This international volume is based on the data collected on the ground through the Eastern Partnership project funded by the Romanian Ministry of Education (PN-II-ID-PCE-2011-3-1014) (2011 - 2016)
EASTERN PARTNERSHIP: A CIVILIAN SECURITY PERSPECTIVE

ed. Mihail E. Ionescu, Ph.D.
Descrierea CIP a Bibliotecii Naționale a României

Conține bibliografie

I. Ionescu, Mihail E. (ed.)

32.01
CONTENTs

ABBREVIATIONS ........................................................................................................ 9

PART I
THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP: THE EVALUATION
OF CIVIL SECURITy NEEDS, OPPORTUNITIES AND
OPTIONS THROUGH MULTILATERAL PLATFORMS

INTRODUCTION. Mihail E. Ionescu .............................................................................. 13

Chapter 1. THE RESULTS OF THE PROJECT EASTERN PARTNERSHIP CIVILIAN
SECURITY NEED-ASSESSMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES/
OPTIONS (PN-II-ID-PCE-2011-3-1014). Mihai-Bogdan Popescu .......................... 30

Chapter 2. MULTILATERAL TRACK ........................................................................... 52

2.1. ANALYZING THE CIVILIAN SECURITY IN THE EAP COUNTRIES
THROUGH THE LENSES OF PLATFORMS 1. Mihaela-Adriana Pădureanu .... 52

1. Armenia ............................................................................................................. 53
2. Azerbaijan ........................................................................................................ 61
3. Belarus ............................................................................................................. 67
4. Georgia ........................................................................................................... 72
5. Republic of Moldova ..................................................................................... 75
6. Ukraine ........................................................................................................... 79

2.2. THE ECONOMIC DIMENSION OF CIVILIAN SECURITY.
Mihai-Bogdan Popescu .......................................................................................... 95

Armenia .............................................................................................................. 97
Azerbaijan ......................................................................................................... 101
Belarus ............................................................................................................. 104
Georgia ............................................................................................................. 105
Moldova ........................................................................................................... 108
Ukraine ............................................................................................................ 110

2.3. HOW CAN ENERGY SECURITY CONTRIBUTE TO
THE OPTIMIZATION OF CIVILIAN SECURITY NEEDS?
CASE STUDY: EASTERN PARTNERSHIP STATES. Angela Gramada ............. 120

Armenia ........................................................................................................... 123
Azerbaijan ...................................................................................................... 128
Belarus .......................................................................................................... 133
2.4. ANALYZING CIVILIAN SECURITY IN THE EAP COUNTRIES
THROUGH THE LENSES OF PLATFORM 4. Mihaela-Adriana Pădureanu ..... 149

PART II
“THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP AND CIVIL SECURITY ISSUES
OF THE MEMBER STATES: PAST REALITIES AND PRESENT TRENDS”
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
Bucharest, June 28-30, 2016

CONFEREE AGE AGENA ........................................................................................... 165
CONCEPT FOR INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH CONFERENCE
“THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP AND CIVIL SECURITY ISSUES
OF THE MEMBER STATES: PAST REALITIES AND PRESENT TRENDS”.......... 169

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT AND ITS MAIN RESULTS
Professor Mihail E. Ionescu ................................................................................... 174

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS
H.E. Anne Lindahl Kenny, Ambassador of Sweden ................................................. 181

DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS PROTECTION AS ONE OF THE MAIN
GUARANTEE OF THE EUROPEAN INTEGRATION OF GEORGIA
Nika Chitadze ........................................................................................................ 183

ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL IMPLICATION OF THE MINING AND
PROSPECTS OF RESPONSIBLE MINING IN SOUTH CAUCASUS
Nino Gaprindashvili .............................................................................................. 194

THE EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY AND THE EASTERN
PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN IDEALISTIC INTENTIONS AND REALISTIC
DRAWBACKS
Adrian Pop ............................................................................................................. 198

PEACEKEEPING AS A NEW POSSIBLE FIELD OF COOPERATION
BETWEEN THE EU AND ARMENIA
Mikayel Avetisyan, Hayk Torosyan ........................................................................ 205
FORESEEING OF HYBRID SECURITY TRENDS
IN THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP WIDER CONTEXT

Zlatogor Minchev .............................................................................................................. 212

TOWARDS A RENEWED EASTERN PARTNERSHIP ENGAGEMENT
IN THE WIDER BLACK SEA

George Vlad Niculescu ........................................................................................................ 226

THE ROLE OF ROMANIA IN THE ENP: EXPECTATIONS FROM UKRAINE

Sergiy Gerasymchuk ........................................................................................................... 238

ROMANIA’S POSITION REGARDING THE ENP IN THE BROADER
CONTEXT OF EUROPEAN AND ROMANIAN POLITICS.

LATEST EVOLUTIONS (2015 - 2016)

Mihai Sebe ......................................................................................................................... 246

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Mihail E. Ionescu ................................................................................................................. 260

PART III

NEWSLETTERS 2012-2016

1. Member states of Eastern Partnership ........................................................................... 267
   a. Armenia ..................................................................................................................... 267
   b. Azerbaijan ............................................................................................................... 281
   c. Belarus ...................................................................................................................... 295
   d. Georgia ..................................................................................................................... 309
   e. Moldova .................................................................................................................... 318
   f. Ukraine ..................................................................................................................... 333

2. Russian Federation ........................................................................................................ 352

3. European Union ........................................................................................................... 362

4. The Eastern Partnership Multilateral Platforms ........................................................... 377
   a. Democracy, good governance and stability ............................................................... 377
   b. Economic integration and convergence with EU policies ........................................ 394
   c. Energy Security ......................................................................................................... 402
   d. Contacts between people ......................................................................................... 412

5. Flagship Initiatives ...................................................................................................... 420
ABBREVIATIONS

AA – Association Agreement
BSEC – the Black Sea Economic Cooperation
BSS – Black Sea Synergy
CIA – Central Intelligence Agency
CSDP – European Union’s Common Security and Defense Policy
CSTO – Collective Security Treaty Organization
CU – Custom Union
DCFTA – Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement
EaP – Eastern Partnership
EBRD – European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EEAS – European External Action Service
EEU/EAEU – Eurasian Economic Union
ENI – European Neighbourhood Instrument
ENP – European Neighbourhood Policy
ENPI – European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument
ERASMUS MUNDUS – European Region Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students
EU – European Union
EUAM – European Union Advisory Mission in Ukraine
EUBAM – European Union Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine
EUDRA – Disaster Risk Assessment Working Group for Ukraine
EUFOR RCA – European Union Military Operation in Central African Republic
EUMM – European Union Monitoring Mission
EUNAVFOR Atalanta – European Union Naval Force ATALANTA
EUTM Mali – European Mission Training Mission in Mali
FDI – Foreign Direct Investments
FP7 – European Union’s Seventh Research Framework Programme
FIDH – International Federation for Human Rights
GDP – Gross Domestic Product
HELROC – EU Battle group Balkan (Greece, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Romania, Ukraine)
INOGATE – Regional Energy Cooperation Programme between the European Union and 11 Partner Countries in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia
INSS – Institute for National Strategic Studies
ISAF – International Security Assistance Force
JTSAC – Joint Training Simulation and Analysis Center, Bulgaria
KFOR – NATO Kosovo Force
MINUSMA – UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
NATO – the North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NIP – National Indicative Programme
NGO – Non-Governmental Organization
OMCT – International Partnership for Human Rights and World Organization Against Torture
OSCE – Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PAC – Partnership and Cooperation Agreement
PPRD East – Prevention, Preparedness and Response to Natural and Man-made Disasters in the Eastern Partnership Countries
SCO – Shanghai Cooperation Organization
SME – Small and Medium Enterprises
SURCAP Phase II – Strengthening Surveillance and Bilateral Coordination Capacity along the Common Border between Belarus and Ukraine project
TAP – Trans Adriatic Pipeline
TEMPUS – the European Union’s programme which supports the modernization of higher education in the Partner Countries of Eastern Europe, Central Asia, the Western Balkans and the Mediterranean region through University Cooperation Projects
UK – United Kingdom
UN – United Nations
UNIFIL – United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon
UNM – United National Movement (Georgia)
USAID – United States Agency for International Development
USSR – the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
VAT – Value-added tax
WBS – Wider Black Sea
WTO – World Trade Organization
PART I

THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP: THE EVALUATION OF CIVIL SECURITY NEEDS, OPPORTUNITIES AND OPTIONS THROUGH MULTILATERAL PLATFORMS
End of the Road

The project team is now at the end of a five years road on which its members tried to assess what it is with the “civilian security” within the EaP partner countries. It is time to present the project conclusions and to assess the efforts deployed along the road, when the team has encountered not only the administrative bumps or team’s changes due to other commitments of some of the members, but especially the vicissitudes of evolution of the international relations in such a sensitive geopolitical region as it is Eastern Europe. Some of these twists on the international stage which has heavily impacted not only the EaP development, but the work of the project’s team as well, are listed below.

1. The American-Russian “reset” policy and the Eastern Partnership. After the Russian-Georgian war of August 2008, which brought a sudden deterioration of the relationship of Russia with the West, the beginning in 2009 of the Eastern Partnership was both a hand extended to the East European countries, former Soviet republics and the beginning of a continental effort to support the reconnection of Moscow to the European way. After five years of applying efforts on a fascinating field of research – civil security – within a fascinating international initiative – Eastern Partnership – we must fix both ends of this project’s team long way. In the last trimester of 2011, when we have begun enthusiastically this itinerary, both difficult and challenging, Europe was under the promising star of the “reset” policy concluded between Russia and USA in 2010, which has influenced the peaceful and visionary work of the EU in the Eastern neighborhood. So, it was possible for both parts, the West and Russia, to work together in order to renew the bilateral connections which have suffered a lot after the Russian-Georgian War. For our team it was possible to travel and apply field work and collect data in the target countries of Eastern Partnership, and also in Russia. The ascendant trend of our work continued for at least two years. And, of course, we – I mean the team of the project – were ready, after the DCFTAs (Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area) with Ukraine, Armenia and Moldova were concluded and waited to be signed in Vilnius at the end of November 2013 to continue in order to fix a matrix which could be used afterwards (the end of the project was estab-
lished to be October 2014) to optimize the civil security in these countries. Instead of that, we witnessed an unexpected series of events which changed entirely the landscape in Eastern Europe. The Crisis Group website published in July 2016 a study concerning the EEU – Eurasian Economic Union – which has been formed by Russia in 2015 – which presents that new landscape: “On paper, the EEU is an economic, technocratic project that offers some benefits to members, particularly in easing cross-border trade and facilitating labour migration, but also poses economic risks by raising external tariffs and potentially orienting economies away from global markets. So far it has had little economic success, though access to Russia’s labour market has been an important motivator and, on balance, a positive outcome for struggling post-Soviet economies. Beset by trade disputes, sanctions regimes and a regional economic crisis, trade inside the EEU fell by 26 per cent in 2015. But optimists argue that the legal status of labor migrants within the bloc has improved, and there will be long-term gains from harmonizing customs and trade rules. The main political tensions around the EEU, however, stem from its role in regional politics. Russia views it not only as an economic grouping, but also as a mechanism to institutionalize influence over its neighbors and as a building block in a new international order. This raises tensions with members and has led to a clash with other integration drivers in the EU’s and Russia’s shared neighborhood, specifically the EU’s Association Agreements, including a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (AA/DCFTA). Moscow views these EU initiatives as encroachment into its sphere of influence. This clash between different regional projects contributed to the tensions and conflict in Ukraine in 2014, and while Moscow argued the AA/DCFTA was harmful for its economy, EU officials saw the concern as political, stressing that EU standards are not a burden even for EU companies when exporting to Russia or cooperating with Russian companies. Both sides view the other as a rival, but EEU member states other than Russia have sought to deepen their relationships with the EU where they can”.

Some monographs, one written in Romania in close contact with the development of this project, have discussed at lengths how this competition developed gradually, after the creation of Eastern Partnership, at the common frontier of European Union and Russia. Concluding his research, Rotaru wrote persuasively: “Russian actions in the ‘common neighborhood’, especially in Ukraine, clearly show that Moscow /.../ is not willing to let the former Soviet republics make their own foreign policy choices. It is difficult to predict the outcome of the events in Ukraine or future developments in the rest of the Eastern partners. However, it is up to the Eastern partners to decide their future”. Letting aside the optimism of the last sentence, the author underlined correctly what has been and still is Russia’s behavior towards its Western neighbors, parts of its own former empire. Among the instruments

---

3 Ibidem, p. 203
used by EU to promote its own targets in Eastern Europe, it should be mentioned primarily the DCFTA. As a matter of fact, this agreement has been the first to be attacked by Moscow in 2013, when some of the partners were well advanced on the road to sign it and to begin its implementation.

2. The referendum in the Netherlands (April 6, 2016) – a test for EaP? In the complex international environment which had developed in the aftermath of the Crimea’s annexation EaP knew a certain revival. Among other things, DCFTA EU-Ukraine, which former Ukrainian president refused to sign earlier in Vilnius, was officially validated by the new government in power in Kiev after the events in February 23, 2016. After several months, in a move which was unprecedented for EU, have been developed the tripartite talks – EU, Ukraine and Russia – for accommodating DCFTA’s fulfillment together with Ukrainian-Russia economic relationship. The talks failed, EU deciding to enforce the initial agreement without any Russian connection to its provisions and its implementation has begun on January 1, 2016. But other evolution on the international scene has influenced negatively the development of EaP. For example, a huge amount of attention which was attracted by the migration issue, rapidly to become in 2015 an existential crisis of the EU. Or, that threat was in close connection with the new assertiveness of Russia, which in September 2015 intervened militarily directly in Syria supporting the Assad government alongside Iranian forces and Hezbollah against the Sunni opposition. A new strategy of Russia began to develop, namely pushing for an understanding with the West in Syria to defeat the so called Islamic Caliphate (ISIL or Daesh) in exchange for canceling the sanctions against Moscow after the annexation of Crimea and Donbass separatism. The West focused more and more to the South events (Turkey showing clear signs of instability especially in the region bordering the Syrian territory) wherefrom was expected a new wave of migrants closely connected with the more complex developments in Syria. And since the spring of 2016 a new event began to appear increasingly becoming a risk for the unity of European Union: Brexit. The possibility that the “remain” camp to be defeated in the referendum regarding the UK membership with EU has acquired visibility and that single fact had created problems for the unity of the European integration.

Against this background, the Dutch electorate was called to decide whether the Ukraine-European Union association agreement should be ratified or not. The event was considered as an opportunity by “Russia Today” (‘Russian CNN’), the main tool of Moscow for influencing the English speaking international public opinion. Of course, what they have broadcasted about the referendum are lies, for example: “A poll conducted in January/…/ found that the overwhelming majority of people in the country are not in favor of the agreement.”; “Over 50 percent of voters said they would ‘definitely’ vote against it, while another 25 percent of the respondents said they
were ‘likely’ to reject it.”¹ Should be noticed that this example of the “hybrid war“ waged successfully by Russia in Ukraine – namely a host of attempts to influence, by various means, the public opinion of the adversary –, has little relationship with reality. But an analysis of the impact of Russian propaganda in the result of the Dutch referendum is offered by Anne Applebaum: “How many of them were moved by Russian disinformation? It’s hard to say, though certainly there has been a lot of it in the Netherlands in recent years, and it accelerated in recent months. Much of it served to create extra uncertainty and fears about nonexistent Ukrainian threats. Many of the ‘no’ campaign’s themes, headlines and even photographs were lifted directly from Russia Today and Sputnik, Russia’s state propaganda website. According to a poll cited by a Ukrainian foreign ministry official, 59 percent of those who voted against the treaty listed, as an important motivation, the fact that Ukraine is corrupt; 19 percent believed that Ukraine was responsible for the crash of MH-17, the plane that Russian separatists shot down over Ukraine in 2014; 34 percent believed that the treaty would guarantee Ukraine’s membership in the European Union. Of those three points, the second two are certainly false. The first, while true, is hardly a rational argument against a treaty designed to reduce corruption in Ukraine.”² The result of the referendum was negative for the fate of DCFTA for Ukraine and even if the turn out was not enough for changing the government decision to it, the echo in the Dutch and European public opinion should not be underestimated.

Clearly, Russia is trying to use its own tools of influence over the European electorate in order to change the decisions already taken regarding Ukrainian crisis. And the Russian propaganda, disseminated by various channels, tends to amplify minor trends of Euro-scepticism (pursued by the extreme right political movements) that exist in the public opinion of the EU states, especially in Western Europe. This, needless to say, had an influence on the future of EaP.

3. The migrant crisis – 2015. Almost concomitantly, in the summer of 2015 Europe has been faced with what has been labeled as the “migrant crisis”, perhaps the biggest crisis ever for its existence. Even if it is not yet very clear what had happened in the summer of 2015, namely what had triggered off the wave of migration to Europe, this new contemporary phenomenon of mass migration to the west of Europe is a direct result of the civil war in Syria. Almost half of more of the 20 million of that country’s population left their homes concentrating in the neighboring countries, mainly in Turkey, or being internally displaced. In the summer of 2015, unexpectedly, from more than 2 million refugees in Turkey, more than one million (among them also migrants from other Greater Middle East countries such as Afghanistan or Pakistan) began to move towards Europe beyond the Ae-

Syria: The gutting of a nation

Syria’s population was estimated to be 22.4 million in 2011 when the uprising against the Assad regime began. In nearly 4½ years, more than half the population has been killed, was displaced or fled the country.

