serves to promote European higher education and helps broaden and improve students' career perspective, and facilitates intercultural understanding). The Eastern Partnership Youth Programme is also planned to be launched. The Polish Presidency of the EU Council in the second semester of 2011 devoted much effort to measures aimed at popularising and boosting mobility between Eastern Partnership countries and the European Union. A debate has also been initiated on the shape of the new generation of EU programmes in the field of education,

youth, science, culture and sport. The proposals put forward in a report published by the European Commission in November 2011 - "Creative Europe" and "Erasmus for All" - cover the possibility of including partners from the Eastern Partnership countries. Poland will also support the creation of the Common Knowledge and Innovation Space with a view to boosting cooperation in the field of education and research.


In June 2012, Poland established a new scholarship programme for citizens of Eastern Partnership countries who are commencing PhD studies in Poland in the human and social sciences. The goal of the Programme is to support socio-economic development in partner countries by raising the level of education and vocational skills among their citizens. The Programme will eventually cover around 120 people.





Other fields of cooperation

- Parliamentary cooperation (EuroNest)
- Civil Society Forum
- Committee of the Regions (CORLEAP)
- Eastern Partnership Business Forum



Our main goal is not only to strengthen relations between the European Parliament and the national parliaments of our Eastern friends, but primarily to enable a dialogue between them, to build trust and to use the best practices of democracy, respect for freedom of expression and human rights.

Jacek Saryusz-Wolski.

polish MEP

Ambitious reforms are most successful when they consistently cover all levels of government and policy areas ensuring the smooth functioning of the state.

Cooperation should take place not only at the government level, but also, for example, between parliaments. The EuroNest Eastern Partnership Parliamentary Assembly, inaugurated in May 2011, established the parliamentary dimension of the Eastern Partnership – a forum for dialogue with representatives of parliaments of the partner countries.

The implementation of the Eastern Partnership is also facilitated by cooperation of NGOs with the European Union. Civil society institutions – especially in the form of non-governmental organisations – play an increasing role in enforcing the reforms and effective control of policies. The **Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum**, which brings together civil society representatives from partner countries and the European Union, supports the development of the third sector in the Eastern Partnership countries and serves to increase cooperation between non-governmental organisations in partner countries and the European Union. The first Forum meeting was held in December 2009 in Brussels. It was attended by over 200 representatives of NGOs. The Steering Committee, which coordinates the activities of organisations from the European Union and the six partner countries, was appointed. The next Forum was held in November 2010 in Berlin, while in November 2011 it took place in Poznan, bringing together representatives of close to 300 NGOs from partner countries

and the European Union. The motto of the meeting was “A partnership for democratic reforms and European integration.” This initiative, also supported by the European Economic and Social Committee, has already gained the status of one of the fastest growing dimensions of the Eastern Partnership.

The **Committee of the Regions** – the institution that offers representatives of local governments the opportunity to assess legislation drafted by the European Union – is also interested in the implementation of the Eastern Partnership. The Committee will primarily support the development of democracy and people-to-people relations in the Eastern Partnership countries. It also makes clear that local governments are responsible for enforcing two-thirds of EU regulations. In June 2009, the Committee organised the “Going East”

The Eastern Partnership has long been one of the most important strategic initiatives of the European Union. Its true potential will be revealed only with the active involvement of the civil society, which has three functions to fulfil: the need to oversee, introduce and develop various projects.

Carl Bildt,
Swedish Foreign Minister
Civil Society Forum
Brussels, 16 November 2009.



Radosław Sikorski, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, during the 3rd Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum, Poznań, 28-30 November 2011

forum, where representatives of NGOs and authorities of different levels met to determine the most effective strategy in the countries covered by the EU initiative. CORLEAP – the **Conference of the Regional and Local Authorities for the Eastern Partnership** – was initiated at a meeting held in Poznań in September 2011. The Conference will serve as a permanent platform for cooperation between EU local governments and their local and regional counterparts in the Eastern Partnership countries.

