

European Parliament recommendation to the Council, the Commission and the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on the Eastern Partnership, in the run-up to the June 2020 Summit

2019/2209(INI) - 19/06/2020 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 507 votes to 119, with 37 abstentions, a recommendation to the Council, the Commission and the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on the Eastern Partnership, in the run-up to the June 2020 Summit.

Long-term policy proposals to strengthen the Eastern Partnership

Members recalled that the Eastern Partnership:

- is based on mutual interest and understanding, shared ownership and responsibility, differentiation and conditionality, and;
- aims for a shared commitment between Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and the European Union to deepen their relations and adhere to international law and core values such as democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, the rule of law, the independence and impartiality of the judiciary, a social market economy, sustainable development and good governance, with the goal of increasing stability and prosperity.

Members considered that the conclusions of the June 2020 summit should include a clear strategy and a long-term common vision for further engagement and development of the EaP beyond 2020, reinforced EU commitments and political incentives, as well as a pledge from the EaP countries to deliver on their own.

Main recommendations

Parliament's recommendations to the Council, the Commission and the Vice-President of the Commission /High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy are based on the following main points:

- encourage effective cooperation, structured dialogue and close partnership within the Eastern Partnership which supports reforms that generate positive political, social, economic and legal change in the countries of the Partnership, taking into account their level of ambition towards the EU;
- promptly enact a strategic and future-oriented vision for the next decade of the EaP policy beyond 2020;

- consider developing an enhanced cooperation strategy for the three associated countries, including a programme of support for reforms and investments in areas such as capacity building, transport, infrastructure, connectivity, energy, justice and the digital economy, which could subsequently be extended to the other EaP countries on the basis of individual assessments;
- engage in a process of creating a common economic space, leading towards integration with the four freedoms, that would facilitate deeper economic integration and convergence of EaP countries with EU policies;
- provide EaP countries with greater financial assistance, and make it subject to conditions, including in the context of ongoing legislative negotiations on the external financial instruments for the period 2021-2027;
- prioritise the imperative of the 'more for more' democracy and rule of law principle in the light of recent developments in both the EU and EaP countries, and ensure that functioning and resilient democratic institutions, the rule of law, good governance, the fight against corruption and nepotism, media freedom and respect for human rights remain the key criteria and conditions for closer political partnership and financial assistance;
- make macro-financial assistance conditional on democratisation and reforms, in order to avoid further backsliding by partner country governments, and creating the conditions for withdrawing assistance to a given country in case of non-compliance with its commitments;
- engage further with the Eastern Partnership in further assistance in state building and in strengthening institutions and their accountability by making instruments similar to the Support Group for Ukraine available to all EaP countries, with the associated partners having priority;
- obtain a commitment from Eastern European partners to enact comprehensive reforms of the judicial and public administration aimed at ensuring the independence, competence and merit-based recruitment of judges and civil servants, and develop a public administration in line with European quality standards in the Eastern Partnership countries;
- acknowledge the initiatives by the governments of associated countries to boost their mutual cooperation and joint position within the EaP, and encourage their expansion to the multi-sectoral level, in particular in the areas of energy, transport, digital matters, cybersecurity, environmental protection, the maritime economy, border controls, customs cooperation, trade facilitation and justice and home affairs;
- promote electoral reforms to ensure free, fair, open and transparent elections and encourage compliance of electoral processes with international standards;
- promote the broadcasting of European media productions in the EaP countries as well as EaP countries' productions in the EU, in order to bridge the differences provoked by history and by the fake information delivered in the last decades;
- reaffirm the EU's commitment to support the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of all Eastern Partnership countries within their internationally recognised borders.

Parliament recommended giving the EU a more active role in the peaceful resolution of ongoing conflicts and the prevention of any future conflicts in its eastern neighbourhood, while recognising agreed negotiating mechanisms and processes such as the Geneva International Talks, the OECD Minsk Group, the Normandy format and the 5+2 talks. In this context, Members suggested appointing an EU special envoy for Crimea and the Donbass region.