= 100,000 people

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internally displaced persons (IDP)</th>
<th>Refugees</th>
<th>Deaths</th>
<th>Not displaced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At least 7.6 million</td>
<td>At least 4 million have fled Syria, with most going to Lebanon, Turkey or Jordan.</td>
<td>Since the conflict began, an estimated 250,000 Syrians have died.</td>
<td>Of the remaining 10.6 million Syrians, most have stayed in their homes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The wave of migrants of 2015 (and the first months of 2016) comprised mainly Syrians, and their attempt to find shelter and opportunity of work in Europe attracted other migrants from the neighboring countries, as well as from areas that were not caught in any conflict. In 2015, out of the 160 000 migrants that arrived in Greece, 63 percent were Syrians. After all, as it was written in the international media at the time, “This is, in essence, a security crisis. For years now, Europeans have

chosen to pretend that wars taking place in Syria and Libya were somebody else’s problem. It’s also a foreign policy crisis: At different times and for different reasons, all of the large European states – the United Kingdom, France, Italy, Germany – have blocked attempts to create a common foreign and defense policy, and as a result they have no diplomatic or political clout.”¹

The current European crisis, sparked off by the Syrian “invasion”, also highlighted the incapacity of the international community to find a solution to the civil war in Syria, the true cause of the migration. But, in the context of series of crises that the EU had to face – in the East, Ukraine, in the South the financial crisis in Greece, in addition to the terrorist phenomenon (which is strongly linked to the migrant wave, refugees being infiltrated by ISIL fighters with precise missions, as it was subsequently demonstrated) –, the EU did not manage to identify in time the proper solutions. An analysis from that period highlighted the fact that, in order to cope with the crisis, radical measures are needed, to a degree that was unconceivable just months ago: “That means closing Germany’s borders to new arrivals for the time being. It means beginning an orderly deportation process for able-bodied young men. It means giving up the fond illusion that Germany’s past sins can be absolved with a reckless humanitarianism in the present. It means that Angela Merkel must go – so that her country, and the continent it bestrides, can avoid paying too high a price for her high minded folly”.²

It must be stressed that, as a whole, the test the EU was put to in 2015 was passed even if the realities mentioned previously were undeniable and influenced the European public opinion (for instance, in the UK, the “leave” camp in the Brexit battle used the migrants as “bogeymen” in order to sway the electorate).

Jean-Claude Juncker, the president of the European Commission, analyzed EU’s response to this major challenge to the continental cohesion and showed a strong optimism. The EU – Juncker said – responded in a positive manner by implementing the right measures. From tripling the EU presence in the Mediterranean in order to at least diminish, if not to completely eliminate the loss in human lives during the perilous journey on the sea to the measures taken against the traffickers and smugglers, from relocating the refugees to the member states based on quotas to the negotiations with Turkey in order to find joint solutions, Juncker stated the following: “But we will not concede defeat. We will not give in to fear by rebuilding walls so recently torn down. We will not confuse the perpetrators of these heinous crimes with those fleeing in their wake.”³ But, on the other hand, because the security threats to the stability of the continent are strongly related to each other, such a

boost for the extremist, reactionary and nationalist-extremist political movements would clearly support – willingly or unwillingly – the assault of Russia on the EU’s Eastern borders in an attempt to create a new continental balance of power.

4. Brexit. On June 23, 2016, as it was decided earlier by the government in an attempt to block the Euro-scepticism in the country, a referendum was held in the UK, the electorate being asked to answer whether the UK should stay in or leave the EU. Next day, probably the most surprised people by the result of referendum were exactly the ones belonging to the camp promoting the exit of UK from the EU. It’s proven that not even they expected their victory and rather anticipated their defeat. The dawn of the day after (June 24), the social networks instantly became crazy. Gideon Rachman, supporter of the “remain” camp, wrote on his twitter: “Seventy five percent of people under the age of 25 voted Remain. What a betrayal of them”. His tweet was immediately retweeted 16463 times and received 13705 likes. Among the comments to it, one managed to capture the essence of the contest consumed in the referendum, namely between old and new generations: “but the ignorant xenophobic leave campaign ignores numbers and plays into ignorant older generation/ fears”. The financial markets instantly reacted, recording serious declines, the pound fell dangerously, at the level of the few years or few decades ago, the chancelleries of the great powers started to be troubled, everywhere in Europe the decision makers organized emergency meetings to assess the situation and the consequences of this unexpected result.

Brussels has quickly and correctly answered to London’s strategy to postpone the exit from EU, considering that there is no other way than a quick departing process. This is a justified point of view, since a prolonged unsafe situation may have bad consequences for the EU cohesion. Also, the next day after Brexit, a Dutch political leader stated that the time has come for the Netherlands to organize a similar referendum, while newspapers in other member states were quick to let radical Euro-sceptic voices express themselves. A quickly compiled statistics indicates that requests of such direct democratic consultations were heard from parties in seven countries: France, Italy, Germany, Netherlands, Denmark, Greece and Sweden. A blunt comment was issued in Moscow on Facebook. It belongs to Boris Titov, a businessman close to Kremlin, and attracted sudden attention: “This is not the independence of Britain from the European Union, it’s the independence of the European Union from the United States. In 10 years it will be possible to talk about a United Eurasia.” Dreams or long-term plans?

Brexit’s history is only at the beginning. By August 2016, an analysis published in “The New York Times” was already citing the opinion of one expert according

1 https://twitter.com/gideonrachman.
2 https://twitter.com/status/74624172745949184.
to whom the EU has to make great efforts in key compartments, such as internal and external security or the creation of new jobs in order to fight youth unemployment: “There is no clear indication of how or why these efforts would succeed where others have failed. Yet the pressure is immense; if Europe cannot rally to its many challenges, anti-European Union feelings could lead to even more referendums. The Netherlands, which already voted against a Europe-wide agreement on Ukraine in a referendum this summer, ‘are a very nervous European partner at the moment,’ /…/. Other factors gnawing at Europe’s fragile unity include the rerun presidential election scheduled for Oct. 2 in Austria, where a far-right politician could win in the first such triumph in Europe since 1945.”¹ If we add to all these the fact that the negotiations for the exit of the UK from the EU haven’t started yet, London postponing this decision and, furthermore, planning to take it in the year to come, something that will prolong by two years this dossier with a massive impact on the European affairs, one can be justifiably pessimistic over the future of the EaP. Namely that the organization as a whole will have an extremely busy agenda in the short and medium turn, in which the EaP will definitely not have a privileged place, and given that the energy and the resources at the level of the leadership of the EU members, especially in the important states, will focus on other priorities, a revival of the neighbourhood policy in the East is probably unattainable. And this might lead to contradictory processes internally and perhaps even externally – in the partner states –, something what will affect negatively the evolution of the EaP.

5. **EaP: whereto?** Since early 2016, but there were signs months before that – especially after the annexation of Crimea and the separatism in Donbass –, two different visions took shape pertaining to the manner in which Eastern Partnership evolves.

The first considers that this formula of EU’s neighborhood policy in the East is actually consolidating, despite all the major obstacles it has to face. In this regard, it is cited as evidence the fact that the EU put into practice, since January 1ˢᵗ, 2016, the Association Agreement with Ukraine, signed in 2014. On January 1ˢᵗ, the former Swedish prime minister, Carl Bildt, one of the “fathers” of the EaP concluded in 2009, wrote confidently on his twitter account – and retweeted for more than 300 times by his readers – that “From today the EU-Ukraine association and free trade agreement is in full force. It’s a victory for all of Europe”.² The reactions of his readers were divided. If some of them – and not few in number – welcomed EU’s undeniable achievement (“I would emphasize Ukraine as the success story, making great domestic achievements, with support from west.”); “one of EuroMaidan’s goals and victories.

---


² https://twitter.com/carlbildt/status/682902876549705729.
In memory of those who believed in this so much, they gave their lives for it.”, stated another, others were skeptical. Among these skeptical responses, I quote: “Ukraine has been enjoying duty-free access to the EU market for a year. No much help, GDP fell by 12 and exports is collapsing.”; “Hopefully a success story and not the beginning of more violence in Donbass”.1

The second opinion came somewhat by surprise – again from one of the “parents” of the Eastern Partnership. In Poland, where in 2016 a change took place in the leadership of the country, the foreign minister, Witold Waszczykowski, stated in an interview granted to “Radio Poland” that the Eastern Partnership was a “wrong” political initiative that created illusions to the partners (Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, Belarus, Ukraine) as it didn’t offer them any perspective to join the EU; furthermore, he went on claiming that the previous Polish government was characterized by the “disaster” of the Euromaidan in Kiev (February 2014). The declaration made by the head of Polish diplomacy, summarized above, went like this: “I rejected this concept /Eastern Partnership/ as wrong. It created illusions to those /partner/ countries, but did not offer them the perspective of joining the European Union. The policy adopted by the previous government /the Civic Platform/ ended in disaster because the Euromaidan called it into question”. Also, the head of the Polish diplomacy sought to demonstrate that the initiative behind this concept was not Polish or Swedish, but German: “The Eastern Partnership is a German concept of the European Eastern Policy, which was forwarded to the governing party /from Poland/ Law and Justice since 2006-2007 –, then under the name of European Neighborhood Policy Plus /…/. This /fact/ was publicly recognized a few months later by the European commissioner for enlargement Verheugen in an interview for ‘Rzeczpospolita’ “.2 The statements made by the Polish diplomat were immediately used by the Russian propaganda3, offering munitions to Kremlin’s view that the events in Ukraine were triggered by this new policy of the European Union after 2009. Each of the two political stances towards the EaP draws its arguments from the present situation. For the official European position, it is of outmost importance that the Ukrainian economy benefits from the access to the European market, comprising over 500 million consumers, therefore a major opportunity. The European Commissioner for Trade, Cecilia Malmström, stated that “the entry into force of this trade area on 1 January 2016 creates unique opportunities4 for Ukraine to stabilise, diversify and develop its economy to the benefit

1 Ibidem.  
3 http://sputniknews.com/politics/20160130/1033962797/eastern-partnership-failure.html#ixzz3zBOSM7gG.
4 Supporting small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs),”the European Commission – jointly with the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) – has put in place the DCFTA Facility for SMEs. The Facility will complement the EU programmes in Ukraine that help small businesses to grow – such as EU SURE and the SME Flagship. The DCFTA Facility for SMEs will receive for its operations in Ukraine approximately
of all its citizens. Assistance from the EU will be made available to help Ukrainian SMEs seize these new opportunities, to grow, and thereby create jobs. EU businesses will benefit as well by gaining improved access to a market of 45 million people. The change will not occur over night, it will require work and investment. Gradually, the DCFTA will contribute to a prosperous Ukraine and to stronger economic integration with the EU.”¹ The President of the European Council and former prime minister of Poland, Donald Tusk, summarized the EU position in a post on twitter on December 16, 2015, as follows: “Europe will stay the course. Ukraine must stay the course of reforms. And Russia must change its course”.²

Among the “pluses” supporting the views of the “skeptics”, one can count the contradictory developments in the high political circles in the capital of Ukraine. On February 3, 2016, the minister of Economic Development and Trade, Aivaras Abromavicius, resigned from the Ukrainian cabinet. Of Lithuanian origin, known as a reformist and author of bold measures towards economic development and combating corruption, he motivated his action as such: “My team and I have no desire to be a cover for open corruption or puppets for those who want to establish control over state funds in the old fashion.” He also added that “These people have names. And one of these names I am going to mention. It is Igor Kononenko. As a representative of the political force that nominated me a minister, he has done a great deal recently to block the work of my team and me.”³

A huge political scandal broke out immediately. Igor Kononenko is known as the “grey cardinal” of the political bloc of President Poroshenko, in addition of being what in the post-communist space is usually called an oligarch (businessman, owner of various assets acquired by dubious methods, highly influential in the Ukrainian politics and even harboring ambitions of creating his own military force). Following the protests of the public opinion, the National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine opened a criminal investigation against Kononenko starting from the declarations of the resigning minister. This new crisis was considered to be the most serious to date of the Poroshenko administration, because of the close ties of the president to Kononenko. In a public declaration, nine ambas-

---

¹ Ibiden.
² https://twitter.com/eucopresident/status/677187172424904705.

---

€100 million of grants from the EU budget. This contribution is expected to unlock at least €1 billion of new investments by Ukrainian SMEs, to be financed largely by new loans supported by the Facility. The funding will: help SMEs to seize new trade opportunities with the EU and within the region which have been opened up thanks to the DCFTA; improve access to finance for SMEs, enabling them to make the necessary investments to increase their competitiveness; allow SMEs to integrate into global value chains by becoming business partners of foreign direct investors; enable SMEs to comply with new food safety, technical and quality standards, as well as with environmental protection measures, thereby benefiting Ukrainian customers and boosting exports to the EU and beyond.” (Ibiden).
sadors of Western states in Kiev revealed that they are “disappointed” by the resignation of Aivaras Abromavicius and by the impact of this act on the process of reform in Ukraine. Kononenko went further and proposed a replacement (a member of his close circle) for the resigning minister and hinted at the withdrawal of his political support for the current administration. The crisis was growing in the context of a series of resignations of the reformists, of the offensive of the conservative forces to take over the power (threatening to even dismantle the parliamentary majority) and of the dissatisfaction of the Western powers, for whom Ukraine’s European trajectory had a tremendous role on the continent.  

It was not the first time when the fate of the EaP was put into question, diametrically opposed points of view taking shape. After the occupation of Crimea and especially after the breaking out of the fights in Eastern Ukraine (which led to tens of thousands of victims), EaP was perceived by some experts – and not few in number – as a failure and, given that its revitalization was linked, in the following months after the Crimea annexation, to the agreement of a third party (Russia), then the conclusion can be drawn that, at the time of this scandal (February-March 2016), the situation was not very serious. What now made the situation very worrying is related to two vectors, both unprecedented in the development of this foreign policy project of the European Union. On one hand, one of the most important regional actors supporting the EaP – Poland – was showing signs of fatigue, if not hostility, under the new political leadership of the country. The second vector represented the internal developments in Ukraine, where the presidential administration dedicated to reform was subjected to the conservative pressures coming from its own ranks aiming at stopping the progress on the European trajectory. This second vector highlights another aspect, always present in the post-Soviet states, but never as significantly as in Ukraine, regarding the progress on the European trajectory. Namely, how credible/efficient can be a process of reform in the post-Soviet societies, in which the abandonment of communism and the transition to market economy took place by “oligarchizing” the social-economic fabric and whether this “oligarchic fabric” does nothing more but to innately reject the European trajectory.

We should also take into consideration the general context in which Europe found itself at the beginning of this year. Challenges such as the Brexit and the resurgence of the Greek financial crisis, the major challenge represented by the past and future flows of migrants (in February-March 2016, major decisions were taken at the top of the EU in order to manage this existential threat, among which...
the highly controversial agreement with Turkey referring to the return of the migrants), or the real threats in the vicinities of “the 28” – Mideast, Russia, North Africa –, but also the negotiations for a free trade agreement with the US that can no longer be postponed (TTIP) represent as many dossiers that Brussels has to deal with. **These are overwhelming missions that imperatively demand a visionary leadership of the EU in order to avoid “fatigue” or, even worse, a process of disintegration.**¹ In this latter case, the EaP would undoubtedly be one of the **first victims.** What has to be absolutely avoided is the abandonment of Ukraine.

But here it seems that appeared a new “game changer”. In the presidential elections in US the winner has been Donald Trump (November 8, 2016). During the campaign for becoming president, candidate D. Trump has expressed repeatedly that he has another vision regarding the relationship with Russia. Expressing his own opinion in “The Financial Times” that D. Trump “will clearly try to strike a deal with Mr Putin’s Russia”, Gideon Rachman, well known for his expertise on international affairs, gave us his thought about the terms of such a “new Yalta”: “The US will end its opposition to Russia’s annexation of Crimea. Although America may not agree to the formal legal incorporation of Crimea into Russia, it would accept it as a fait accompli. Following that, the US will lift economic sanctions. The Americans will also drop any suggestion that Ukraine or Georgia will join Nato. The build-up of Nato troops in the Baltic states will also be slowed or stopped. In return for these large concessions, Russia will be expected to wind down its aggression in eastern Ukraine and not attempt to make further territorial gains there. Russian pressure and implicit threats towards the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania will be dropped. Military tensions on the front line between Nato and Russia will be dialled down. With their conflict in eastern Europe eased, the US and Russia will make common cause in the Middle East. The US will drop its commitment to the overthrow of Bashar al-Assad in Syria and will join the Russians in an attack on the Isis militant group.”² Of course, such a development will exert a deadly blow to the

¹ For Carl Bildt, EU is surrounded not by a “ring of friends” but by a “ring of fire” (“fueled largely by the combination of Islamist terrorism and Russian aggression in eastern Ukraine”), Brexit is a crisis which should be absorbed in order to avoid the disintegration of the organization: “A vote against continued EU membership would be a disaster of the first order for Europe. With the EU’s geopolitical clout greatly reduced, anti-EU forces in other member countries would gain strength. After expanding for more than a half-century, the EU would suddenly start shrinking. Dealing with the consequences of a UK exit would consume too much political oxygen in the succeeding years to address the myriad other challenges Europe faces. Whatever happens, one thing is certain: a year or two from now, the EU will look very different. It might be a fractured union, so preoccupied with altering its breakdown, spurred by the UK’s withdrawal, that it stumble on virtually every other issue it faces. Or it could be a vigorous union that includes the UK and has gotten its act together on refugee, border, and asylum issues and is finalizing the TTIP and the digital single market. In this sense, whether the new year is a happy one for Europe may well determine whether the next decade is a happy one – both for Europe and those, including the United States, that depend on it.”(Carl Bildt, Happy New Year for Europe? – http://www.project-syndicate.org/print/european-union-crises-brexit-by-carl-bildt-2015-12).

² Gideon Rachman, Donald Trump, Vladimir Putinand the art of a deal with Russia, in “The Financial Times”, November 14, 2016 – https://www.ft.com/content/9bef31a4- a57-
EaP existence in its present form, although not to the EU Neighbourhood Policy in Eastern Europe which has to continue in a way or another. But what is worrying about that kind of evolution is that the same opinion is expressed by the Russian experts. Almost concomitantly with Gideon Rachman, F. Lukianov, chief editor of “Russia in Global Affairs” wrote: “If Trump tames America’s foreign policy ambitions, Russia will get what it wanted — a more multivariate international system where Russia will not play by rules it didn’t help make. Russia sought to raise its profile in the international system, and now the opportunity to do that seems to be coming its way, primarily in the Middle East and Europe.”¹ There is enough to say that it is a strange consensus among the experts on the Russian-American relationship to think in such a way which is not of good auspices for EaP. Any kind of “Yalta” will have large repercussions far beyond the EaP in Eastern Europe.