Cooperation in the EaP framework is also open to the business community. The **Eastern Partnership Business Forum** was organized for the first time in

September 2011 in Sopot. The Forum was attended by business leaders, entrepreneurs, and representatives of governments and institutions from the EU and partner countries. The meeting was an occasion to exchange experiences, establish business contacts and discuss potential investments and joint projects in the framework of the Eastern Partnership.



Today, the role played by the Eastern Partnership in the business world cannot be questioned – both in the EU Member States and in partner countries. In light of the challenges facing the economy of today, dialogue between entrepreneurs from all across Europe has become more important than ever before. As politicians, we also need the involvement and assistance of the business community. They know better than anyone what are the hurdles that must be overcome in order to build growth and create jobs.

Herman Van Rompuy

President of the European Council
Eastern Partnership Business Forum
Sopot, 30 September 2011.

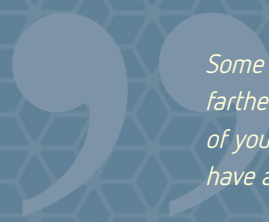


Armenia, view of Yerevan and Mount Ararat





Implementation of the Eastern Partnership



Some of you want us to go faster and farther. But honestly, I know that many of you are surprised at how much we have achieved in such a short time.

Štefan Füle

Commissioner for Enlargement and European
Neighbourhood Policy, informal meeting of Foreign
Ministers of the Eastern Partnership
Sopot, 24 May 2010.

The dynamic development of the Eastern Partnership is rapidly becoming reality. In 2011, dozens of projects deepening bilateral cooperation were carried out, and the implementation of multilateral flagship initiatives was launched.

A key issue for the development of the Eastern Partnership is the **visa liberalisation process**. Its effects may be the most tangible benefit for the citizens of the partner countries. Ukraine and Moldova, which have already concluded agreements on visa facilitation and readmission, are at the most advanced stage of cooperation with the European Union. Since the beginning of 2011, they have been carrying out two-phase Action Plans whose implementation will lead to full visa liberalisation. Georgia is following in the footsteps of Ukraine and Moldova. In March 2011, agreements with Georgia on visa facilitation and readmission entered into force, and in June 2012 the European Union opened visa dialogue with the country. Consequently, Georgia will soon receive an Action Plan on visa liberalization. Negotiations on visa facilitation agreements with Armenia and Azerbaijan began in early 2012. The European Union also put forward an offer to enter into similar negotiations; however, Belarus has yet to reply to the offer.

The introduction of travelling facilities will additionally streamline the already implemented **integrated border management programme** – IBM (training program-

mes, building of additional border infrastructure, equipment of partner countries etc.).

Simultaneously, intensive efforts have been undertaken to conclude **association agreements and agreements on deep and comprehensive free trade areas** (DCFTA). Ukraine has finished the negotiation phase (the Agreement was initialled in March 2012), while Moldova and Georgia have been making rapid progress in their negotiations, e.g. by starting negotiations on the DCFTA trade chapter. In March 2012, Armenia also began DCFTA negotiations. Also, measures have been taken to strengthen the economies of the Eastern Partnership countries. Under the flagship initiative of **promoting small and medium enterprises (SME Facility) the East-Invest project** has been launched, which aims at improving the investment climate in the partner countries and establishing a network of business contacts between the European Union and its Eastern neighbours. Another element of the initiative is the **SME Facility financial support instrument** implemented with the participation of the European Investment Bank (EIB). The EIB opened its first credit lines under this facility in Moldova and Georgia. Others are being prepared.

One of the most promising areas of cooperation is the energy sector. An initiative to increase energy efficiency and environmental protection has been launched. The partner countries are encouraged to participate in the EU's energy efficiency projects, such as the Intelligent Energy Europe and the Covenant of Mayors – an EU initiative subscribed to by cities ready to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 20 percent below the set target.





