



## SUMMARY REPORT

OPEN SOCIETY  
EUROPEAN POLICY  
INSTITUTE



### ONLINE BRAINSTORMING SESSION

#### EASTERN PARTNERSHIP IN THE NEXT DECADE: TOWARDS NEW AMBITIOUS DELIVERABLES A FOCUS ON GEORGIA, MOLDOVA AND UKRAINE



9th July 2020, 14.00 – 15.50 CET



*This event is organised in the framework of the IPRE's project: "Establishing Policy Bridges with the EU", implemented with a grant offered by the Open Society Initiative for Europe*

## 1. CONTEXT

On the 9<sup>th</sup> of July, the Institute for European Policies and Reforms (IPRE), in cooperation with the International Renaissance Foundation (IRF, Kiev), Open Society European Policy Institute (OSEPI, Brussels) and in partnership with the EaP Civil Society Forum Secretariat (EaP CSF), EU Neighbourhood East Forum, EU and EaP partner think-tanks organised an online brainstorming session on the future deliverables and milestones for EaP beyond 2020.

Following the Eastern Partnership (EaP Leaders) video teleconference on the 18<sup>th</sup> of June, a new set of deliverables for EaP will be concluded by spring 2021. In this context, the online event brought together over 50 representatives of the EU institutions, researchers and experts to reflect on the key priorities of the EU's EaP policy in the next decade with a particular focus on the Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.

## 2. STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR THE EAP FUTURE

Given that the world is suffering from the COVID-19 pandemic, the priorities on the EaP future will transversally address the economic recovery of the region. In the consultation process with the civil society, the EU received a number of proposals to be more ambitious when it comes to good governance and rule of law. Based on this reflection exercise, the European Commission outlined in its [Joint Communication](#) from March 2020, **five long-term objectives**:

- promoting **resilient, sustainable and integrated economies**;
- establishing **accountable institutions, rule of law and security**;
- building a **more inclusive society**, by working with media, civil society, youth and local authorities;
- empower the **green transformation** and **climate resilience**;
- promote the **digital transformation**;

Based on these objectives, a set of deliverables will be developed by the next EaP Summit in March 2021. The implementation period for these deliverables will be framed between 2021 and 2030. A final timeframe is still to be decided.

### 3. A MORE AMBITIOUS FRAMEWORK FOR THE THREE ASSOCIATED COUNTRIES

#### 3.1. Differentiation vs. inclusiveness

- The EaP is not a choice between differentiation or inclusiveness, is both differentiation with inclusiveness. The macro-financial support is more consistent for the three associated countries, and this has been visible in the last years.
- During the next ten years the three associated EaP countries will not get clear targets with respect to the EU integration, beyond political association and economic integration. However, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine should develop a much broader vision not only on how to make reforms, but also on how to promote them in EU capitals and advocate for closer relations with Brussels.

#### 3.2. Good governance, rule of law and fight against corruption

- If EU wants to work on strengthening good governance and rule of law, one cannot neglect the Parliament as an institution. Parliaments play a pivot role in democracies, but not in the Eastern Partnership countries. The EU assistance should be focussed more on the key functions of the Parliament and we should look a key tools and techniques that are needed for proper parliamentary oversight and work on transparency and accountability of the parliamentary structures. The EU could support a **parliamentary development strategy in the three associated countries**.
- Associated countries will have to tackle major issues like corruption, rule of law and administrative capacity. These aspects will need more time, efforts and financial resources. However, it is key to keep the EaP and implementation of its objectives constantly on the EU political agenda.
- The EaP should deliver on democracy, rule of law and freedom of rights. Strategic, consistent and smart use of conditionality is key. This instrument should be used as a leverage for implementing targeted and tailored reform deliverables.
- The prosecutor general position has to be depoliticized and the EU should support the independence of this institution.
- Combating and fighting the transnational corruption that expands from the EaP to EU, which heavily undermines the democratic institutions in both in EaP and EU, should be addressed.
- A very precise milestone could be the **Single European Payment System for the three associated countries**, which might bring wide benefits for people who travel and do business in the EaP and EU countries. It could also address some key issues, like money laundering and banking transparency. SEPA expansion to the EaP could be done through an initial assessment, followed by Action Plans like in the case VLAPs. The Action Plans should include technical assistance and financial rewards for rapid and efficient implementation of their provisions.

#### 3.3. Security

- The security component and the conflict resolution dimension should become part of EaP future priorities. We could also include the associated countries in various EU defence initiatives (e.g. on cyber security).
- The next deliverables could integrate a **EaP security compact** – merge the capabilities of EU member who are willing to build up the security structures of the EaP countries with EU funds, support and coordination. The security compact should go much deeper into consolidating the intelligence bodies, much stronger links between defence ministries and cyber security structures.
- The EU could finance **50 scholarships each year for mid-career defence personnel from Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine**, who could stay for up to 6 months in the EU and follow an exchange program in their area of specialization.

### 3.4. Financial assistance and conditionality

- EU could provide more specific economic and social incentives for the next decade. Labour mobility could be very crucial.
- **Monitoring and oversight of the EU assistance for the EaP should be improved** and the key information should be communicated to the ordinary citizens in a structured and more simple way.
- The further **decentralization of EU support** is crucial. It would lead to a higher impact of EU assistance on the local level.
- It is key for the EU to continue developing new programs for supporting the local administration, businesses, and do it with limited control of the governments.

### 3.5. Looking ahead

- The principles which might guide the EaP next deliverables should be: (1) continuity and keeping on the agenda the former deliverables which haven't been fully accomplished, (2) flexibility – adjustable deliverables based on realities on the ground, (3) measurability – based on clear assessment indicators, (4) regular assessments conducted by different stakeholders, (5) check points for each package of deliverables.
- In order to make the EaP more ambitious, we should talk more about the **membership perspectives for the associated countries**. Depoliticization of the justice system, the judiciary and prosecutorial institutions and improvement of the electoral rules and people to people contacts should be on the top of the priorities.
- Deep assessment of the implementation of the deliverables at the level of each country, including by civil society, think-tanks, watchdog organisations and national governments.
- More precise milestones for EaP post-2020 deliverables, with clearer measurement indicators, must be set up for accelerating the cooperation between EU and the three associated countries.

Prepared by: **MIHAI MOGILDEA (IPRE)**



**The Institute for European Policies and Reforms (IPRE)** was established in March 2015 as an independent, non-profit and non-partisan think-tank. IPRE's Mission is to accelerate the European integration of the Republic of Moldova by promoting systemic reforms, enhancing participatory democracy and strengthening the role of citizens in national and local decision-making processes.

IPRE is a member of the National Platform of the Civil Society Forum of the Eastern Partnership ([www.eap-csf.eu](http://www.eap-csf.eu)), co-initiator of the Eastern Partnership Think-Tank Forum launched in 2017 in Chisinau.

Address: București 90 street, of. 20  
Chișinău, MD-2001, Republic of Moldova  
Tel.: + 373 22 788 989  
E-mail: [info@ipre.md](mailto:info@ipre.md)  
Web: [www.ipre.md](http://www.ipre.md)