6. **Connection between conflicts in Syria and Ukraine.** During the first half of 2016, the increasingly insistent news about a possible agreement between Russia and the US regarding the Syrian dossier – the conclusion of two armistices sponsored by these two major powers on February 11 and February 22, 2016 –, as well as the signals about the possible lifting of the sanctions against Russia that were imposed following its actions in 2014 in Ukraine (Donbas) raise a key question: what are the odds for a revival of the EaP, an initiative that received a heavy blow given the developments in Ukraine and, generally speaking, given Russia’s assertiveness in the East of the continent coupled with the wave of migrants in the South?²

On the other hand, Russia’s association to the global war against terrorism, through its intervention in Syria, confirms the aforementioned perception in Moscow with regard to the Ukrainian crisis. Once the Russian intervention materialized in Syria, the air strikes carried out by the Russian military targeted especially the terrorist groups fighting against the forces of Bashar al-Assad, revealing that – beyond its association with the global war on terror – Russia follows its own interests as a great power, mainly to keep its “client” in power. And that goal was tenaciously followed despite the fact that Assad was almost completely isolated on the international stage (with the exception of Iran and terrorist movements such as Hezbollah, designated as such by both the US and the EU). This is how a Russian analyst summarized Moscow’s “Syrian Gambit”: “Faced with the need to shore up

---

¹ fyodor lukianov, Like Obama, Trump Is Unlikely to Lead as the World’s Policeman, in “Russia in Global Affairs”, November 18, 2016 – http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/redcol/Like-Obama-Trump-Is-Unlikely-to-Lead-as-the-Worlds-Policeman-18466; some of the ideas/interpretations mentioned in this text were presented in extended form, while they were still “hot”, in editorials published by the undersigned in the English daily “Nine O’Clock”, under the pseudonym M. Hareshan-http://www.nineoclock.ro/category/editorial/
militarily Bashar Assad’s faltering regime in Syria in the summer of 2015, Putin saw in this a broader opportunity to bring Russia back in from the cold, after months of Western isolation and pressure for Moscow’s shenanigans in Ukraine, by casting its intervention in Syria as a valiant contribution to the war on terror. Putin’s ‘Syrian Gambit’ aimed at transforming the relationship with the West on Russia’s terms to regain Russia’s rightful place as a global power. The Kremlin realized that it was getting stuck in Ukraine, where it could not re-establish Russia’s geopolitical parity with the United States. For Washington to take Moscow seriously, Russia needed to reassert its role on a stage where vital U.S. interests were at stake and where Moscow’s limited capability could make a global splash. Syria was a perfect fit.”

However, game changers can occur at any time, especially given the extraordinary fluidity of the events. Whether it is a reorientation of Turkey, especially after the thawing of the relations with Russia (the visit of Turkish President Erdogan to Moscow on August 9, 2016), whether Ankara will be unable to stem the internal instability after the failed coup of July 15, 2016 or the current cooperation between Russia and the US will fail or the civil war in Syria will protract, such game changers will always affect the current equations and will lead to new trends of evolution. On one hand, it remains to be seen whether the West resigns itself with the creation of a new “frozen conflict” in Donbass, which is of course another goal pursued by Moscow, and, on the other hand, whether it will lift the economic sanctions imposed on Russia (they were prolonged until the end of June 2016, but a new decision will be taken in December 2016). The recent rapprochement between Russia and Turkey – in the wake of the failed military coup against Erdogan of July 15, 2016 – can motivate a harsher tone of Moscow with regards to the developments in Ukraine. It is sufficient to show, in context, that the extraordinary fluidity of the situation in the Middle East, as well as in the Black Sea area, represents an undeniable sign of the ever increasing systemic crisis, something that makes any prediction risky. The cooperation on the field in Syria between Russia and the US, in their effort to put an end to the civil war, continues (at the beginning of October it was suspended due to the high temperature of the American presidential campaign), but one cannot but notice a major change in the Turkish position, which now seemingly accepts a role for Bashar al-Assad in the transition phase, something that Ankara had rejected from the very beginning of the Syrian crisis. In the short term, the developments in Syria will probably reveal substantial changes in the geopolitical orientations of the involved actors. Their impact on Eastern Europe and, generally, on the entire European continent, will have to be measured with outmost care.

In this first phase, the strategy of the West towards Ukraine can be summarized as follows: isolating conflict, establishing a format for negotiations (the “Normandy format”, which brought together the leaders of Ukraine, Russia, France and Germany, signaling that the problem is strictly continental and not global);

signing ceasefire agreements and establishing a roadmap for the peaceful resolution of the conflict (Minsk-1 and Minsk-2); establishing a credible reassurance of the Allies in Eastern Europe in order to prevent new Russian aggressions during the NATO summit in Wales of September 2014, which decided the establishment of a Rapid Reaction Force, as well as the deployment of Eastern Europe Allied headquarters in the threatened states, including Romania; going to credible deterrence and the Warsaw summit of July 2016, finalized with the boosting of the military presence in the East of the continent (“enhanced forward presence” for the Baltic area and “tailored forward presence “ in and around the Black Sea). The “hard core” of this strategy towards the Ukrainian crisis lies in the implementation of the provisions of two Minsk agreements – broader autonomy in Donbas, holding elections in accordance with the Ukrainian laws and giving Kiev control over Russian-Ukrainian border, something that paves the way to the lifting of the sanctions imposed by the West on Russia (it is not clear whether partially or altogether). But what could be next in the development of Ukrainian crisis is to depend on what the new Trump administration in USA would undertake globally.

7. The Russian intervention in Syria – 2015. A turning point in the Ukrainian crisis unexpectedly took place in September 2015, when Russia decided to intervene militarily in the civil war in Syria. Undoubtedly, this intervention – signifying Russia’s return to an area from where the USSR had been excluded since the Cold War (1973), therefore almost half a century later – happened just after the conclusion of the famous nuclear agreement with Iran (July 2015), when Tehran gave up producing the nuclear bomb for at least 15 years in return for the lifting of the international sanctions and reinstatement in the international community. At the same time, Moscow’s direct military involvement alongside Iran in supporting the Assad regime in Syria took place in the context in which Russia and the EU were holding talks regarding the application of the association agreement (DCFTA) signed by Brussels and Kiev in 2014. On the same occasion, Cameron also emphasized that final goal of the US and the United Kingdom is to remove the Syrian leader from power: “I know there are people who think IS [ISIS] is even worse than Assad, so shouldn’t we somehow cut a deal with Assad to team up and tackle IS. It sounds enticing, but even if it were the right thing to do, which it isn’t, it wouldn’t work. We need a Syria free from IS and Assad. /.../ What America said, which I agree with, is that you need a transition. But what is clear is that at the end of that, Assad cannot be the head of Syria. It wouldn’t work.”

In fact, even the US president Barack Obama pointed out in his speech delivered in front of the UN General Assembly in September 2015 that it was *realpolitik* that demanded this solution in Syria: “In accordance with this logic /of *realpolitik*, we should support tyrants like Bashar al-Assad who drops barrel bombs to massacre innocent

---

1 Ibidem
civilians because the alternative is surely worse… Yes, realism dictates that compromise will be required to end the fighting and ultimately stamp out ISIS. But realism also requires a managed transition away from Assad.”  

Therefore, the strategy of the West regarding the civil war in Syria can be summarized as such: containment of the conflict and, at the same time, cooperation with Iran and Russia, both supporters of the Assad regime, in order to destroy ISIL (Daesh), the terrorist entity that established a foothold in both Syria and Iraq, and afterword launching a transitional political process which will be finalized by the departure of Assad and installment of a new power in Damask.

As for why (and how) this solution was reached now and not earlier, as well as the issue of the survival of the leader of the regime in Damascus and the future of Syria, in general, these are the options circulating among the leaders of the great powers: secular and unitary, federal or divided according to the various and often contradictory interests of the external actors involved – these represent questions that we cannot (and don’t intend to) answer in this analysis dedicated to EU’s Neighborhood Policy. The information we have is partial and contradictory regarding the developments in Syria and the positions of the external actors involved, and whatever reaches the public from behind the close doors of the chancelleries of the great powers is fragmentary or/and unreliable. However, it is obvious that we are witnesses to an ample confrontation involving vital interests of a number of states – beyond the common goal of the coalitions formed to destroy Daesh, the self-proclaimed caliphate supported by terrorist organizations –, and that whatever is decided here will have deep repercussions in Ukraine.

As demonstrated earlier, there is a strong connection between the Ukrainian dossier and the Syrian one, although the two theatres are thousands of kilometers apart. Russia, a major player in both dossiers, is able to use this artificially created interdependence between the two crisis in its own gain. One of the vectors of this interdependence lies in the pulsations of the migrant flows entering Europe from the south. Just to give an example – which was immediately highlighted in the analyses made by various experts – is what happened in Northern Syria, close to the Turkish border, in the Aleppo area. Following the ceasefire agreement of February 12, 2016 the Russian air force continued to bomb the Aleppo region, while the land forces of the Assad regime pushed on the city under rebel control. This resulted in new wave of refugees, in the tens of thousands, who headed to Turkey. The new migrants joined the almost three million others that already found their way to Turkey, and the pressure exerted by them led to an increase in the flows of migrants heading North and to the deterioration of the situation in Greece and at Macedonian border. The chain reaction did not stop here, if we take into account

the worsening of the relations inside the EU (diplomatic tensions between Austria and Greece, between Hungary and its neighbors, as Budapest announced it will erect a fence at the border with them, including Romania), and even a decrease in the interest of the Balkan states to join the EU. As the international media pointed out, “is Russia trying to ‘weaponize’ refugees from Syria by using them as a geopolitical tool to undermine Turkey, the European Union, and NATO? That’s what some officials in Ankara and Washington claim. The charge is that the Kremlin, acting in support of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad’s regime as well as Syrian Kurd militias, is intentionally creating a fresh, destabilizing flood of refugees in order to overwhelm Turkey and Europe.”¹

Therefore, is Russia using the flow of migrants from Syria as a “weapon” in order to obtain the lifting of the sanctions imposed by the West? An affirmative answer would amount to a serious abnormality in the current international relations and, basically, to a sharp conflict between Russia and Europe. If the evolution will be in that direction, then the impact on the EaP will be enormous.

Up to the last moment of our writing (November 15, 2016), the Syrian civil war is not showing signs to be ended soon. But if above mentioned scenario envisaged by G. Rachman regarding a “new Yalta” in Eastern Europe will become reality, than perhaps we will witness another dynamics of the events in Syria, hopefully one of positive tendency, although is doubtful. As for the EaP, given the same premise, its life will be fatally threaten.

CHAPTER 1
THE RESULTS OF THE PROJECT EASTERN PARTNERSHIP:
CIVILIAN SECURITY NEED-ASSESSMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES/OPTIONS (PN-II-ID-PCE-2011-3-1014)

Mihai-Bogdan Popescu

Introduction
The project addresses an important chapter within the Eastern Partnership’s (EaP) framework, that of civilian security. In order to examine the EaP member states’ civilian security vulnerabilities and threats we have applied the concept of resilience. In brief, resilience means someone’s ability to resist certain shocks. The project’s main goal is to develop a resilience index for the Eastern Partnership member states. Moreover it aims to a comparative analysis among EaP states in terms of ability to resist crisis, threats and vulnerabilities. The first part of this chapter will present the concept of “civilian security”. The second part is dedicated to the resilience issue and contains the methodology used for the calculation of the index. The third part presents the main empirical findings of the project, highlighting each EaP member states’ resilience from 2012 to 2015, while the forth part is dedicated to the four scenarios fitting each EaP state.

I. What is „civilian security”
The project starts from the concept of civilian security – a new theoretical concept which is still under debate, encompassing both natural and “man made” disasters but also other threats associated with the political or the economic field. For example, the European view about civilian security is significantly different from the American point of view. At the origins of the debate, In 2003, Amanda J Dory mentioned that “during the Cold War, a comprehensive program of civil defense was designed to address Americans’ survival concerns in relation to the threat of a massive Soviet nuclear attack. Today we need a new concept--„civil security”--that recalls the nation’s experience with civil defense and updates it, addressing and enhancing the ability of Americans to recognize danger, limit damage, and recover from terrorist attacks”

1 Ph.D., NSPSPA Bucharest
The European view on the other hand is different. "Every nation state has an obligation to ensure security for itself and its citizens. Typically, the state also devises a series of laws that provide for the implementation of security-sector rules and regulations. Security agencies of the state are the bodies responsible for making sure these laws are enforced – that the rule of law is upheld". The European Union has decided to develop the civilian aspects of crisis management in four priority areas defined by the European Council in June 2000: police, strengthening of the rule of law, strengthening civilian administration and civil protection.

Of course according to the document, this is limited to the EU’s missions abroad, dedicated to the post conflict stabilization. However, this vision is complementary with several EU members approach towards their own civilian security strategy. In search for a broader definition dedicated to this concept, according to authors such as Emil Kirchner, Evans Fanoulis and Han Dorussen the civil/civilian security’s ultimate goal is the protection of civilians within the borders of the state. In contrast to military security, civil security is mainly focused on internal threats and generally under civilian rather than military administration.

Also, the above mentioned experts showed that “… civil protection is the state endeavour to protect all civilians under its authority against direct and indirect threats, and a country’s civil security system consists of the state apparatus, stakeholders, relevant policies and all other means responsible for providing civil protection in the country”. From the above mentioned definition it has to be noticed that the civil security concept does not take into account the military dimension and it relies mainly on the functionality of institutions. It should be noticed that the only amendment to this definition refers only to domestic threats, in case of (civilian) external crisis, such as the 2008 economic crisis. As a consequence, the state has to adapt itself and develop the necessary tools to tackle such threats.

The institutional framework has a key importance in the civilian security management system. For example, in their study on the Italian civil security system, Federica di Camillo emphasize on the importance of the cultural and historical aspects, the legal and constitutional aspects, the role of the citizens and the private sectors (such as NGOs), mentioning that the civilian security system is influenced by the Italian institutions and legal context. In their analysis on Germany’s civil security policies and strategies, Gummer and Stuchtey mention that for Germany

---


3 Emil Kirchner, Evans Fanoulis, Han Dorussen, "An Analysis of Civil Security Systems in the UK and Ireland", UACES 42nd Annual Conferences, Passau, 2012, p. 3

4 Ibidem, pp. 4-5

5 Federica Di Camillo, The Italian Civil Security System, IAI Research Papers, 2014, pp. 3-15
the main objective is the protection of critical infrastructure (CI) – by CI under-
standing organizations and institutions of special importance for the country
to the population, where failure or functional impairment would lead to severe
supply bottlenecks, significant disturbance of public order or other dramatic con-
sequences\textsuperscript{1}. According to the 2009 Security Strategy the CI are divided into nine
functional sectors: energy, information technology & telecommunications, transport & traffic, health, water, food, finance & insurance, government & public ad-
ministration, and media. Those sectors are managed by several institutions such
as the Federal Ministry of Interior, the Federal Office for Information Security,
and the Federal Office for Civil Protection and Disaster Assistance to coordinate
public-private projects designed to protect CI and share information on emerg-
ing threats\textsuperscript{2}. Moreover, the German public has proved to be against using military
force abroad. There is a popular support only for those security policies built on a
“non military” and civilian character\textsuperscript{3}. So, such as in the case of Italy the concept
of civilian security implies the protection of citizens and infrastructure, but with-
out taking into consideration the military dimension of security.

To sum up, the civilian security refers to the protection of state and citizens
from non -military pressures. The responsibility belongs to a civilian administra-
tion, and both state institutions and society have an impact on the state’s capacity
to tackle civilian security threats. Not before observing that the concept of civilian
security is an ongoing enhancement, we mention that in the present study we will
use the European approach towards the concept of civilian security.

\textbf{The concept of ”resilience”}

The most important part of the project was to develop a resilience index for
the Eastern Partnership member states. The term resilience is very complex, even
posing the danger of fuzziness\textsuperscript{4}, having multiple understandings; the concept was
used in several fields, such as ecology, psychology, economics, disaster studies,
geography, political science and archaeology\textsuperscript{5}.

In their project about resilience in the metropolitan regions in America, the
team of researchers from Berkeley Institution considers that,”the concept typically
connotes an ability to “bounce back” from a stress or disturbance, potentially returning to
a pre-stress norm or a transformed post-stress condition”\textsuperscript{6}. Others such as Walker et al.

\textsuperscript{1} S.C. Gummer, T.H. Stuchtey, “Civil Security” and the Private Security Industry in Ger-
many, BIGS, 2014 in http://www.bigs-potsdam.org/images/Policy%20Paper/PP%20No.%204%20Se-
curity%20Industry%20in%20Germany%20onscreen%20version%20.pdf, p. 7
\textsuperscript{2} Ibidem, pp. 8-9
\textsuperscript{3} Ibidem, p. 6
\textsuperscript{4} R. Pendall, K Forster, M Cowel, ”Resilience and Regions: Building Understanding of the
\textsuperscript{5} Ibidem, p.2
\textsuperscript{6} “Resilience Capacity Index: Building Resilient Regions”, University of Berkeley in http://brr.
berkeley.edu/rci/
see the resilience as, "the capacity of a system to absorb disturbance and reorganize while undergoing change so as to still retain essentially the same function, structure, identity, and feedbacks". Moreover, Walker and Holling also identifies two other characteristics associated with the idea of resilience: **adaptability**, which is the capacity of actors in a system to influence resilience, or the collective capacity of the human actors in the system to manage resilience, and the **transformability** which is the quality to create a fundamentally new system when ecological, economic, or social (including political) conditions make the existing system untenable, or defining and creating new stability landscapes by introducing new components and ways of making a living, thereby changing the state variables, and often the scale, that define the system. Resilience is connected with the term **regions** and regional systems. A **region** might suffer two types of disturbances: shocks (such as a natural disaster for example) and slow burns (such as the effects of deindustrialization in a region, or the integration of immigrants into a regional economy). It is most precise to call a region "resilient" if, when faced with a challenge it responds in ways that maintain or even increase good outcomes. Thus, according to the Berkeley study "conceiving of regions as capable of adaptation and transformation in response to challenges allows researchers and practitioners to understand the conditions and interventions that may make one place more or less resilient and why". However, the discussion above applies rather to more technical focused issues than to the field of political sciences. If it is to adapt the definition, for the latter case resilience would represent, the capacity of the state – by capacity understanding the type of institutions, administrative capacity, economic policies, natural resources, civil society involvement –, to face a shock or slow burns (which might be internal or external) or disturbance, the adaptation of state conditions in order to face such a situation, and return to the initial situation, or to transform its internal conditions, in terms of institutions and policy, as a consequence of those disturbances. Moreover, adaptability might refer to the type of policy pursued by one state, its institutional stability, the management of resources, and its capacity to counter shocks and slow burns. On the other hand, transformability might refer to one state’s capacity to undergo political and economic reforms, shape new institutions in order to face or recover from a shock. Also, in our case the regions and systems should be considered the Eastern Partnership states, each partner state representing a region or a system.