Eastern Dimension of Mobility Conference, Warsaw, 6-7 July 2011

Several cities from the Eastern Partnership countries have already joined it. An opportunity to modernise the energy sector is also provided by the Eastern Europe Energy Efficiency and Environment Partnership project, which is already being implemented in Ukraine. In time, it might be extended to other Eastern Partnership countries.

Cultural cooperation between the European Union and EaP countries is also developing strongly. The ambitious **Eastern Partnership Culture Programme** has been implemented since 2011. Its main objective is to strengthen institutions in the cultural sectors in the partner countries. Measures implemented under the Programme are intended to help, among others, in the formulation of the cultural policy, the reform of cultural institutions, the development of grounds on which it is possible to benefit from opportunities offered by European cultural program-

mes. The coordination of the selection process, evaluation and promotion of projects under the programme are carried out by the Regional Monitoring and Capacity Building Unit of the European Partnership Culture Programme (RMCB Unit), with its seat in Kiev.

In 2003, the European Commission opened the "SALTO EECA Resource Centre" in Warsaw which deals with the cooperation of young people in Central Europe and the Caucasus. Poland hopes that the Centre will play a significant role in the functioning of the Eastern Partnership Youth Programme.

In 2011, the Polish Presidency organized a series of cultural projects, including a project which brought together young musicians from Poland and the six Eastern Partnership countries: "I, Culture Orchestra", and the Eastern European Performing Arts Platform, with its seat in Lublin. The first Eastern Partnership Culture Congress took place in Lublin in October 2011.

Until now, a series of conferences and meetings have been organised, including two editions of the annual "Go East" Conference (Warsaw, 2009 and 2010), devoted to possibilities of implementing joint projects in the field of culture and civil society, as well as the "Eastern Dimension of Mobility", during which over 300 participants discussed effective ways of supporting mobility.



Calls for project tenders and competitions are posted on the website of the EuropeAid Cooperation Office:

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/funding/index_en.htm





Funding

The implementation of the Eastern Partnership would not be possible without adequate funding.

The European Commission has allocated a total of **1.9 billion euros from the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument** (ENPI) towards the implementations of the Eastern Partnership in 2010-2013. This total sum comprises both funding for multilateral EaP programmes and initiatives, as well as bilateral funds towards cooperation with the individual partner countries. In general, ENPI funds serve three principal goals: supporting systemic transformation in partner countries on the path to democratic rule of law (including the promotion of human rights), supporting the creation of free-market economies in these countries, and promoting sustainable development.

Financing of the Eastern Partnership project also takes place through different financial mechanisms existing within the EU. The **European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights** focuses on projects that enhance the civil society and respect for human rights. The **Neighbourhood Investment Facility** (NIF) serves to promote investment in infrastructure in the area of energy and transport, environmental protection, private sector development (in particular small and medium enterprises) and the social sector. The European Commission has earmarked **700 million euros** for the NIF for 2007-2013.

Ever greater support for Eastern Partnership projects is offered by international financial institutions, in particular



Eastern Partnership Business Forum, Sopot, 30 September 2011

the European Investment Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. In 2010 the European Investment Bank (EBI) prepared the **Eastern Partners Facility** programme, which provides **1.5 billion euros** in funding for loans and guarantees for investments in partner countries. Entrepreneurs may apply for these funds directly at the European Investment Bank. The EBI, in cooperation with EU Member States concerned, has also launched the Eastern Partnership Technical Assistance Trust Fund (EaPTATF), with a planned budget of **10 million euros**, which has the potential to significantly enhance the capacities of the EaP countries through funding of feasibility studies, legal and institutional expert opinions, environmental and social impact assessments of projects or project management. Poland has contributed 1 million euros towards the EaPTATF.



Štefan Füle – Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy, and Mikheil Saakashvili – President of Georgia

On 1 December 2011, the EU Foreign Affairs Council established the **European Endowment for Democracy** (EED). The purpose of the EED is to support democratic change. The EED's primary form of activity will consist in forwarding funds to partner organizations (political foundations, NGOs) towards measures covered by the Endowment's mandate. The European Endowment for Democracy will be financed from EU budgets and contributions from national budgets.

