

Eastern partnership, in the run-up to the November 2017 summit. Recommendation to the Council, the Commission and the EEAS

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The European Parliament adopted by 519 votes to 114 with 47 abstentions, a recommendation to the Council, the Commission and the EEAS on the Eastern Partnership, in the run-up to the November 2017 Summit.

As a reminder, the Eastern Partnership is based on a shared commitment between **Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine** and the European Union to deepen their relations and to respect international law and fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, human rights, fundamental freedoms and gender equality, as well as to the social market economy, sustainable development and good governance.

Parliament made a series of recommendations to the Council, the Commission and the EEAS.

1) The future of the Eastern Partnership: the November 2017 Summit should inject new dynamism into the Eastern Partnership as a long-term policy and ensure that the outcomes of this Summit will provide the basis for upholding the core values of the European Union. The Partnership should particularly:

- result in a renewed commitment of partners to the adoption of reforms related to justice, public administration and the fight against corruption and organized crime, based on roadmaps with objectives and clearly defined deadlines;
- strengthen civil society in partner countries, promote transparency and accountability of public institutions and encourage electoral reforms;
- ensure that the outcomes of Summit provide a new impetus including the delivery of tangible results for citizens, notably in terms of **employment, reducing socioeconomic disparities, transport, connectivity, energy independence, mobility and education**;
- continue efforts to combat unemployment, especially among young people, and to develop the skills needed for a changing labour market;
- promote the implementation of **anti-discrimination policies** in all sectors of society; to ensure gender equality in public policies;
- **increase mobility between the EU and partner countries** (support Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine in implementing the visa liberalisation agreement, open visa dialogues with Armenia, encourage progress by Azerbaijan in the implementation of Visa Facilitation and Readmission Agreements (VFA/RA) and finalise negotiations on VFA/RA with Belarus);
- strengthen cooperation in the areas of education, research and innovation, including facilitating participation in programs such as Erasmus +;
- monitor the implementation of free trade agreements in order to avoid social and environmental dumping, support a genuine reform of the economic system to phase out monopolies, and an in-depth reform of the banking and financial sectors to fight against money laundering and tax evasion;
- support the development of the necessary transport and connectivity infrastructure, including through an ambitious investment plan for the TEN-T core network;
- enhance energy independence and efficiency through specific investments and diversification of energy sources by means of enhanced cooperation in the priority areas covered by the Energy Union;
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- ensure full respect for international law and agreements on **nuclear safety** and environmental protection;
- commit to sustaining the **unity of action** among EU Member States in **maintaining collective pressure on Russia**, whose military presence in the region has nevertheless grown over the past years, in particular through strengthened targeted restrictive measures;
- reflect, jointly with the partner countries, on the prospect of an enhanced role for the EU in solving conflicts, including by launching ambitious fully-fledged **Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP)** missions tasked with enhancing security and stability;
- fully cooperate with the EU in tackling challenges such as illegal migration, terrorism, cybercrime, human trafficking, smuggling and illicit trade.

2) Implementation of the Eastern Partnership: the objectives should be, *inter alia*, to:

- reiterate the **principle of differentiation** and emphasise that the partnership aims to create the necessary conditions for close political association and economic integration, including participation in EU programmes;
- **acknowledge the European aspirations of Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine**, recalling that any prospect of accession to the EU requires progress in the implementation of reforms, notably in the areas of the rule of law, respect for human rights and good governance;
- ensure that cooperation and support to partners are subject to strict and controlled conditionality, and that EU financial assistance is conditional on the development and implementation of reforms;
- support the **multilateral dimension** of the Eastern Partnership through transnational civil society platforms, cross-border projects such as people-to-people programmes involving intercultural dialogue and the younger generation;
- maintain that EU support should be **tailor-made** to match the level of shared ambition regarding cooperation with each partner following the principles of both ‘more for more’ and ‘less for less’;
- ask the Commission, the European Investment Bank and other multilateral financial institutions to work towards the successful implementation of the Investment Plan for Europe and of a **dedicated support mechanism** for Eastern Partnership countries committed to implementing the association agreements;
- request the establishment of a **trust fund** for Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova and consider holding a donors’ conference for Ukraine in support of the country’s humanitarian needs induced by the conflict in the East and the annexation of Crimea;
- reiterate its strong support for **parliamentary scrutiny** of the Eastern Partnership policy.

Lastly, Parliament's willingness to increase its monitoring of the implementation of international agreements with the eastern partners and to increase its scrutiny of EU support provided in this respect.