---


2 *Ibidem*

3 R. Pendall, K Forster, M Cowel, *op. cit.*, p. 7

4 *Ibidem*

5 “Resilience Capacity Index: Building Resilient Regions”, *University of Berkeley* in http://brr. berkeley.edu/rci/
Walker and Holling’s definition might be problematic to some extent. After a shock, a state for example might not keep essentially "the same function, structure, identity, and feedbacks". At least the structure might change. Let’s take into account for example the transition from an autocratic regime to a more opened and democratic regime. New types of institutions and new types of economic policies emerge, changing from a state owned to a more market oriented economy. The definition of resilience provided by Kathrin Foster from Berkeley is more suitable because it takes into account the fact that in order to recover from a stress, a region (in our case a state) might return to the post stress state or it might transform to a post stress condition. This argument is also backed by the literature dedicated to the state building/state formation processes from the post-Soviet and post-Communist space. There are two main characteristics associated with this type of state. First of all, the state building process is ongoing and dynamic, and secondly it is influenced by international pressures from other states, financial institutions, aid organizations or western NGOs, to craft particular political and economical institutions according to the international standards. Last but not least, the OECD defines resilience in opposition with fragility which is a function of disequilibrium between state functions and capacity on the one hand and social expectations on the other. It arises either from the paucity of the political process for managing agreement on the social contract (issues of political governance) or from extremes of incapacity or illegitimacy. The character of political competition and the extent of checks on executive authority and mature participatory processes are core variables for one state’s stability and resilience, while a factionalised, restricted, or repressed political competition is linked to instability. For example, a participatory process reinforces the resilience of the state by providing a non-violent means for mediating conflicting interests and by constraining the power of rulers or elites, and when faced with external or internal shocks, democratic processes offer a mechanism for devising collectively agreed strategies to address those shocks and for ensuring that individual and group rights and interests are protected in the process.

**Resilience Indicators**

Identifying resilience requires the selection of some observable characteristic or outcome of the phenomenon, or in other words “the resilience of what to what?” Thus when the indicators were chosen, our goal was to observe several characteristics and capabilities to face and bounce back from any stress or disturbance, of

---

1 Anna Grzymalla Busse, PJ Luong, “Reconceptualizing the State: Lessons from Post Communism”, POLITICS & SOCIETY, Vol. 30 No. 4, December 2002, p. 536


3 Ibidem, p. 22

4 R. Pendall, K Forster, M Cowel, op.cit, p. 3
Each of the Eastern Partnership states. On the other hand, we want to highlight the way the state reacts to a shock using its civilian instruments. Of course, due to our focus on civilian security, threats involving military action were not taken into account.

The EU’s European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) and Eastern Partnership (EaP) main goals were to stabilize its neighborhood: “Even in an era of globalisation, geography is still important. It is in the European interest that countries on our borders are well-governed. ... Our task is to promote a ring of well governed countries to the East of the European Union and on the borders of the Mediterranean with whom we can enjoy close and cooperative relations”\(^1\). In the Wider Europe Neighborhood from 2003 it was stated that, “The EU has a duty not only towards its citizens, and those of the new member states, but also towards its present and future neighbors to ensure continuing social cohesion and economic dynamism\(^2\).

So it is not wrong to mention that in the vision of the EU decision makers the EaP states’ resilience is below the EU standards, and further stabilization is needed.

Taking into account what was mentioned above four categories of indicators have been established: political factors (governmental stability, consolidated institutions and the rule of law, democratic control, transparency, negative influences of regional political forces/countries, societal conflict and instability), security factors (natural and man-made disasters, law enforcement/law and order), economic factors (GDP, GDP per capita, economic growth, balance of payment, foreign debt, public debt, inflation, import, export, economic diversification, trade freedom, investment freedom, financial freedom, legislation harmonization, starting a business, know-how and technological modernization, property rights, shadow economy, population, natural increase, unemployment, migration rate, population density, energy resources, energy vulnerability), and regional profile (regional cooperation and international cooperation).

Data Collection

The data for the index were collected from interviews following several study visits in the EaP countries, Russia, Poland and Brussels, official documents, but also from a variety of secondary sources. A scale has been established from 0 to 4, 0 being the lowest value and 4 the greatest. The values have been defined on the one hand on the basis of theoretical consideration deducted from interviews and through comparison with the performance of other Eastern European countries,


including those who presently are members of the EU – the transition countries, as they are defined by the European Bank of Reconstruction and Development. This has been decided due to the fact that those countries and the Eastern Partnership member states countries are Post-Communist and/or Post Soviet states. All those states have common problems related to democratization, human rights, market economy and foreign policy goals, in terms of integration or association with the EU. More than that some former soviet republics, which are now part of the EU represent a form of inspiration for the EaP states. To give an example, the Baltic States represent an economic and political model of development for Georgia, as former Georgian president Mikheil Saakashvili declared.

In order to integrate both numerical data and interviews in our index, we used the following formula: \( y = \left( \frac{X - X_{\text{min}}}{X_{\text{max}} - X_{\text{min}}} \right) \times 4 \), which is a linear transformation, where \( y \) is the corresponding score on the 0-4 scale, \( X_{\text{max}} \) and \( X_{\text{min}} \) are the endpoints of the original scale, and \( X \) is the value of the raw data. For example, in the Heritgage Foundation, World Economic Freedom 2013, Trade Freedom indicator, Azerbaijan has an economic freedom score of 77.2 which means that \( X = 77.2 \). The state with the best score, among all post-Communist countries is Georgia with a score of 88.6 and the state with the worst score is Uzbekistan with 71.3, which means that \( X_{\text{max}} = 88.6 \) and \( X_{\text{min}} = 71.3 \). Thus, applying the dates to our formula we have the following result: \( y = \left( \frac{77.2 - 71.3}{88.6 - 71.3} \right) \times 4 \); in this case \( y = 1.36 \), which means that according to our scale, Azerbaijan has a trade freedom score of 1.36.

In some cases the following formula has been used: \( y = 4 - \left( \frac{X - X_{\text{min}}}{X_{\text{max}} - X_{\text{min}}} \right) \times 4 \). Let’s take another example for the “Starting a business” category from the World Bank, Doing Business 2013. Azerbaijan has a score of 10, \( X_{\text{min}} \) is 6, with Armenia being the best placed state among all the post-communist countries, while \( X_{\text{max}} \) is 174 with Bosnia and Herzegovina being the worst placed state among all the post-Communist countries. In this case we will use the following formula \( y = 4 - \left( \frac{10 - 6}{174 - 6} \right) \times 4 \) ; \( y = 3.90 \), The result is Azerbaijan’s starting a business score adapted to our scale.

**Scenarios**

The next step after the establishment of the resilience index is to develop four possible scenarios for the EaP member states. By doing so, we will borrow and adapt from Briguglio and Cordina’s methodology of scenario building. This has been chosen due to the fact that the authors are taking into consideration both external and domestic shocks as main threats to one state’s security. Moreover

---


they are operating with two types of variable, namely resilience and vulnerability. While resilience means one state’s ability to face crisis, vulnerability can be defined as the exposure of a country to shocks.

The authors put forward four possible scenarios: the best case, applying to countries that are not inherently vulnerable and which at the same time adopt resilience building policies; the worst case, applying to countries that have a high vulnerability and the adopted policies run counter to resilience; the self-made case refer to those countries that have a high degree of vulnerability, but which are resilient through the adoption of appropriate policies that enable them to cope with the effects of their own vulnerability; the prodigal son case refer to those states that have a low degree of vulnerability, but still they resilience enhancing policies are inefficient\(^1\). The authors also take into account the fact that vulnerability “refers to inherent characteristics which render countries prone to exogenous shocks, vulnerability scores for a particular country should not differ much over time, and therefore is not expected that a country moves vertically along the quadrants”\(^2\). On the other hand, horizontal movement is possible for those countries that adopt resilience building measures. In order to build the resilience – vulnerability matrix two types of variables are needed. We will use our own resilience index for 2012 -2015, and as a second variable

\(^1\) Adapted from Lino Briguglio, Gordon Cordina, Nadia Farrugia, Stephanie Vella, ”Economic Vulnerability and Resilience”, Research Paper No. 2008/55, United Nations University, 2008, p. 2

\(^2\) Ibidem, p.3
we will use the 2013 vulnerability index calculated by *The Economist - ViewsWire*. This has been chosen due to the fact that it looks at similar indicators (e.g. regime type and factionalism, social unrest, relations with neighbors, economic growth, unemployment, etc).

Each EaP country will fit in one of the four possible scenarios according to their resilience (0 – worst, 4 – best) and vulnerability (0- best, 4 worst) ratings.

**The Eastern Partnership: means and goals towards the neighborhood**

Among other things, the Eastern Partnership as an upgrade to the ENP’s Eastern Dimension is such a tool designed for the enhancement of the targeted countries resilience. However, this study’s main goal was not to calculate the approximation with the EU standards, but rather one country’s ability to resist internal and external shocks. All six EaP member states have, what is called in the literature, *extractive institutions* - meaning that they concentrate power in the hand of political elites, and economic institutions are often structured by these elite to extract resources for its own, from the rest of the society. On the contrary, *inclusive institutions* are those when the “state can exercise its monopoly of using legitimate violence” and being pluralistic, in the sense that they distribute power broadly in the society and subject it to constraints, and encourage participation by the great mass of people in economic activities that make best use of their talents and skills and that enable individuals to make the choices they wish. So, in this regard the EaP is such a tool that in time might help the targeted countries to escape the vicious circle of extractive institutions and make all necessary steps towards inclusiveness.

For the sake of better understanding I will repeat some features of the EaP. Launched in May 2009 at the Prague Summit, the EaP fosters the necessary conditions to accelerate political association and further economic integration between the European Union and Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. "The main goal of the Eastern Partnership is to create the necessary conditions to accelerate political association and further economic integration between the European Union and interested partner countries. The Eastern Partnership should further promote stability and multilateral confidence building". The EaP has stronger incentives such as the possibility of signing a new Association Agreement with the EU,

---


2. For example, the Soros foundation calculates the approximation towards the EU’s standards. For more details see http://www.eap-index.eu/about


including also a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) among the EU and the EaP members, and it would also allow for an easier travel to the EU through the visa liberalization process. Moreover, it has a multilateral track aiming at facilitating cooperation and socialization among member states and boosts the popularity of EU and EaP within the decision makers from the area but also within the civil society. The multilateral dimension consists in a political part with institutions such as: summits, foreign ministry meetings or resorts ministry and the parliamentary assembly, Euronest, and a technical part consisting in four multilateral platforms Democracy, good governance and stability, Economic Integration and convergence with EU policies, Energy Security and People to people contacts, and a Flagship Initiative covering areas such as border management, small and medium enterprises, climate change. A close interdependence between the first three platforms can be noticed. An open market cannot work without an opened political environment, and the market freedom will have an immediate impact on the development of energy market. There is also a Civil Society Forum dedicated to the meetings between the NGOs and other civil organization from the region. The Partnership will also promote democracy and good governance, it will strengthen energy security, it will promote sector reform and environment protection, it will encourage people to people contacts, it will support economic and social development and offer additional funding for projects to reduce socio-economic imbalances and increase stability.

To sum up, the EaP’s main goal is to stabilize the EU’s eastern neighborhood. It asks for certain reforms in areas such as democracy, rule of law and market economy but due to its multilateral track it also targets the development of civil society but also the socialization among EaP member states.

The Evolution of the EaP’s member states’ resilience between 2012 and 2015

The European Commission, in its last review of the European Neighborhood Policy from 2015 indicates that the EU’s “…measures set out in this Joint Communication seek to offer ways to strengthen the resilience of the EU’s partners in the face of external pressures and their ability to make their own sovereign choices”\(^2\). Thus the EU takes into account the idea of boosting the EaP countries’ capacity to tackle external shocks.

Figure B and C shows the total resilience for each Eastern Partnership countries. As it can be noticed, all of them have a low resilience, slightly rising over “2”. This means that all the six EaP member states are vulnerable in face of external and internal shocks and have a limited capacity to resist crisis. There was an incremental change in the case of Georgia, but the increase is not significant.

---

1. *Ibidem*, p. 10
However, it can be explained by the fact that Georgia’s top foreign policy objective is to integrate into the EU, and it is committed to the implementation of certain reforms. Armenia and Belarus on the other hand, the two Eurasian Economic Union member states seem to be very stable, and no dramatic change has occurred from 2012 to 2015. Ukraine has experienced an important fall in 2014 due to the domestic situation from the East, while Moldova is on a downfall trend, having serious domestic problems related to corruption. For 2015, Ukraine has experienced a slow increase, this being explained by the Government commitment to the EU agenda. In the case of Azerbaijan, the situation can be explained by the 2015 decrease in the global oil prices and by the fact that its economy lacks diversification.

As mentioned above, Armenia is one of the most stable states within the EaP. As it can be noticed, Armenia’s political resilience is on a slow rising trend from
2012 to 2015. This is due to the domestic regime’s stability, especially after 2013. Nevertheless, despite being stable, Armenia has other problems related to corruption, independence of the judiciary, etc. this making Armenia’s political institutions as being extractive. Moreover, Armenia suffers when it comes to economy (more details will be offered in the next chapter). After stepping into Russia’s Customs Union in 2013, the approximation towards the EU standards in terms of market liberalization has stalled. However, Armenia keeps its European option opened, and in December 2015 negotiations for a new type of agreement between parties has started. Armenia is vulnerable to natural and man - made disasters. One such issue also highlighted by Brussels is the Metsamor power plant. Despite being a “landlocked” country due to its relations with Azerbaijan and Turkey, Armenia is part of several regional initiatives (EaP, EAEU) and it also has positive bilateral relations with Georgia and Iran. It also cooperates with other international organizations such as USAID, World Bank or several UN agencies and other international promoters of democracy\(^1\), and to some extent it seems committed to reform implementation. The low score for 2015 can be explained by the worsening of regional (non)cooperation with Turkey, due to the 100 years celebration of the “Armenian genocide” and Azerbaijan due to the re emergence of violent conflict in Nagorno Karabakh in April 2016.

In the case of Azerbaijan, there is a significant difference between the economic factors and the political, security and regional cooperation areas. Azer-

Azerbaijan’s economy is based on the large revenues from natural gas and oil, but its economy suffers from the so called “dutch disease”, meaning that it lacks diversification and is very vulnerable to external shocks. The political regime seems stable, but however the country might be vulnerable to some pressures due to the presence of Russian and Iranian minorities in the northern and southern part of the country. Moreover, signs of religious radicalization can be noticed. In terms of natural and man mad disasters Azerbaijan seems vulnerable to such threats. Azerbaijan is part of several energy and transportation projects and of many regional organizations such as Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) or the Commonwealth of Independent States (CSI). However, cooperation within those frameworks does not require for certain criteria implementation. Azerbaijan is not part of the EAEU yet and its committed to the EU reforms is rather limited. Even cooperation with other international partners such as World Bank, USAID and the Asian Development Bank is rather modest.

The political system in Belarus is very stable, as an authoritarian version of centralized leadership, and the possibility of social unrest is low. Basically there is no threat to the state’s monopoly on the use of force, but on the other hand civil liberties are also suppressed. The political branch controls everything, and according to certain studies Belarus has the largest number of police per capita in the former Soviet Union, and the security agency has kept the name of the

2 Ibidem
former soviet KGB\textsuperscript{1}. Despite having a quite diversified economy the country has some tough problems such as corruption, violations of property rights, inflation and dependence on CIS markets. In terms of international cooperation, Belarus apparently tries to pursue a balanced foreign policy between the West and Russia. However, country’s commitment to Western reforms is very limited. It participates only in the EaP multilateral track, it cooperates with other international organizations and institutions such as the IMF, Eurasian Development Bank, but again on a limited scale.

As it can be seen Georgia suffers in terms of economic factors and security. Georgia’s political landscape is dominated by two major party groups the “Georgian Dream” and the United National Movement. Despite making important steps towards a democracy (according to Western standards), Georgia’s political parties are not robust enough and many times they exclude cooperation. A positive aspect is the fact that the last two elections were considered as being largely free and fair. Despite heavily fighting against corruption Georgia still has some problems related to independence of the judiciary, corruption among elites or respect for property rights. The country has problems related to natural disasters, especially floods. In terms of regional cooperation, Georgia is part of the EaP, but it also cooperates with other international organizations such as USAID or World Bank, being very committed to reform implementation. Moreover, during Ivanishvili’s term as Prime Minister, Georgia tried to normalize its relations with Russia but without altering the European path.

It is important to notice that Moldova is on a downfall scale since 2013. In the last years the country has experienced political instability. Also corruption among political elites was a serious issue. This has left Moldova vulnerable to external pressures. Moreover, the society is divided regarding the future integration with the EU. For example, in February 2014, the autonomous Russian speaking territorial unit of Gagauzia voted against closer EU integration, opting for closer relations with the EAEU. On the long run this might have a negative effect on Moldova’s “future state cohesion and integrity”\(^1\). Moldova also suffers heavily when it comes to economy.

---

Moldova has signed the DCFTA with the EU in 2013 which enabled the improving of many legal provisions but numerous inefficiencies still exist. Corruption is a major issue and there is an informal connection between politics and business, translated as privileged access to political decision makers by the business elites\(^1\). In terms of regional cooperation, according to the key documents, Moldova is committed to the EU integration, but it also cooperates with other institutions/organizations such as IMF or World Bank. Nevertheless it is still a CIS member, despite being less present in Russian led regional projects.

Ukraine was considered one of the EaP’s main countries, due to its own foreign policy objectives but also strategic importance. As it can be seen, especially after 2013 the country is on a downfall trend. The first major problem is that the country is unable to use the monopoly over force across its entire territory. Moreover the country is continuously experiencing political instability. There were several resignations from the office of some important government members. Moreover, there were several allegations of corruption among government members. After the Euromaidan movement, Ukraine started some major democratic reforms, but with a limited result due to the capture of institutions under the former president\(^2\). Those events had an important impact on Ukraine’s economic growth. Donbas was contributing with 12,4% of GDP, while Luhansks was

\(^1\) Ibidem

contributing with 4% of the GDP. In terms of regional cooperation Ukraine is fully committed to the implementation of EU reforms, and after Euromaidan it receives substantial financial assistance from several international donors such as IMF, World Bank or EBRD. Moreover, Ukraine aims at having good relations with all neighboring countries. Ukraine is a founding member of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and a member of GUAM (Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova), the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) and of the Central European Initiative (CEI).