The **Neighbourhood Civil Society Facility** (NCSF) is also used to support civil society in all countries covered by the ENP. Assistance under the NCSF aims to strengthen democracy (e.g. by boosting the role of NGOs and promoting media pluralism, as well as by

organizing election observations), including the development of civil society and its involvement in political dialogue. The NCSF budget for 2011-2013 amounts to **22 million euros** allocated from the ENPI fund (with an equal share towards the southern and eastern dimensions of the partnership).

It is also possible to receive non-EU funding. The programmes may be co-financed by EU Member States, EEA countries, international organizations and corporations and other business entities.

One example of such activity is the International Visegrad Fund (IVF) programme: Visegrad 4 Eastern Partnership (V4EaP). The decision to set up the programme was taken at the V4 Prime Ministers' Summit held in Bratislava on 16 June 2011, while the official inauguration took place in Prague on 5 March 2012. The V4EaP programme enables partner countries to make use of the V4 countries' experiences in systemic transformation in three priority areas: democratization and transformation, regional cooperation, and civil society support.





Polish involvement



As the initiator of the Eastern Partnership, Poland expresses great satisfaction that the project is ever more successful. It is a programme towards a united, stable and prosperous Europe. It is in the interest of both the 27 Member States and the six partner countries. As its initiator, we want to be consistently and strongly involved in its further development.

Donald Tusk
Polish Prime Minister
Eastern Partnership Summit
Warsaw, 30 September 2011.

Since the political transformation in 1989, one of the main successes of Poland, in addition to membership in the European Union and NATO, was to build stable, trust-based and friendly relations with its neighbours.

Poland has sought to strengthen economic cooperation and facilitate people-to-people contacts. In the period leading up to its EU accession, Poland endeavoured to ensure that no new lines of division would appear on the continent after the enlargement of the European Union. In launching Poland's membership negotiations in 1998, the then Polish Foreign Minister Professor Bronisław Geremek called for the creation of the eastern dimension of the European Union. Poland actively participated in the Convention on the Future of Europe, consistently lobbying for its partners in the East. It has also taken concrete measures, such as abolishing visa fees for the citizens of Ukraine. In 2002, President Aleksander Kwasniewski proposed the so-called Riga initiative. Broad regional cooperation involving 17 countries supported the transformation processes and their common fight against crime and terrorism. In 2003, the Polish Foreign Ministry presented the partners with proposals for the shape of relations of the enlarged European Union with its Eastern neighbours. To develop a common policy Poland attempted to use its presidency of the Central European Initiative. Early on, it proposed to develop a coherent policy towards the countries of Eastern Europe, which would be flexible enough to ensure individual relations with individual countries. Poland also aimed at giving them a strong human and social dimension, in addition to emphasizing economic

and political integration. Many Eastern neighbours, however, feared that EU enlargement to the East would create a new wall dividing the continent into privileged countries and those that have to cope with their problems by themselves. Poland has proved that it will not cut itself off from its nearest neighbours. On the contrary, Poland has taken many measures showing that it will use its membership in the EU to effectively promote positive changes in the countries of Eastern Europe.

Poland strongly engaged itself first in the preparation, and then in the implementation of the Eastern Partnership. It also worked to enrich this initiative with new elements and additional support for the societies of partner countries.

In January 2010, together with Spain's Presidency of the European Union, the Polish authorities organised an international seminar on the Eastern Partnership in Madrid. Many new ideas for additional support for the modernisation of the European Union's Eastern neighbours were put forward at the time. One of them was the establishment of the Group of Friends of the Eastern Partnership (now known as the Information and Coordination Group). Its establishment was agreed **in May 2010 in Sopot, at an informal meeting of Foreign Ministers of the European Union and the Eastern Partnership countries** convened at the initiative and invitation of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Radosław Sikorski. This informal **Information and Coordination Group** is a forum of cooperation with countries that are not members of the European Union, but are interested in supporting the Eastern Partnership, such as the United States, Norway,



Japan, Canada, Switzerland, as well as Russia and Turkey. Some of these countries are ready to act as donors and provide financial support to the EU initiative. Others, especially those located in the vicinity of the Eastern Partnership countries, stand ready to participate in some projects. Countries belonging to the Group will be kept informed of progress in the achievement of the objectives of the Eastern Partnership. They will also be able to share ideas and receive information on projects in which they could participate.