Four possible scenarios for the EaP states

After the Resilience index has been calculated according to our methodology the next step is to frame the EaP states in four possible scenarios: Best Case, Worst Case, Self Made and Prodigal Son. By doing so, as mentioned above, we will use two variables, namely resilience and vulnerability. The scenarios are useful due to the fact that it shows the commitment of those countries to undergo political transformation, their success in reform implementation, and their performances concerning resistance in face of crisis. Like in Briguglio and Galea’s study the cutoff values chosen for each quadrant are the averages of the vulnerability and resilience scores for each six EaP countries. As mentioned above, a single vulnerability variable has been used, the 2013 “vulnerability index” calculated by Views Wire.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Armenia</td>
<td>2.06</td>
<td>2.03774</td>
<td>2.095</td>
<td>2.03736</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.03736</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azerbaijan</td>
<td>1.9225</td>
<td>2.49057</td>
<td>1.9475</td>
<td>2.49056</td>
<td>1.925</td>
<td>1.8325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belarus</td>
<td>1.7425</td>
<td>3.16981</td>
<td>1.725</td>
<td>3.16981</td>
<td>1.795</td>
<td>1.7675</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>1.9275</td>
<td>1.35849</td>
<td>1.9875</td>
<td>1.35849</td>
<td>2.085</td>
<td>1.35849</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moldova</td>
<td>2.055</td>
<td>2.71698</td>
<td>2.005</td>
<td>2.71698</td>
<td>1.87</td>
<td>2.71698</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>2.2075</td>
<td>3.32075</td>
<td>2.0825</td>
<td>3.32075</td>
<td>1.8275</td>
<td>3.32075</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Figure J. Resilience and Vulnerability Variables for each EaP member state)

1 Tatyana Malyarenko, ”The War in Donbass”, Academia.edu, 2015, in https://www.academia.edu/12663326/The_War_in_Donbas_Russias_Strategy_of_Societal_Destabilisation

For 2012 Georgia fits into the Prodigal Son scenario, Armenia, Moldova and Ukraine were into the Self Made scenario, while Azerbaijan and Belarus into the Worst Case scenario. It has to be mentioned that from 2009 – 2012 there was the so called enthusiastic period of the Eastern Partnership. Four EaP members were negotiating AA/DCFTA with the EU and they had to implement certain reforms. On the other hand, Belarus and Azerbaijan didn’t qualify for negotiations because they were no WTO members. More than that, Belarus was under heavy influence of Moscow, and Azerbaijan has tried to assess a reorientation in its foreign policy. Ukraine’s vulnerability was very high, but at the same time the country was implementing certain reforms. The same is true for Moldova and Armenia. This means that their reforms, despite being limited had a certain impact on the institutional transformation. Georgia fits into the Prodigal Son scenario mostly due to the fact that according to statistics it is less vulnerable than other EaP countries.

For 2013 things are almost the same. Georgia is in the “Prodigal Son” scenario, but with an increased resilience, being very close to the Best Case scenario. Armenia and Ukraine are again in the Self Made Scenario. Moldova is exactly on the border between Worst Case scenario and Self Made scenario, but making a step back according to its situation from 2012. Azerbaijan and Belarus fit again into the Worst Case scenario.

Things have changed considerable for 2014. Georgia moved into the “Best Case” scenario which means that it is successful in implementing the EU reforms.
2013

(Figure L. R-V Matrix for 2013)

2014

(Figure M. R-V Matrix for 2014)
Armenia remains into the “Self Made” scenario, while Azerbaijan, Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine are into the “Worst Case” scenario. It is important to notice that Moldova and Ukraine changed their position by moving into the upper left of the quadrant. This means that their reforms are inefficient or they stopped implementing certain EU criteria.

![Resilience - Vulnerability Matrix](image)

(Figure N. R-V Matrix for 2015)

Nothing has changed for 2015. Azerbaijan, Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine are in the “Worst Case” scenario, Armenia remained into the “Self Made” scenario and Georgia maintained itself into the “Best Case” scenario. However, for both 2014 and 2015 Georgia is very close to the “border”, experiencing only a slight increase.

**Conclusions**

The present study starts from the theoretical concept of civilian security, a new approach towards security focusing on “non military” threats. Focusing on resilience is a way of showing the main threats and vulnerabilities and the existence of all the necessary tools for facing such threats. As it has been shown, resilience means the capacity to tackle external and internal shocks. The type of domestic institutions (extractive/inclusive) has a key importance in one state’s capacity to face certain crisis. All the EaP countries have a limited resilience and all of them are vulnerable in face of crisis. The process of replacing extractive with inclusive institutions is a long one and will continue in the future. Four main indicators were included into the resilience index, in order to highlight all the
necessary aspects connected with the concept of civilian security: political factors, economic factors, regional profile and security (“non military”). The Resilience Index shows the EaP states’ capacity to tackle domestic and external shocks, and it is useful for several reasons. On the one hand, it highlights some “vulnerable” areas where those states need help from the EU, but it is also shows their capacity to face certain crisis.

All the six Eastern Partnership states have similar problems related to democratization, rule of law, and market economy. This is why the EaP has been designed also as a tool for enhancing their capacity to resist shocks. Corruption, a discretionary judicial system, lack of respect for human rights, inefficient market economy weakens the state from the inside and leaves it vulnerable to external pressures. The approximation towards the EU standards is just a way for enhancing resilience, due to the EU’s approach towards institutional transformation. Analyzing the evolution of the EaP states’ resilience different trends have been observed over time: stability, decrease and a slight increase. Among the six EaP states only Georgia managed to continuously increase its resilience. Armenia and Belarus were the most stable states, with low changes while Azerbaijan, Moldova and Ukraine experienced decrease moving after 2013 into a worst case scenario. There is of course a direct connection between the approximation towards the EU’s standards and the resilience enhancing policies. For example Georgia, the only Best case scenario is the most committed country to the implementation of the EU’s acquis. Another interesting observation is that autocratic regimes such as Azerbaijan, Belarus and even Armenia¹, are more stable than the countries who try to implement democratic reforms. But at the same time, due to the nature of their political regimes they are vulnerable to crisis. This is shown best by the evolution of Azerbaijan after 2014.

For a future research, it is of crucial importance to assess and draw a comparison among the states who have signed the AA/DCFTA with the EU.

References:


¹ According to Freedom House classification Armenia is considered a semi consolidated authoritarian regime, while Azerbaijan and Belarus are considered consolidated authoritarian regimes.
Di Camillo Federica, The Italian Civil Security System, IAI Research Papers, 2014  
Kirkhner Emil, Fanouilis Evans, Dorussen Han, ”An Analysis of Civil Security Systems in the UK and Ireland”, UACES 42nd Annual Conferences, Passau, 2012  
”Resilience Capacity Index: Building Resilient Regions”, University of Berkeley, in http://brr.berkeley.edu/rci/  
CHAPTER 2
MULTILATERAL TRACK:
2.1. ANALYZING THE CIVILIAN SECURITY IN THE EAP COUNTRIES THROUGH THE LENSES OF PLATFORMS 1

Mihaela-Adriana Pădureanu

Introduction

The paper is structured in six different sections, one for each EaP member countries and in every section there will be a special focus on the bilateral dialogue (except for Belarus, which is member only of the multilateral track) between the EU and each state focusing on the country’s interests, capabilities and opportunities. Then we will tackle the multilateral dimension, focusing on the way in which the states are able to respond to the civilian security aspects using the benefits obtained from this cooperation. As mentioned in the previous chapter, there is a clear connection between the type of domestic political institutions and one state’s resilience in the face of internal and external shocks. For example, platform one can be used to increase the states’ capabilities to respond to different crisis, due to its stress on the institution-building process. It tackles a variety of issues such as: administrative reform, justice, integrated border management, migration and asylum but also common security and defense (which goes beyond the objectives of our project). When we speak about the political aspect of civilian security, one should take into considerations certain aspects such as corruption, political transparency, a trustful judiciary system, governmental stability or societal (in)stability. It can be concluded that a more open political environment means increased resilience. To give a certain example using one of our indicators, a less corrupted state is able to attract more foreign direct investments, but at the same time is also able to tackle certain (political) external pressures. The chapter will analyze platform one from the multilateral track and

1 In this chapter I present the interests that the Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries have regarding their civilian security, the capabilities that they use to obtain and ensure that those aims are fulfilled. Also, for each country are proposed recommendations and are underlined the opportunities that they have to improve and further develop those capabilities in order to provide a more well-equipped system that can answer the civilian security’s challenges.

2 Ph.D., NSPSPA Bucharest

will weigh importance of these forums for the concept of civilian security. We will also underline the interests, capabilities, opportunities and recommendations for platform one and platform four of the multilateral track. On the methodological level, I want to stress the fact that the work on this topic has begun in 2013 and went to different phases. The unexpected events in Ukraine have brought a lot of attention on this topic of the Eastern Partnership – our aim is not to address military threats, but only the civilian aspect of security. We have analyzed here the events that took place between 2011 and 2015. Due to the specific of the region, the interviews conducted in all member states were taken under the condition of anonymity. I express here my gratitude to all our respondents for their time and useful insights.

1. Armenia

Interests

As is the case with all the EaP member countries, Armenia has its own interests and plans when it comes to its foreign policy. The civilian security aspect is seen here as a dependent variable, while the country’s behavior is considered to be the independent variable. Thus, Armenia’s choices in foreign policy are considered as causes for the country’s capacity to respond to the civilian security aspects. Also, in the case of Armenia, something that applies to the all the ex-Soviet republics, the Russian Federation is another constant element that is taken into account when it comes to its foreign policy choices. All these aspects are making Armenia one of the most complex countries in the EaP.

At a very general view we can say Armenia is one of the countries with the deepest vulnerabilities regarding the civilian security in the EaP. Although in the first four years of the EaP initiative, 2009-2013 the country was regarded as able and willing to have more responsibility and be more active in order to resolve the problems it had in main domains such as political participation and civil liberties, this initiative has been left behind once the Armenian authorities decided to turn to a more pro-East direction. In September 2013, when Armenia announced that wants to join the Customs Union, and therefore will not sign the Association Agreement, the possibility to develop and improve the relation with the European Union (EU) had decreased substantially. This was a significant blow – and a hint to what was about to come in Ukraine – to the Vilnius summit that was planned just two months later, in November 2013.

After that announcement, it followed a period of time in which the discussions between the EU officials and the Armenian authorities where on a rather unclear
path for almost two years. In October 2015, the European External Action Service (EEAS) released the information that the EU and Armenia were going to start negotiations for a new legal framework of cooperation\(^1\). In December 2015, two months later the negotiations were launched and they will be based on „the new Neighborhood Policy”\(^2\) and according to Piotr Switalski (Head of EU Delegation to Armenia and Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary) three subjects will be adopted as a result of these meetings without further discussions: „values, the rule of law and cooperation in security sector”\(^3\).

As for the Armenian part, at least at the political level discourse, according to the Armenian president, Serzh Sargsyan there is a strong will to have a very quick negotiation process that will lead to a new agreement with the EU\(^4\).

Therefore, we can see how Armenia is trying to maintain a third way between the EU and the Russian Federation. The main difference between these two approaches comes from the fact that the relation with the Russian Federation and its membership in the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) are guarantees that the hard security aspects are well protected in Armenia (from the other six EaP member countries only Belarus is also member of the CSTO).

If we ask why up to now Armenia has decided that the relation with the Russian Federation is more valuable than the one it has with the EU, the first answer comes from the problems that Armenia has with its neighbors: Azerbaijan and Turkey\(^5\). With Azerbaijan, Armenia has a territorial dispute also known as the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the two states, which fought the latest war between 1988-1994 do not have diplomatic relations while in the region are periodically ceasefire-violations. When in the summer of 2013 Azerbaijan claimed it bought from the Russian Federation arms worth almost 4 billion dollars, it was very simple to expect a fast and decisive reaction from the Armenian authorities\(^6\). As for the relation with Turkey, the two states do not have diplomatic relations, although

---


3 Idem


in 2009 they did sign an accord through which they agreed to reopen the borders and establish diplomatic relations.\(^1\)

The main reasons for the frozen connection between Turkey and Armenia are related to territorial problems, including contested borders and the role of Turkey in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict as well as the request of the Armenian part for the recognition of the mass killings in 1915 made by Turkey in the First World War against the Armenian people as genocide.\(^2\) Therefore, the main external threats for Armenia are related to border issues and hostile neighbors\(^3\) and these problems are also reflected in the official documents. According to the Armenian security strategy, the main interests of the country are mentioned from a classical and very traditionalist point of view. The major interests of the state are related to the way in which territoriality is seen and administrated and the population is protected from external factors that are considered as major threats. Also political issues, such as rule of law, democratic values and independent justice are stressed as important tools for implementing the National Security Strategy\(^4\). That is why we can say that the main interests for the Armenian state are related to maintain the borders’ integrity and the safety of the population inside those areas, especially in the areas most prone to conflict. Because these threats are military and political we can say that are existential threats that can affect the core existence of this state.

Due to Armenia’s new chapter in relation with the EU, we can say that it uses the bilateral framework more than the multilateral one, which is a common feature among the EaP countries.

**The view from the Platform 1**

We will now look at how the activities that are related to the multilateral platform one were implemented in Armenia in the last years and in which way they have contributed to the country’s resilience. Because institutions are central in order to ensure the way in which the state will be able to respond to the civilian security aspects, platform one which includes topics such as democracy, good governance and stability can be viewed as the core element that can contribute to the state’s increased capacity to respond to civilian security crisis. The major top-

---

ics of platform one include: “the rule of law and an independent judiciary, preventing and tackling corruption, reforming public administration, developing an integrated approach to border management, cooperating with interested partner countries on CSDP matters, civil protection and disaster management”\(^1\) and they received great and equal support on the part of the EU officials.

Anyway, one of the most problematic subjects is that of corruption, also a common problem for the all EaP countries. In the following paragraphs I will focus on the problem of corruption in Armenia, as part of the first platform because of the easy access to studies and data bases. Another important reason is because this is a problem that affects the whole society and Armenia is considered as a country with very high corruption, although in 2013 it was placed on number 94, while in 2012 it was placed on number 105 at the global level\(^2\). In 2014, Armenia was placed by Transparency International on number 94\(^3\) and in 2015 on number 95\(^4\). One interesting fact about corruption in Armenia is that the main domain that is perceived as being the most corrupt is education, followed by police and judiciary\(^5\). This means that people that are training the future leaders, experts and active citizens are not able to provide a proper image of them and to become role-models for their students or pupils.

In March 2013, Transparency International launched the project called “National Integrity System Assessments in the European Neighbourhood East Region” that was implemented in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine until August 2015 and finished with a very comprehensive report “The State of Corruption: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine” which includes specific recommendations for these countries\(^6\) and the project was funded by the European Union. Based on the findings in the project, Transparency International Armenia participated in the discussions regarding Armenia’s third anti-corruption strategy and made the following recommendations: “prevention of conflicts of interest, a more effective asset declaration system for public servants and high-ranking officials, improvement of the merit-based appointment system


\(^5\) Ibidem

for civil servants, and enhanced public sector fiscal transparency and disclosure of non-classified information”\(^1\). Since 2003, Armenia has adopted two other anti-corruption strategies\(^2\).

Following this initiative, the Armenian government launched in July 2015 the Anti-Corruption Council, an institution that will fight corruption in the public administration\(^3\) but the Council does not seem to be a good example and has been criticized for its expensive private flights\(^4\). In September 2015, the Armenian government adopted the anti-corruption strategy for 2015-2018 that aims at four major sectors: “healthcare, education, revenue collection and services the police provides to the population”\(^5\). The total cost of the initiative is estimated at “806.390, US dollars of which $749.110 will be a compensation of expenses by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and $57,280 a grant investment”\(^6\). However, the EU is not completely satisfied with the current situation in the fight against corruption and has urged Armenian authorities to do more in this area, otherwise it risks to lose 15 million Euros from the funds allocated to this domain precisely\(^7\). The opposition party, Armenian National Congress (ANC) has asked the government to sign and ratify the whole text of the UN Anti-Corruption Convention of 2003 without reservations regarding the article 20 –

---


which incriminates “illicit enrichment”\textsuperscript{1} (Armenia has signed the UN Convention in 2005 and ratified it in 2007)\textsuperscript{2}. Besides the UN Convention the legal framework that addresses this problem includes the following laws: “Law on Fixed Payments, the Law on the Organization and Implementation of Inspections, and the Law on the Declaration of Property and Income (...) the Law on Public Servants and the Law on Civil Servants”\textsuperscript{3}.

Based on the information presented above we can say that regarding the fight against corruption and the strengthening of institutions, Armenia has made some important changes, but it still needs to take deeper actions against this phenomenon. In case of success the whole society will benefit from more capable institutions and it will be better prepared to respond to different types of crisis because the current image tells us that we can expect a small capacity of institutions to respond to citizens’ needs in all cases of crisis.

At the social level we also had in the summer of 2015, the protests known as the “Electric Yerevan”. Their cause was the fact that the Russian-owned company that controls the electricity distribution company in Armenia requested a 17% increase in electricity rates (the third increase in less than a year)\textsuperscript{4}. Although those protesters have had economic causes, the important thing from the perspective of this article is that the ordinary citizens are continuing to be concerned about public sphere and public decisions.

Apart from the political sector, in the platform one we have also mentioned the civil protection and disaster management dimension. As for Armenia, the country is prone to certain significantly natural disasters, such as earthquakes. In 1988, Armenia was hit by the Spitak earthquake and 24.000 people died, while 50.000 lost their homes. In 2013, after a quarter century, some 4.500 people were still waiting for help in any form from the authorities\textsuperscript{5}. What this delay tells us is that the public authorities are slow and somewhat unable to respond in real time or even on middle or long term to a natural disaster, therefore confirming our hypothesis that in case of emergencies, institutions lack the human and financial

\textsuperscript{1} Ibidem


\textsuperscript{4} Oliphant, Roland „Armenia’s ‘Electric Yerevan’ protests enter seventh day” (25.06.2015), The Telegraph http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/armenia/11699692/Arménias-Electric-Yerevan-protests-enter-seventh-day.html (04.07.2016).

resources to answer to this situation. What makes Armenia’s situation even more critical is the fact that a possible earthquake could also involve one of its problematic neighbors such as Turkey or Azerbaijan. Therefore, the lack of cooperation will imply an even more critical situation for the parts involved in a possible emergency.

The European Union has funded the programme “Supporting Disaster Risk Reduction Amongst Vulnerable Communities and Institutions in South Caucasus”, which is directly linked with our research subject because it aims to prepare the local communities to respond to natural and man-made disasters and to also increase their resilience1.

Another issue that can be discussed here is the link between the level of corruption and the problem of housing, which if we can connect we will obtain a high number of construction authorizations for the capital city, Erevan that put at risk the lives of a large number of inhabitants2. This only adds to the problems that we already mentioned for Armenia.

Capabilities

Armenia is trying to improve and modernize its capability of reaction when it comes to civilian crisis. Since 2008 Armenia has had a Ministry of Emergency Situations which was part of the “Prevention, preparedness and response of human-made and natural disasters (Eastern region)” Programme (PPRD) between 2011 and 20143. As for the public spending, until 2010 its military budget has increased yearly, and it reached 4.5% of GDP - its highest level- in 2010 and it was 4.3% of GDP in 20144 in accordance with Armenia’s interests that were mentioned in the previous sections. Due to the fact that civilian crisis is not related to the military sector, we can say that the decision to provide more resources to the military sector affects the resources that could be used to improve other sectors such as administrative reform and institutions building.

From the perspective of the threats to the civilian security, Armenia is one of the most vulnerable countries: “Armenia is deemed one of the most disaster prone countries in the world: it is prone to all types of disasters except the sea ones. Severe earthquakes, frequent landslides, hail storms, droughts, floods threaten the safety of people and cause considerable damage impeding the sustainable devel-

---

2 Interview with expert in Yerevan, under the condition of anonymity, October 2013.
opment of the country”1. The order of the threats using their frequency is: floods, extreme temperature, earthquakes, droughts floods and storms2. To these natural causes it also adds the poor capacity to manage the risks.

In June 2016, the EU launched in Yerevan the programme called “Disaster Risk Reduction to Improve Resilience of Communities and Institutions in the South Caucasus” which is very related with our project – but with a more policy oriented dimension: “the programme aims to make communities in areas prone to natural hazards less vulnerable, and to boost their resilience to natural and man-made hazards”3.

On the legal framework the government of the Republic of Armenia has approved in 2012 a National Strategy and Disaster Risk Reduction National Strategy Action Plan4. The government of Armenia created in 2010 the Disaster Risk Reduction National Platform in order to respond to develop its capacity of respond to disasters5 which means that the authorities do understand the difficult situation in which Armenia is when it comes to natural disasters.

Opportunities

It is difficult to assume that a high budget for the military sector will offer a pragmatic solution for Armenia. Allocating the small resources that they have to military spending will cut on the long run the opportunity to develop a stable economy. Without a doubt, Armenia should make its foreign policy choices based on the political landscape that has inherited after the fall of the Soviet Union, but a difficult relation with its neighbours will only drain important resources from other areas and will involve Armenia in a dangerous circle that will maintain the country in a precarious situation. The EaP multilateral framework offers Armenia the possibility to negotiate its major external issues without looking too traditionalist in its actions. Therefore, it should try to maintain a higher degree of connection with this initiative in the future.


3 „EU continues to support DRR in South Caucasus”, (28.06.2016), Prevention Web http://www.preventionweb.net/news/view/49423 (06.07.2016).


2. Azerbaijan

Interests

Just as in the case of Armenia, Azerbaijan is trapped in a very difficult position. Its main threat is the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, but it also has a very different internal situation from Armenia due to its booming economy. In 2012 it had a GDP per capita of $10,400 (almost double compared to Armenia, $5,900)\(^1\). For example, in Armenia the poverty rate is 30%\(^2\) and in Azerbaijan is only 6%\(^3\). That is way Azerbaijan afforded to buy the Russian arms in the summer of 2013, although Azerbaijan is not anymore a member of the Collective Security Treaty Organization CSTO, and therefore has less significant links in the defense cooperation area with the Russian Federation than Armenia.

According to the National Security Concept of the Republic of Azerbaijan the main threats for this state are: „Attempts against the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and constitutional order of the Republic of Azerbaijan; Actions undermining performance of State functions of ensuring rule of law, maintaining public order and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms; Separatism, ethnic, political and religious extremism; Terrorism and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; Regional conflicts and transnational organized crime”\(^4\). As we can see, many of them were also presented for Armenia, but Azerbaijan is stressing more the regional framework and the trans-national potential threats. Not as dependent on external help as Armenia, due to its natural resources, Azerbaijan has more space to negotiate its interests in relation with other actors such as the Russian Federation or the European Union.

Regarding its relation with the EU, Azerbaijan has different objectives than the countries that have signed the Association Agreements or even Armenia. The relations between EU and Azerbaijan are regulated by the 1999 Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PAC) and Azerbaijan does not seem interested in signing an Association Agreement with the EU, but wants to negotiate a so-called Strategic Modernisation Partnership Agreement, although initially the both were considered complementary\(^5\). Azerbaijan is not a member of the World Trade Or-

---

ganization (WTO), a fact that aggravates the negotiations for the DCFTA\(^1\). Leila Alieva argues that due to its special situation and its rich natural resources, the more for more principle does not motivate decision-makers to take action in order to implement the needed reforms\(^2\) (Armenia, on the other hand has been a member of the WTO since 2003). Also, the European Commission considers an Association Agreement as “too ambitious” and “impossible” due to Azerbaijan’s lack of membership in the WTO\(^3\).

Gela Merabishvili proposes that the EU try to approach the human rights problem in Azerbaijan by two new means: first to link energy and human rights and second to criticize in public the government’s actions\(^4\). Although possible it is unlikely that this will be the case, due to the current (summer-autumn of 2016) situation in the EU and the major problems it already has (internal and external). Besides, a good relation with Turkey may be a good example for the Azeri government.

F. Mogherini’s first visit to Azerbaijan has been labeled by many non-governmental organizations working in the field of human rights as “a missed opportunity”\(^5\) for the EU to speak against the human rights abuses that are underway in this country. Six important NGOs (Front Line Defenders, Human Rights House Foundation, Human Rights Watch, International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), International Partnership for Human Rights and World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT) wrote to F. Mogherini to ask for a more visible stance on the part of the EU when it comes to the problems that the activists in this field face\(^6\). But in the official discourse given in Baku, the head of the European diplomacy stressed first of all Azerbaijan’s “potential to become one of the EU’s major commercial partners in the region” and its role as “a strategic partner with regard to European energy security” and only after that mentioned “the high importance that the European Union attaches to the respect for hu-


\(^2\) Ibidem


man rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of expression and association”. Therefore, the crackdown on the civil society had not been mentioned in the public sphere, which only increases the bitterness towards what the activists perceive as the EU’s “double standards”. This opinion is also spread across observers of the region, such as Svante Cornell, Director of the Central Asia-Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Programme of the John Hopkins University who criticized what he called the “selective of Western policy” when it comes to human rights. He also gave the example of countries with a much worse record when it comes to the situation of human rights such as Saudi Arabia, Vietnam or Turkmenistan and which have not been treated by the West as Azerbaijan was. Even president Alyev has accused EU of double standards with reference to the refugees’ crisis. It is rather unrealistic to believe that the EU will seek to persuade the political elite in Azerbaijan to seek more than economic cooperation with it, thus in this relation each partner is underling very clear and pragmatic goals.

_A view from the Platform 1_

Azerbaijan is probably less willing than Armenia to have closer ties with the EU, mainly because they seek to obtain an official position from the EU on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Also, due to the less free regime in Azerbaijan it is less likely that the organisms that could benefit from the EU’s help, such as like is the case with non-governmental organizations in Armenia, will be able to have access to the EU funds and then use public channels to persuades the public officials. Azerbaijan is not only a more centralized and authoritarian country, but also a more stable one.

On the internal level, Azerbaijan is not only less free than Armenia, but is also more corrupt and was placed on number 127 in 2013, by Transparency International in a better position than in 2012 when was placed on number 139. In 2014 Azerbaijan was on number 126 and in 2015 the country was place 119 from 168.

---

2 Interview with expert in Baku, under the condition of anonymity, November 2013.
states which shows a decreasing trend. Due to the problem of corruption and the lack of political liberties, the institutions in this country are also highly prone to inaction. Although at the formal level, Azeri authorities are willing to improve their performance, at a closer look it seems that the way in which they are trying to fight corruption shows a lack of clarity when it comes to who does what, and therefore there is less probability for accountability2.

Just like in Georgia, in the autumn of 2013 Azerbaijan held elections for the Presidency. The incontestable winner it was for the third time in a row, Ilham Aliyev. At the beginning of 2013, two of his political opponents were arrested: the presidential candidate Ilgar Mammadov and activist Tofiq Yagublu3. The EU condemned the arrest of Ilgar Mammadov4 who is still in prison, in spite of the fact that the European Court of Human Rights ruled its imprison as politically motivated5. As for Tofiq Yagublu, he has been pardoned by president Alyev on March 17, 20166.

The October 2013 election process proved to be from the point of view of the Eastern Partnership and its relation with Azerbaijan, a failure. There was no measurable impact of the EU policies on the democratization process in this country, mainly because the economic conditionality could not be used here, due to the fact the economic situation in the country was very good and Azerbaijan was not dependent on external loans.

OSCE has also criticized the 2013 election process in Azerbaijan mentioning the lack of freedom of expression, assembly and association and a biased presentation of the candidates7. All those factors allow us to classify the Azerbaijan3

---

7 „Election in Azerbaijan undermined by limitations on fundamental freedoms, lack of level playing field and significant problems on election day, international observers say” (10.10.2013),
jan’s internal vulnerabilities to emergency situations and internal crisis as rather high.

Konarzewska considers that the 2014 crackdown on civil society activists has been seen by some as Azeri authorities’ demonstration to the Russian Federation and to the Western partners that it will not accept the pressure for democratization. The author also argues that Azerbaijan will continue to seek an independent foreign policy, including by resisting Russian pressure to join the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU). I agree with both arguments because they point to two strong ideas: an independent elite, or at least one that wants to be perceived so; and the role of cultural factors: Azerbaijan is closer to Turkey than to the Russia Federation (for example Azerbaijan approved the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 68/262 which supported Ukraine’s territorial integrity, while Armenia and Belarus rejected it).

Another argument is that the arrested activists could have been seen as a threat during the Azeri’s presidency of the Council of Europe (between April-November 2014) and that is why were imprisoned. This idea does not contradict the previous arguments, but strengthens it – the fact that Azerbaijan was the head of the Council of Europe was not going to change its behavior.

**Capabilities**

Due to its economic opportunities, Azerbaijan has the chance to improve the human resources as well as the infrastructure in order to increase the standard of living for its citizens and to stabilize the country in the South Caucasus landscape. At Vilnius, the EU and the Azeri officials decided to continue the dialogue regarding the Association Agreements. At the Riga summit, Azerbaijan made little progress compared with the other EaP member states.

Since 2010, Azerbaijan has increased its military spending and in 2012 allocated 4.64% of GDP for military making and was placed on number 16 at the global level (in terms of military spending), in 2013 allocated 4.7% of GDP and in

---


2014 a surprising 5.1% of GDP, which placed it on the sixth position on a global level\(^1\). This shows us the internal willingness to increase its presence, a move that could obviously make Armenia unsure. According to the Asian Disaster Reduction Center, Azerbaijan is prone to floods, landslides, earthquakes and droughts\(^2\). From all these, floods have by far the greatest frequency, followed by earthquakes, droughts and extreme weather\(^3\). Azerbaijan is also vulnerable to: “technological hazards, including transport and industrial accidents”\(^4\).

As for the institutions that have the goal to deal with this kind of threats, since 2005 in Azerbaijan functions the Ministry of Emergency Situations. According to the Ministry’s website, its two main goals are: “civil defense; and protection of the population from natural (geophysical, geological, meteorological, hydrological, maritime hydrological contingencies, natural fires, etc.) and man-made (arsons, explosions, collapse of buildings and constructions, chemical, biological and radiological hazards, accidents in electric power supply system, vital utilities, waste treatment facilities, breakdowns in hydrodynamic installations, oil and gas production units, main pipelines, transportation and traffic accidents, etc.) disasters”\(^5\). This means that the institutional framework for dealing with civilian security crisis exists and has the chance to produce efficient results, at least on medium and long time.

**Opportunities**

Azerbaijan is showing that it knows very well how its internal growth can be reflected in the external capacities, and therefore at a greater regional role. In 2013 it launched the development concept „Azerbaijan: 2020 Outlook for the future” which seeks to offer a direction of development for the economic and social domains in Azerbaijan\(^6\). This movement comes as a way to provide an alternative path for economic development in this country, which can only be a step forward in the regional context. This will ensure that Azerbaijan is not becoming dependent


on one partnership and has space to act accordingly to its interests. Also, due to its relation with the EU, it should try to harmonize its legislation in the area of civilian crisis management and should also improve the human resources through trainings and common exercises. Investments in infrastructure and new technologies can also be helpful for the whole country as a tool to help increase its resilience.

3. Belarus Interests

Belarus represents by far the most special case in the Eastern Partnership countries. The argument for this affirmation is that Belarus has been named the “last dictatorship in Europe”\(^1\) while Freedom House, has classified Belarus as not free for many years in a row. In December 2010, president Alyaksandr Lukashenka won a fourth term as President of Belarus\(^2\) and in October 2015 he won a fifth term. OSCE observed the election process and, but mentioned in its final report that the recommendations that has made after the 2010 and 2012 elections in order to improve the election process\(^3\).

In 2013 the electoral code had been modified in order to make and facilitate the control of the government on the results. But the opposition it seems that has learned from the previous elections and decided to unite in two political blocs: People’s Referendum formed by Party of Belarusian Popular Front, Tell the Truth campaign, Movement for Freedom, Belarusian Liberal Party of Freedom and Progress, Belarus Social Democratic Party (Hramada); and the second one For Free and Fair Elections for a Better Life „Talaka” which are led by Alexander Milinkevich and Uladzimir Niakliajeu\(^4\).

But despite being elected five times as a president and having a difficult relation with the EU, A. Lukashenka manages to play a significant role in the peace negotiations called Minsk protocol between Ukraine, the Russian Federation, the rebels in Eastern Ukraine (Donetsk People’s Republic and Luhansk People’s Re-

---

\(^1\) This phrase uses the title of the book: “Belarus: The Last European Dictatorship” (2012) by Andrew Wilson, Yale University Press, Cornwall.


public), France and Germany (the so-called Normandy group) and this fact has been mentioned even in the Riga’s Summit final declaration\(^1\). The Declaration also mentioned the reopening of the EU-Belarus Human Rights Dialogue, which met in June 2016 and is expected to have a new session in 2017\(^2\). Also, the Belarus - EU Coordination Group met in April 2016 and discussed about subject from platforms two and four, but also about human rights\(^3\).

Another step to improve the relation and to reward the president Lukashenka came in February 2016, when the EU foreign ministers decided to lift the sanctions against Belarus\(^4\). The decision was based on Belarus decision to free in August 2015 many political prisoners. The parliamentary election expected in September 2016 will be a test for this decision on the part of the EU. Due to the fact that this measure comes after the OSCE report that I mentioned already, we can say that the EU prefers even a difficult dialogue with Belarus than risk to antagonize it even more.

The relation between EU and Belarus has been challenging since its independence. Belarus does not have a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (as the rest of the EaP countries) with the EU. In 2012 the Council adopted the conclusions on Belarus that allow the critical engagement approach, the support of the civil society and „EU’s readiness to launch negotiations for visa facilitation and readmission agreements which would enhance people-to-people contacts to the benefit of the Belarusian population at large”\(^5\). However, Belarus does not have an action plan and in the EaP participates only in the multilateral track\(^6\). For 2014-2020, the EU adopted a Country Strategy Paper that has three main goals: social inclusion, environment and local and regional development\(^7\). This

---


shows that the cooperation between the two actors is indeed focusing on practical results, on a different approach for each member and does not give too much attention to the political dimension.

The Belarusian approach is very pragmatic and oriented to practical results. Belarus promotes what has labeled as the „integration of integrations” – a method through which it seeks to bring closer or to „harmonize” the practices in EU and in the Eurasian Economic Union1.

When it comes to security interests, Belarus has a military doctrine, adopted in 2002 that offers a very classical view of security, based on the way in which territoriality is seen and protected or organized. According to it, Belarus does not have any territorial claims to other states, nor do other states have any territorial claims towards Belarus. Also, Belarus supports the non-intervention norm when it comes to internal issues and demilitarization according to international treaties2. If this is the situation for the military domain, when it comes to foreign policy aims, Belarus encourages a close reconnection between the ex-Soviet states in the Customs Union and sees European Union as a trading partner3. A. Lukashenka seems to see Belarus as economic dependent on Russia, but considers Russia as depended on Belarus in terms of security4. Although this claim is rather exaggerated – as is hard to think that Russia cannot ensure its security, it is relevant the fact that the Belarusian president does not seek a very close integration with Moscow and until now was able to oscillate between the West and the Est and has all the chances to do so at least until the end of the present mandate.

As for the political domain, Belarus does also support the visa liberalization with the EU. The link between Belarus and the Russian Federation is also important because Belarus is member of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO). This shows us that Belarus wants to have a closer relation with the Russian Federation, due to the fact that they share common values, which also differ from the European Union way of doing things.

A view from the Platform 1

Due to its internal situation, Belarus is a closed actor and can be really difficult to obtain trustful information from the country on sensitive topics. From platform one, Belarus is interested on the border security, the promotion of equality and

---

non-discrimination and more differentiation towards the EaP states\textsuperscript{1}. Anyway, a thorny subject that is related to platform one is the death penalty, Belarus being the only European country that still applies this punishment\textsuperscript{2}. EU has asked Belarus repeatedly to abolish the punishment and always condemns the executions that take place in Belarus.

For example, Belarus took part in the Cross-border Cooperation Programme Poland - Belarus - Ukraine 2007-2013 with a total budget of € 202.9 million EUR (ended December 2015)\textsuperscript{3}. Another project called “Strengthening Surveillance and Bilateral Coordination Capacity along the Common Border between Belarus and Ukraine (SURCAP Phase II)” started in March 2014 and is funded by the EU and implemented by the International Organization for Migration, together with the International Centre for Migration Policy Development\textsuperscript{4}. Therefore, we can conclude that Belarus will continue to have an important interest when it comes to the securitization of its borders and will want to participate in new projects on this topic.