The Polish government allocates a large share of foreign aid funds to the implementation of Eastern Partnership goals; in 2010-2011, almost 100 different projects were implemented in the partner countries. Poland continues to promote the initiative on the international stage, trying to win political support for it, encouraging other countries to commit themselves and raising additional financing.

The Eastern Partnership during the Polish Presidency:

The Eastern Partnership was a key priority of the Polish Presidency of the Council of the European Union in the second half of 2011. "We want to share the experiences from our own integration process, so that our partners can best benefit from this process, just as Poland once benefited from it. When Poland was ruled by a communist dictatorship, 10 million Poles joined the "Solidarity" movement and stood up for their rights. Without that united force, we would not be where we are today - a member of the European Union, currently holding its Presidency. We succeeded, and so can you!," said Polish Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski on 29 September

2011, addressing representatives from Eastern European states gathered in Warsaw on the occasion of the Eastern Partnership Conference "Towards a European Community of Democracy, Prosperity and a Stronger Civil Society."

Poland has been consistent in its willingness to strengthen the Eastern dimension of neighbourhood policy, e.g. through deepening sector-specific cooperation and including partner countries under EU cooperation programmes and agencies. The 2nd Eastern Partnership Summit took place in Warsaw on 29-30 September 2011. It was attended by the heads of state or government of the 27 EU Member States and of five partner countries, as well as the highest representatives of European institutions. Belarus opted out of the summit. A **Joint Declaration** ("Warsaw Declaration") was adopted during the summit. The Declaration sends a strong political message in favour of deeper integration and further practical implementations of joint activities by the European Union and its Eastern partners. The text also includes specific provisions which confirm the will to actively cooperate in this field, underscoring e.g. the fact that the Partnership is founded on common values, reiterating the European aspirations of partner countries, announcing the readiness to fully integrate partner countries with the EU internal market, and create a future common economic area covering the EU and Eastern Partnership states. The Declaration also reaffirms efforts to establish a visa-free regime and deepen sector-based cooperation. The Warsaw Declaration also includes the announcement to open the EU programmes to citizens of partner countries, and specifies 2011 as the possible year for terminating negotiations on the Association Agreement with Ukraine and on the creation of Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas (DCFTAs) with Georgia and Moldova.



2nd Eastern Partnership Summit, Warsaw, 29-30 September 2011

Summit participants expressed their acknowledgement for the role played by civil society and noted the possibility to create a range of new instruments: the European Endowment for Democracy and the Civil Society Facility, the creation of which Poland strongly supports. The Summit also noted the creation of the Eastern Partnership Academy of Public Administration – a multiannual programme of trainings of trainings addressed to public officials from partner countries.

Pursuant to these declarations, negotiations were inaugurated on the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas (DCFTAs) with Georgia and Moldova, and terminated on the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement, which covers the DCFTA. The Polish Presidency's efforts to set up the Eastern Partnership Business Forum were also successful (the founding conference took place in Sopot). Furthermore, the Presidency organized the 3rd Civil Society Forum in Poznań, which also hosted the Conference of the Regional and Local Authorities for the Eastern Partnership. The

EuroNest Eastern Partnership Parliamentary Assembly held its first formal meeting during the Polish Presidency.