As for the problem of corruption, just like Azerbaijan, Belarus has a significant problem with corruption, ranking on number 123 at the global level in 2013\textsuperscript{5}. In 2014 it ranked 119 from 175 countries\textsuperscript{6} and in 2015 was on number 107 from 168 states\textsuperscript{7}. This would put Belarus at the middle of the top of the EaP countries, in front of Ukraine for example.

At the administrative level, Belarus has to support the consequences of a system that lacks a long-term vision and is unable or unwilling to surpass the authoritarian model\textsuperscript{8}. Therefore, even the initiation of change in the administrative

\textsuperscript{1} Ibidem
\textsuperscript{8} For a full demonstration see also: Yauheni Preiherman, „How Decisions are Made in Belarus” (17.05.2013), Belarus Digest http://belarusdigest.com/story/who-really-governs-belarus-14051 (05.01.2014).
sector will involve a huge effort from the part of the public servants. Of course, this is possible but will need a significant help from external actors that should try to improve the efficiency in the administrative sector.

Between 2007 - 2014, Belarus received through the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) a total amount of € 71.6 million EURO\(^1\) and for 2014-2017 can obtain between €71 million and €89 million\(^2\).

**Capabilities**

Belarus’ annual budget for military spending is situated at 1.3% of the GDP, reflecting their balanced way for the prioritizing the foreign policy aims\(^3\). Most of their equipment is obsolete and therefore do not perform to the actual standards for interventions in cases of crisis. Because of the close relation between the Russian Federation and Belarus, it is expected that in special situations, Russia will offer its help for the Belarusian authorities.

Since 2001, Belarus has had a Ministry for Emergency Situations whose main goal is to protect the citizens against natural and manmade disasters\(^4\). Belarus is prone to extreme temperature, floods and storms\(^5\) as well as fires and epidemics\(^6\). This calls for more implication and cooperation on the part of the authorities in order to ensure a better response to these threats.

**Opportunities**

Due to its proximity with the border of the EU, Belarus can try to improve the relations with its neighbours and to become more open to the offer that receives from them, even if they are conditioned by internal reforms. If we look at the situation in Ukraine we can see that sooner or later the lack of legitimacy and the gap between the leaders and the citizens will be reflected in social movements. Because the Russian Federation is member of the World Trade Organisation, but also because of its internal problems, the relation it has with Belarus and the financial support that it offers have a rather small probability to go on for a very long period of time.

---


4. Georgia

Interests

Until 2014 together with Republic of Moldova, Georgia was considered one of the winners of the EaP. Now, Republic of Moldova is in more difficult position and Georgia is by far the best pupil in the Eastern Partnership. As expected, the 2008 war is the fact around which the national security strategy was build. The war in Georgia and the illegal annexation of Crimea are cited in the Riga Summit final declaration as facts that show that the “sovereignty and territorial integrity within internationally recognized borders cannot be taken for granted in the 21st century on the European continent.”

The problems in the two countries are considered a threat to the whole European security system and EU argued for respect for the international law during the conflict.

Therefore, the military dimension of the Georgian security is stressed in the national strategy, from where we find that Georgia is part of the Atlantic and European space and that supports its extension towards East. According to the National Security Concept of Georgia, the main priorities for the Georgian state are: ensuring sovereignty and territorial integrity, developing state institutions and strengthening democracy, development of an efficient national security system, strengthening national unity and civil consent, European and Euro-Atlantic integration (on the fifth place). This means that the first aims are related to nation-building issues and stabilizing the institutions and only after that they are able to get involved with the regional landscape. The most important threat for the Georgian state is the occupation of its territories by the Russian troops and the possible consequences of this: a new aggression or the violation of rights of the people from those regions. This poses a great risk for the human security in the area and proves once again the important role that so-called frozen conflicts still have in the ex-Soviet space.

At the Vilnius Summit in November 2013, EU initialized with Georgia (and Republic of Moldova) Association Agreements (AA), which include Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas (DCFTA). The AAs were signed in June 2014, some parts entered into force on September 1st 2014 and since July 1st 2016, Georgia has full free access to the common market. According to text of the Agreement,

---


the relation between the two partners recognizes the following values: “democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law – (which) lie also at the heart of political association and economic integration as envisaged in this Agreement” and will seek to “strengthen respect for fundamental freedoms, human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities, democratic principles, the rule of law, and good governance, based on common values of the Parties”1. These affirmations show us that the values that the EU sees as fundamental for itself are also taken into account in relation with the third parts, at least when is about such essential legal acts such as an Association Agreement, which includes more than just trade or economic cooperation. For example, after the signing of the AA the civil society was recognized as an actor in the process of implementation2.

The AA also allows the parts to deepen their cooperation in the area of civilian and military crisis management and Georgia can now take part in different exercises and trainings, if the EU will invite it3. The Final Declaration of the Riga Summit also mentions Georgia’s contribution to the EU Military Operation in Central African Republic (EUFOR RCA) and the possibility to participate in the EU Training Mission in Mali (EUTM Mali)4.

A view from the Platform 1

Georgia managed to make some huge internal reforms and is the best placed country from the ex-Soviet Republic (except for the Baltic States) on the subject of corruption at the global level. Transparency International placed Georgia on number 53 from 177 states5 reflecting the progress made in the last decade in this country. In 2014 Georgia was placed on number 50 from 175 countries6 and in

---


2015 on number 52 from 168 countries\textsuperscript{1}. Also, according to the Freedom House reports, Georgia is a partly free country with good results when compared to other ex-Soviet republics\textsuperscript{2}. All this steps were strong arguments for the signing and implementation of the AA and we can speculate that the 2008 war did not push Georgia back on the path to democratization, but it was a factor that motivated the country even more to try to implement reforms.

\textit{Capabilities}

Georgia had its biggest budget for military in 2007, 9.2\% of the GDP and then it decreased to 2.9\% in 2012 and in 2015 to 2.3\% of the GDP\textsuperscript{3}. This is showing the militarist trend that existed in the Georgian society and that now it seems to have past. But even with a close connection between Georgia and NATO, it is highly unlikely that in the case of a conflict that would include the Russian Federation, the situation would involve other Western actors. After the conflict in September 2008, the European Union Monitoring Mission (EUMM) in Georgia started its work as a civilian organism. According to their website, EUMM is “an unarmed civilian\textsuperscript{4} monitoring mission of the European Union”\textsuperscript{5}. The mission’s main goals are common to other civilian missions: to monitor the implementation of the Six Point Agreement (the negotiated legal document), followed by the need to stabilize and normalize the situation; it also seeks to help build confidence between the parties\textsuperscript{6}. The Mission offers great opportunities for Europeans because they could contribute in this way to the implementation of the principles from the Six Point Agreement without having the international pressure that the other missions, from UN and OSCE carried. Just as it did with the Western Balkans, EU has the chance to offer a clear vision for solving conflicts and making the two sides find a common ground.

Regarding the civilian security aspects, Georgia is vulnerable to floods, landslides, mudflows, droughts and snow slides\textsuperscript{7}. At the governmental level, the Geor-

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item My emphasis.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
gian National Environmental Agency founded in 2008 is part of the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection of Georgia and is responsible for the “preparation and dissemination of warnings and notifications in the event of expected natural, hydrometeorological and geological disasters and adverse events, as well as in cases of forecasts on extreme environmental pollution”\(^1\). But, according to Gaprindashvili et. al Georgia still has a lot to do in this domain, especially when it comes to the process of communication between authorities and the citizens\(^2\).

**Opportunities**

Georgia is able to improve its economic situation, through the ties it has with the European Union mainly using the DCFTA and the Association Agreement, but there are small chances that the cooperation will go beyond the economic level. This also means that it has the possibility to develop stronger and more accountable institutions and to ensure a higher standard of living for its citizens. But at the military level, Georgia lacks the same mobility that NATO countries have. Due to this aspect it is highly unlikely for Georgia to deepen its cooperation with NATO in the next five years.

The war proved that the foreign policy choices are limited for the ex-Soviet republics and that the decision to get involved with military alliances is only valid if is approved by the Russian neighbor. In any case, Georgia’s progress should be supported and their efforts should be rewarded more, including with the decision to allow free movement for its citizens (visa liberalization).

**5. Republic of Moldova**

**Interests**

As mentioned before, Republic of Moldova and Georgia were for a long time the best performing countries in the Eastern Partnership. As is the case with Georgia, Republic of Moldova is also caught in a frozen conflict, the favorite method used by the Russian Federation for keeping the loyalty of the ex-Soviet republics. According to the National Security Concept of the Republic of Moldova, the main aim of the strategy is to: “ensure and defend the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity, constitutional order, democratic development and internal security, and to consolidate the statehood of the Republic of Moldova, which is equivalent to the edification of the national identity of the Moldovan people”\(^3\). Just like

---


in the Georgian case, the state is trying to act inside, as well as on the outside in order to build and defend the nation. These remarks show the dangers inherent from the Soviet times, and which are connected to the lack of consent for the way in which the Moldavian identity is defined.

Thus, it is not surprising that the prevailing threat for the Moldavian state is the foreign military presence on its territory and the possibility of a future aggression. Also, the Concept points out the threats derived from human activity and natural disasters.

As for the relation between the EU and Republic of Moldova, the two partners went through times of closeness, as well as rather difficult times. Together with Georgia, the Republic of Moldova signed in June 2014 the Association Agreement (which includes the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area) some of its parts entered into force in September 2014 and since July 1st 2016 has been fully applied. As in the case of Georgia, the civil society will be fully involved in the implementation of the Agreement\(^1\). The text of the AA has almost all the features that were found in Georgia’s AA: recognizes the European choice and aspirations of the country, the possibility to ask Moldova to participate in civilian and military crisis management operations\(^2\).


more political will is needed in order to facilitate the judiciary to function more efficiently and to have results in the fight against corruption. In any case, the relation between institution and the civil sector is well-developed in Moldova, and the officials seem willing to receive feedback from the non-profit sector. Of course, this could be the effect of the external pressure – in order to see how this will be perceived by the European officials.

Due to its security situation, Moldova is very interested in the subject of border management and has cooperated with EU Border Protection Agency Frontex in areas such as: “exchange, training, research and development and joint operations as well as on joint analytical work in the context of the Eastern Borders Risk Analysis Network”. The cooperation began in 2009 with the aim of capacity building and in 2011 a Cooperation Plan for 2012-2014 was signed with five main aims: “exchange of information/relevant situational products/alerts, intelligence and risk analysis, joint projects and operations, professional training, research and development”.

As is the case in Georgia, the EU also has in Moldova and Ukraine a monitoring mission, called European Union Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine (EUBAM). From the perspective of this study, one of the most important aims of the mission is: “to improve cross-border cooperation between the border guard and customs agencies and other law enforcement bodies; facilitate international coordinated cooperation”. The role of the mission is very important because it shows that the EU is interested in stability in the area and is willing to help the two countries to increase regional cooperation. Strengthening the two countries’ capacity to resolve the common problems can have a significant effect for the whole region and can lead to more stability – a much needed goal for these countries.

Following Moldova’s request, three European experts participated in the Security Sector Reform process between 2014 - 2015 and will continue to do so in 2016. According to the Riga Summit Final Declaration, Moldova has also contributed to EU Training Mission in Mali (EUTM Mali) and is expected to participate in the EU Military Advisory Mission in Central African Republic (EUMAM RCA).

1 Interview with expert in Chișinău, under the condition of anonymity, September 2012.


Capabilities

Moldova has the lowest budget for military in the whole region, only 0.4% of GDP in 2015. Especially in the last three years, Moldova was able to use the human capital and the resources it has received in order to improve its performance in terms of institutions and implementing the requests of the EU in order to harmonize its relation with the EU.

Applying the civilian security concept to Moldova allows us to say that the main threats here are: “floods, windstorms, droughts, extreme temperatures, landslides, seismic events (and) a number of man-made hazards that pose further risks in the country, including potential industrial accidents, pollution and nuclear contamination from neighbouring countries”. If we classify the threat using the criterion of frequencies, then floods are by far the biggest danger, followed by droughts, storms and extreme weather.

Unfortunately, Moldova is the only European country that appears in a top ten of countries with the most population affected by natural disasters based on the UN report, “The Human Cost of Weather Related Disasters”. This should be an important signal for the Moldavian authorities, which need to do more to respond to these situations. The public institution that has the main responsibilities in this area is the Ministry of Environment.

Opportunities

Moldova should try to maintain what has gained in the last years and to make a real effort to involve and communicate more with its own citizens. Also, it could try to use the potential that the Transnistrian conflict has in order to involve more the actors that could help it resolve the conflict (such as Germany). The presidential elections that will take place in October 2016 will have an important impact on the future road of the country and its external affairs. Although sometimes lacking enough relevant results, EU has to continue to support Moldova’s European choice, while its political elite must become more responsible in front of its citizens.

---

4 Burdujan, Radu, “ONU: Republica Moldova a fost cea mai afectată țară din Europa de dezastre natural” (UN: In Europe, Moldova was the country most affected by natural disasters) (25.11.2015), Agora http://agora.md/stiri/14483/oun-republica-moldova-a-fost-cea-mai-afectata-tara-din-europa-de-dezastre-naturale (18.07.2016). The report is available here: “20-year review shows 90% of disasters are weather-related; US, China, India, Philippines and Indonesia record the most” (23.11.2015), United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) http://www.unisdr.org/archive/46793 (18.07.2016).
6. Ukraine

Interests

Ukraine is the biggest and probably the most complex state in the Eastern Partnership. Without a doubt, the latest events – the protests that started before the Vilnius Summit were the first signal that the domestic situation in this country is very problematic. A thorough analysis of the events in Ukraine, including the illegal annexation of Crimea, is not necessary here and the subject has been widely discussed in academic and newspaper articles. We will now look at Ukraine’s interests and short term perspectives and then we will identify the progress made in the areas connected with platforms one and four.

Even if Ukrainians understood their sensitive position, between the East and the West, they managed to balance this inconvenience for a long time¹. We could say that the offer made by the European Union, to sign the Association Agreement and thus the DCFTA put Ukraine in front of a difficult decision because it could no long use a bi-dimensioned language and it had to replace the and-and formula with an or-or one regarding its foreign policy.

On a formal level, in 2012, Ukraine adopted the National Security Strategy whose motto was “Ukraine in the world that is changing” and adds only a new threat - the economic crisis – to others much more used like: „conflicts, nuclear proliferation, energy security, terrorism, illegal migration or trans-border crime have been the same for the years”². Based on the strategy, H. Shelest identifies the following external threats for Ukraine „the Transnistrian problem, the borders between Belarus, the Russian Federation and Moldova and „Russian Black Sea Fleet deployment in Ukraine”³. Also, in this strategy is mentioned for the first time the fact that Ukraine is not part of any bloc of states⁴ which offers a clear message in relation to NATO. This stance was highly influenced by President Viktor Yanukovich election in 2010, who moved the country towards „russification”⁵.

Due to the 2014 events, in May 2015 the National Security and Defense Council (NSDC) adopted a new National Security Strategy that is planned to be active until 2020⁶. The new document highlights the importance of defense for the country therefore being more comprehensive than the previous document. The

---


³ Ibidem

⁴ Ibidem


document mentions the European choice of the Ukrainian people as one of the events that gave rise to „the Revolution of Dignity“. According to the document, the main threats for its security come for Russia’s actions, including military aggression, occupation of its territory and actions against the Ukrainian economy. Some of the reasons for which Ukraine responded so ineffective to the crisis in the East are: “institutional weakness, lack of professionalism, the structural imbalance of the security sector; lack of resource support and inefficient use of resources in the defense and security sector.” What I want to stress from the perspective of this analysis is the subject of corruption considered extremely wide spread in all the structures, which allows us to say that at a formal level the political elites recognize the problem and are willing to take action against it.

Overall, Ukraine shares one important feature with Moldova and Georgia: the presence of foreign troops or armed forces on its territory, but also vulnerabilities such as corruption, the weak judiciary system, a population decrease, etc.

A view from the Platform 1

On the theme of corruption, Ukraine is the worst placed country in the EAP, ranked on number 144 in 2013 by Transparency International, on number 142 from 175 states in 2014 and on number 130 from 167 countries in 2015. Another relevant indicator for the country’s internal situation is the top made by Freedom House, which considers Ukraine as a partly free country.

Unlike the elections in 2010 (presidential election when existed the suspicion of large scale electoral fraud) and 2012 (parliamentary elections, OSCE recommended measures to improve transparency, impartiality), the last (early) presi-

---


2 Ibidem


Presidential elections and (early) parliamentary elections in Ukraine had been evaluated better, which increased the rulers’ legitimacy. On May 25, 2014 took place the presidential elections and on October 26, 2014 the parliamentary elections were held events expected after the Revolution of Dignity. The post-election reports by OSCE point mainly to the same advantages (such as a free campaign and a free media) and disadvantages (like legislative changes that impact the judiciary). As for the parliamentary elections, the OSCE post-election report found some controversial practices such as vote buying or the use of public office by the candidates for gaining support but the process was overall mainly free and fair. Therefore, taking into account these facts we can say that the democratic process is on an increasing trend in Ukraine.

After the 2013-2014 events, the relation between the EU and Ukraine has advanced very much, compared to the 2010-2013 time. In March and June 2014 different chapters of the Association Agreement were signed by the EU and Ukraine – the full text of the Agreement was signed in June 2014 and in April 2014 the EU formed the Support Group for Ukraine that has the goal of supporting Ukraine in implementing the AA and the Association Agenda. Since November 2014 different parts of the Agreement were “provisionally applied” and since January 2016 the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) part is being applied and will enter into force after the full ratification of all the member states.

The last EaP Summit in Riga gave the European leaders the opportunity to offer their support to Ukraine and they have mentioned in final Declaration the situation in Ukraine as a proof that the security in Europe should be taken more seriously and that more should be done to support the country’s territorial integrity.

---


Just like Republic of Moldova, Ukraine is taking part in CSDP activities and is playing a part in the EU-led Naval Military Operation (EUNAVFOR Atalanta) and has also contributed in 2011 and 2014 to EU Battlegroup Balkan HELBROC (Greece, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Romania, Ukraine)\(^1\). In 2016, Ukraine will join the Visegrad Four EU Battlegroup, a new action that shows the country’s readiness to be a reliable partner for Europeans\(^2\).