With a view to deepening sectoral cooperation within the Eastern Partnership, the Polish Presidency organized a series of meetings at the level of ministers, senior officials and experts. These events included: a conference of economy, transport and agriculture ministers; a debate of ministers for higher education, a conference of chiefs of customs services and a meeting of statistical office directors, expert meetings devoted to migration, combating drug crimes, human trafficking and corruption, as well as energy, security, education, culture, tariffs and industrial property. Basing its work on measures taken by the Polish Presidency, the European Commission is currently working on the further development of sector-specific cooperation. Among other things, a roadmap has been created which plots the implementation of the Eastern Partnership in the run-up to the next Eastern Partnership forum in the autumn of 2013.





Development perspectives

The European Union has launched activities that will lead to the final elimination of the post-war divisions on the continent.

The countries of the region that 20 years ago still belonged to the Soviet Union have been left alone with their problems after the USSR's collapse. Although they are located in a strategically important region, they could not count on sufficient support to enable them to accelerate their transformation process and conduct the relevant reforms.

The Eastern Partnership countries cover one million square kilometres and are inhabited by more than 75 million people. This represents a huge potential. There is no better chance to use it than by building closer relations with the European Union. But its full potential flowing from integration will only become apparent after the deepening of cooperation between the six partner countries.

The Eastern Partnership project is to show the partners the benefits of deeper integration. These countries can count on the political support of one of the world's most powerful players: the European Union. After the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon, the EU can operate even more effectively on the international stage.

The Eastern Partnership countries have been offered substantial support for their ongoing political and economic reforms. The introduction of transparent structures of authority and international standards in

all areas of life will make the states perform better for the benefit of their citizens. Economic reforms make it possible to raise their peoples' standard of living. The quick pace of these changes is demonstrated by the success of new Member States, which have gone from a command-and-quota economy plunged in permanent crisis to a free market economy on the path to rapid growth – all in the span of less than two decades. Poland proved it did its homework when the financial crisis broke out in 2009, being the only country in the European Union that saw positive economic growth. The countries of Eastern Europe have a chance to follow the same path and enjoy a similar status to that of Norway and Switzerland, two EU neighbours, in the future.

The dynamic development of the Eastern Partnership showed that this vision is attractive to many countries. Dozens of projects are already being implemented in the partner countries and will soon start to produce tangible results. Stimulating the activity of civil society and cultural exchange will result in closer relations at the level of societies. This will enable people in the Eastern Partnership countries and the European Union to see how much they have in common. This will help overcome many negative stereotypes. Bolstering these contacts is necessary in order to convince citizens from the most distant corners of the European Union, often thousands of miles away, that distance does not play a role. And that the citizens of countries located on the eastern fringes of Europe have the same dreams and aspirations.

For this reason, the visa liberalisation process is being consistently developed, which will eventually lead to the





Serzh Sargsyan – President of Armenia, and Catherine Ashton – High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

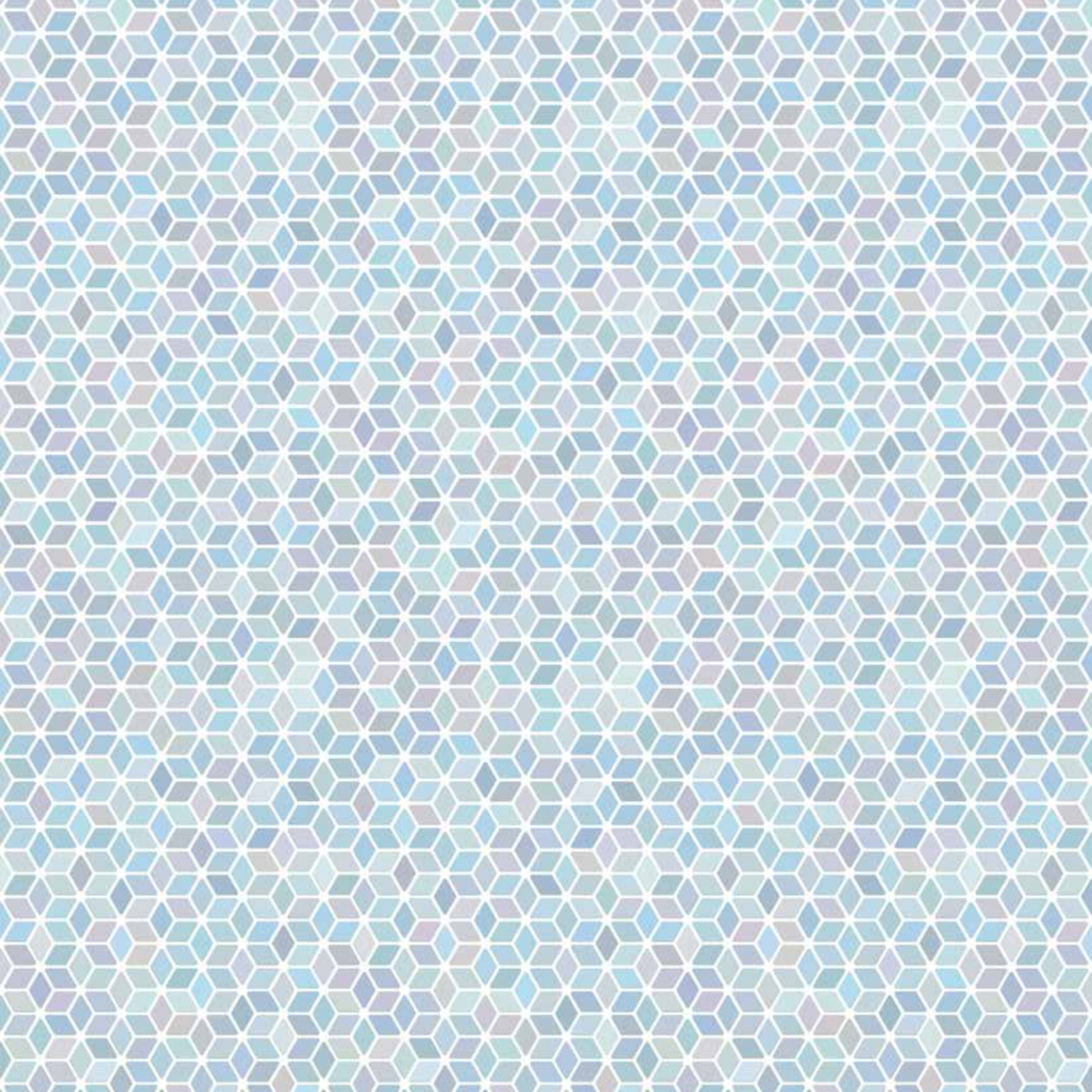
introduction of a visa-free regime. This is an incentive for the citizens of the partner countries to continue reforms. It is also proof that they produce tangible benefits. It is essential that the European Union and the Eastern Partnership countries fully commit themselves to the implementation of other reforms. Political will can easily wane, because one has to wait a while for efforts to materialise. Countries that have undergone a systemic transformation know that reforms, which produce effects over time, require special support. However, a real leap in development cannot be made without tough institutional and economic change. The European Union should use its best efforts to ensure that

this commitment on the part of the partner countries does not wane. Attractive projects can encourage these countries to continue their march toward modernisation. And although the road seems long and difficult, there is no alternative to it.

Nobody should be in doubt that the close proximity of the countries of Eastern Europe has a direct impact on all EU Member States. Lack of support for economic and social reforms could lead to crises erupting in partner countries, one outcome of which could be uncontrolled migration that will also affect the European Union. Therefore, all countries should be interested in supporting the modernisation and democratisation of our Eastern partners, since only this creates the possibility of greater stability in the region.

One must, however, remember that the development and perspectives of the Eastern Partnership depend primarily on the involvement of partner countries and their progress in setting up democratic rule of law.

The Eastern Partnership does not prejudice the final shape of the European Union's relations with the countries covered by this policy. It is not a promise of membership, but it also does not exclude that in the future countries that fulfil all necessary conditions will be able to apply for European Union membership.



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