At the invitation of the Ukrainian government, EU has send a CSDP mission in Ukraine, called Advisory Mission in Ukraine (EUAM), which has the main goal of giving advice for the reform of the civilian security sector\(^3\). Another EU mission in Ukraine is European Union Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine (EUBAM), which I mentioned also in the section dedicated to Republic of Moldova. Both missions are important, but EUBAM has also regional effects because it stresses the need to improve cooperation between the EaP member countries and not only the bilateral relation between each member state and EU.

**Capabilities**

Actually, Ukraine was not willing to spend too much on its defense budget, but after 2014 things have changed. For example, in 2013 the military budget was 2.3% and in 2015 it was 4% of the GDP\(^4\). Even more, in September 2015, Ukraine has adopted a new Military Doctrine\(^5\). This allows us to say that Ukraine is willing to do more to respond to the present threats, especially the military ones.

From the point of view of this article, Ukraine is prone to the following natural disaster: “floods, extreme temperatures and windstorms, and to industrial disasters”\(^6\). The highest rate of mortality is due to extreme temperatures, while droughts and floods provoke the highest damage to the economy\(^7\).

The main institution that deals with these threats is the State Emergency Service of Ukraine coordinated by the Minister of Internal Affairs and successor of

---


the Ministry of Emergencies and Affairs of Population Protection from the Consequences of Chernobyl Catastrophe of Ukraine\textsuperscript{1}. Ukraine has inaugurated in July 2016 the Disaster Risk Assessment Working Group for Ukraine which has the goal of working to implement the EU DRA Guidelines in the National Action Plan 2015-2020 for Risk Management\textsuperscript{2}.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{political-resilience.png}
\caption{Political Resilience for the EaP member states from 2012 to 2015}
\end{figure}

On the financial level, EU has been the biggest donor to Ukraine in the last 25 years. Between 2011 - 2013, Ukraine benefited from €470.05 million from the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) according to the national Indicative Programme\textsuperscript{3}. In 2014 the programme called the €355m State Building Contract was approved and it contains also a €10 million Civil Society Support Programme with the aim of involving the civil society in reforms’ implementation\textsuperscript{4}. Ukraine also receives humanitarian aid from the EU - between 2014

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{4}“EU financial and technical assistance for Ukraine”, European External Action Service http://www.eeas.europa.eu/ukraine/about/financial-technical_assistance_en.htm (25.07.2016).
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
- 2015 has obtained €26 million from the Commission and 47 million from the member states\textsuperscript{1}. In any case, the situation will continue to pose a risk on short and medium term for Europe’s security and due to its unstable political and economic situation, it has not been able to improve its capacities when it comes to ensuring civilian protection.

**Opportunities**

It is evident that the situation in Ukraine is very problematic for the EU and that many reforms will be needed in order to deepen the relation between the two actors. Based on the current situation in Ukraine, it is difficult to suppose that the country can continue to avoid important reforms. Ukraine’s rulers should try to use the difficult situation and to gain support for the deep changes including in fighting corruption and increasing trust in public institutions.

**Recommendations**

For the six member countries of the Eastern Partnership, the situation in Ukraine is just an example of how this could work out in a bigger country and therefore can be seen as a warning sign. Five of them are involved in the so-called frozen conflicts, while the sixth is called „the last dictatorship in Europe”. If for the ex-Communist states, we could talk about a pro-Western elite and a national consensus regarding the European path of each country, things are very different in the Eastern neighbourhood.

For four of them (excluding Belarus and Azerbaijan) a possible change in the government structure could also mean a change in the course of the foreign policy. But regardless of the future outcomes in the future elections, there is a constant loser in all six states, the average citizen, whose wellbeing is not ensured because the political elites are much too worried to maintain their power. That is why from the perspective of this project, we find a high risk of mismanagement in case of a civilian crisis and that is why EU should try to be more assertive and clearer in its dialogue with the member-states.

The 2008 events showed that the Russian Federation is willing to use military force in order to make sure that its interests are not endangered by alternative political models. Although the Russian Federation failed to understand that what is vital in order to implement a political model, hence public support is nonexistent for it in the ex-Soviet space, it used instead force and violence in order to make sure that it is properly understood. This is why the Europeans should try to engage and involve more the Russian counterpart in order to dispel its supposition regarding the evolution of the six countries.

As can be noted, the main focus from the EU should be on the three states that have signed the AA, a step that was perceived as rather far in 2009 when the EaP

\textsuperscript{1} Ibidem
initiative was launched. The work and effort of the three countries should continue to be supported with the necessary conditionalities enforced for particular cases.

References:


“EU lift majority of sanctions against Belarus” (16.02.2016), Euronews http://www.euronews.com/2016/02/15/eu-lift-majority-of-sanctions-against-belarus/ (11.07.2016). See also:


„How Decisions are Made in Belarus” (17.05.2013), Yauheni Preiherman, Belarus Digest http://belarusdigest.com/story/who-really-governs-belarus-14051.


Liakhovich Andrei, „Rethinking the EU Policies Towards Belarus” (07.01.2016), New Eastern Europe http://neweasterneurope.eu/interviews/1441-rethinking-the-eu-policies-towards-belarus.


„Prosecutor General’s Office warns T ofig Yagublu” (15.04.2016), Contact, http://www.contact.az/docs/2016/Social/041500153076en.htm#.V4y69zWEFIU.


Official Documents

“20-year review shows 90% of disasters are weather-related; US, China, India, Philippines and Indonesia record the most” (23.11.2015), United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) http://www.unisdr.org/archive/46793.


„European Union Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine” EU-BAM, European External Action Service http://eubam.org/who-we-are/.


“Fact Sheet, Georgia and Moldova one step closer to enhanced political and trade relations with the EU 131202/01” (02.12.2013), Brussels, European External Action Service http://eeas.europa.eu/statements/docs/2013/131202_01_en.pdf.


“Global Corruption Barometer 2013”, Transparency International http://www.transparency.org/country#MDA.


Oliphant, Roland „Armenia’s ’Electric Yerevan’ protests enter seventh day” (25.06.2015), The Telegraph http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/armenia/11699692/Armenias-Electric-Yerevan-protests-enter-seventh-day.html.


„Ukraine”, Prevention Web http://www.preventionweb.net/countries/ukr/data/.


2.2. THE ECONOMIC DIMENSION OF CIVILIAN SECURITY

Mihai-Bogdan Popescu

The aim of this part of the chapter is to describe the type of economic institutions within the Eastern Partnership member states, in relation to the rules imposed by the European Union. Thus, when speaking about economic aspects of civilian security, one should bear in mind the state’s capacity to create an opened business climate in order to attract investors, to stimulate growth, to manage issues such as inflation, balance of payment, dependence on natural resources but also unemployment, access to education, and the assurance of a stable source of financial income, in order create a decent standard of living for its citizens. According to EBRD, economic and political institutions play a key role in defining a country’s long-term growth potential. Countries with a stronger institutional environment – effective rule of law, a good business climate, more secure property rights and market-friendly social norms – are better positioned to attract investment, to participate in trade and to use physical and human capital more efficiently. Moreover, the concept of civilian security can be connected with the term resilience, which is defined as an ability to “bounce back” from a stress or disturbance, potentially returning to a pre-stress norm or a transformed post-stress condition.

In its relations towards the Eastern Partnership countries, Brussels has developed two types of political instruments: the bilateral track – agreements between the EU and each state, such as the Association Agreements (AA) which are currently being negotiated with the EU by most of the partner countries, and the Deep Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA), which is part of the AA, and the multilateral track – international conferences, workshops, seminars, round tables attended by senior officials from EU Member States and the partner countries. Both tracks have been developed in order to help partner countries’ advance legislative and regulatory approximation to the EU acquis by allowing the exchange

---

1 Ph.D., SNSPA Bucharest
3 University of Berkeley, Resilience Capacity Index: Building Resilient Regions, in http://brr.berkeley.edu/rci/
of experience and best practices. The DCFTA is about closer economic integration, including the complete elimination of custom duties. In order to qualify for DCFTA a country should firstly be a World Trade Organization (WTO) member and adopt large parts of the EU acquis, which means reforms in areas such as trade facilitation, taxes, competition policy or property rights. The “Economic Integration and Convergence with EU Policies” is the second platform of the EU’s multilateral tracks towards the countries within the EaP policy. Moreover, the platform has several panels - expert level working groups attached to a platform – covering areas such as: the approximation with the DCFTA, small and medium enterprises, agriculture and rural development, transport and climate change. According to the EU’s Security Strategy from 2003, the best protection for EU’s security is a well governed democratic states, and “Spreading good governance, supporting social and political reform, dealing with corruption and abuse of power; establishing the rule of law and protecting human rights are the best means of strengthening the international order”. Moreover, “trade and development policies can be powerful tools for promoting reform”.

But from an enthusiastic start in 2009, the EaP had to face a serious crisis. The first and the most serious shock happened in 2013 short before the Vilnius Summit, when Ukraine’s president, Victor Yanukovich decided to put on hold the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement. Two months earlier in September 2013, Armenia decided to decline the entrance into the EU’s DCFTA and had opted instead for Russia’s Customs Union. Presently, Ukraine is in turmoil, after the Euromaidan, the annexation of Crimea and the War in its East, but the new decision makers from Kiev have signed the AA/DCFTA with the EU. Moldova and Georgia signed the AA/DCFTA at the Riga Summit, while Belarus and Azerbaijan are not WTO members yet (Belarus participates only at the multilateral track) and did not start negotiations yet, while also having different foreign policy objectives. Nevertheless, the problems inside the EU, and around the EU borders might have an impact on the EaP. Brussels attention is mainly focused on issues such as the Brexit problem, the rise of populism and euroskepticism (a clear example is the Dutch referendum from April 2016, on the ratification of the EU – Ukraine AA, but most important on the migrant crisis which in 2015 already created discord to some extent among the EU members. However, after the 2015 Riga Summit the EU changed its attitude towards the EaP. Two key words highlight this new type of politic, namely “diversification” and “inclusivity”. The first one mean that

---

1 Presently, what was known as the EaP’s multilateral track consisting in four thematic platforms, and the Flagship Initiatives is under reconstruction.


3 European Council, A Secure Europe in a better World… p. 7

Brussels will take into account the different foreign policy options, and the different goals towards those states’ relation with the EU, while the second one means that Brussels will support certain states in order to get closer to the EU. Moreover, after the issuing of the revisited ENP in November 2015, it seems that the EU is pursuing a new type of foreign policy towards its neighborhood. In brief, while the former documents were speaking about a transformation of the neighborhood, now Brussels is more focused on the stabilization of that area¹. This new philosophy might have an impact on the degree of reform approximation asked by the EU in relation with the ENP states (including the six EaP states).

![Comparison of Economic Resilience for 2012 – 2015, among EaP member states]

**Armenia**

**Interests**

In Armenia’s Security Strategy, the “insufficiently competitive economic environment, an inadequate regulation of natural monopolies, and an underground or shadow economy, and a large cash flow” are highlighted as security threats. The document speaks about the liberalization of the economy as a goal in order to reach sustainable economic growth. Moreover, the adoption of a European model of development, but alongside with the strategic partnership with Russia, and cooperation with Iran and the US, contribute to the consolidation of the potential Armenia’s policy². While Russia seems to be Armenia’s security choice, the European Union and the accession into the DCFTA were described by Armenia’s


officials as being Armenia’s economic choice. However, Armenia does not seek future EU integration. As it will be shown, Yerevan chose Russia’s offer to become Customs Union member, but it still keeps the door opened for Armenia-EU collaboration.

**Capabilities**

Armenia’s GDP growth advanced with only 2.5% in 2015, and this is mainly due to an increase in private consumption and in exports. But when speaking about social conditions, according to the CIA World Factbook around 33% of Armenians live below poverty line, and unemployment is relatively high, at 17.1 for 2014 and 2015. On the other hand, one of Armenia’s economic advantages is its human capital. Armenia has a strong human capital, very educated especially in the area of sciences and the literacy rate is almost 100%. According to the World Economic Freedom Armenia has problems related to property rights, and fighting corruption, with scores of 25 and 30 out of 100 but has a better classification in the area of open markets, receiving scores between 70 and 85 out of 100. Also, according to World Bank starting a business in Armenia is easier than in other EaP countries, the country being ranked 6th, in 2014 which is a four places improvement since 2013. Those aspects reflect the fact that the business climate in Armenia presents both opportunities and challenges.

Armenia’s investment and trade policy is relatively open, and apparently there is no legal discrimination between foreign and national companies. However, Armenia’s investment climate poses several challenges, such as geographic isolation, low GDP per capita (at about 8,300 $), and high levels of corruption. Foreign businesses must frequently contend with tax and customs processes that lack transparency and add to costs; the court system lacks independence, making it an unreliable forum for resolution of disputes; and while it has made progress, particularly in refund of value-added tax (VAT) payments across the board, the application of reference prices during customs clearance does not ensure a level playing field for all businesses. It can be said that political and economic institutions are not very opened, due to the fact that major sectors of Armenia’s economy are controlled by well-connected businessmen who also benefit from political protection or are high ranked officials. This raises barriers to new entrants, limits

---

1 Interview of Shavarsh Kockaryan, in *Common Space.eu*, 2013 in http://commonspace.eu/eng/news/6/id2754


3 **2013 Investment Climate Statement – Armenia**, US Department of State in http://www.state.gov/e/eb/rls/othr/ics/2013/204593.htm

4 Ibidem

5 Ibidem
consumer choice, and discourages investments by multinational firms that insist on partnering with politically-independent businesses.

The seemingly open legislative framework and the government’s visible effort to attract more foreign investment are complicated by instances of unfair tender processes and preferential treatment. Such instances, as well as the state’s failure to ensure a fair investigation of abuses and judicial review have undermined the government’s assurances of equal treatment and transparency. The above mentioned aspect might have a direct effect on attracting FDI. The FDI in the first three quarters of 2012 was 23.5% lower than in the same period a year before. Foreign reserves are expected to drop to 3.6 months of imports in 2012 (from 4.6 months in 2011) due to the central bank’s interventions to limit the exchange rate fluctuations.

**Development opportunities**

In July 2013 the EU and Armenia concluded negotiations on a new Association Agreement (AA) and a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA), which is an integral part of the AA. The AA and the DCFTA aimed at allowing Armenia, with the EU’s support, to drive forward a program of comprehensive modernisation and reform based upon shared values, political association and economic integration. According to an independent study carried on for the European Commission, Armenian economy could gain an extra €146 million a year, representing a 2.3% increase in GDP. Removing non-tariff measures is key to realising these benefits. For its part, the EU is expected to gain by some €74 million. The DCFTA was presumed to have significant impacts on Armenia’s trade. The forecast 15.2% increase in Armenian exports and 8.2% increase in its imports in the long run were presumed to improve Armenia’s trade balance in relative terms.

However, on September 3, 2013 Armenia announced that it wants to join Russia’s Custom Union, which caught both Western observers of guard but also parts of the Armenian civil society and opposition parties. This came short after Russian president Putin visited Baku on August 2013, and signed a weapon deal contract with the Azerbaijani officials. Taking into account Russia’s presence in Armenia’s economy, and the regional security issues from the South Caucasus this is not necessarily a surprise. Experts in the West, even consider that Armenia has a limited

---

3. Ibidem, p. 4
sovereignty\textsuperscript{1}. For example, Russia owns two power stations, one hydro and one nuclear, Gazprom also own 80 percent of Armenia’s energy infrastructure, Russian airline Sibir owns 70 percent of Armenia’s airline Armavia, Vneshtorbank, a Russian state owned bank owns 70 percent of Armenia’s Sarvings bank, and Russia also bought the Armenian national railway network\textsuperscript{2}. Some economical advantages are expected after joining the Customs Union, according to Armenian experts, in areas such as transports, energy – especially the consolidation of Armenia’s power plant and secondly a reduction in gas prices by 30\%, and a short term GDP growth of around 4\%\textsuperscript{3}. Moreover, the Armenian business elites from Russia have a preference for the former USSR market. We should also take into account the fact that Armenian products are more popular in that area, than on the EU market (take for example the Armenian brandy!)\textsuperscript{4}.

Armenia seems more inclined for the moment to join Russia’s economic project. Nevertheless, it looks like the EU keeps its door opened for Armenia. At the Vilnius summit it was mentioned that the EU and Armenia reconfirmed their commitment to further develop and strengthen their cooperation in all areas of mutual interest within the Eastern Partnership framework, but however the declaration also mentions that the ”Summit participants reaffirm the sovereign right of each partner freely to choose the level of ambition and the goals to which it aspires in its relations with the European Union”\textsuperscript{5}. One decisive step has been made at the Riga Summit from May 2015. The EU recognized Armenia’s membership in the Eurasian Economic Union, and mentioned that a new type of agreement between parties will be signed ; an agreement which will take this aspect into consideration. Moreover, on December 7, 2015 the EU and Armenia started negotiations on this agreement. “We aim for a comprehensive framework agreement covering political, economic and sectoral cooperation and taking into account Armenia’s more recent commitments”, said High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini. This will have an impact not only on the relations between the parties but also at a higher scale on the relations between the EU and the EAEU, with presumable consequences on the Eastern Partnership on the long run.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{1} Interview with M. Terterov, Head of Energy Charter, Brussels, January 2014
\item \textsuperscript{3} “Armenia will benefit economically from joining Customs Union: experts say”, Arka News Agency September 2013, available at http://arka.am/en/news/economy/armenia_will_benefit_economically_from_joining_customs_union_experts_say/
\item \textsuperscript{4} Interview of V. Manoukian, Bucharest 2014, in https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dk-Cack-LeJs
\end{itemize}
Azerbaijan

Interests

Due to its vast amount of energy resources, Azerbaijan is first of all interested in securing a key position on the European energy market. Almost 90% of the goods sold in the EU are represented by fuels and mining products. But the relation with the EU is not resumed only to energy. In the country’s 2007 security strategy “Azerbaijan views its partnership with the Euro-Atlantic structures as a means for contributing to security, economic prosperity and democracy in the whole Euro-Atlantic area.” On the one hand, Azerbaijan wants to keep the EU in the region in order to keep stability in the area, but is less interested in future integration within the EU. Secondly, the European Union it is seen as a source of modernization, and local experts consider that, Azerbaijan wants to trade energy with the EU, for technological modernization. Moreover, at the society level young people see the EU as offering different possibilities for working and studying abroad.

Capabilities

For 2012, Azerbaijan has reported a GDP of 174.3 billion dollars and a GDP per capita of 18,700 dollars, the foreign debt was around 4 billion dollars and the public debt around 11.8% from GDP. Also, the country has a positive balance of payment of 12 billion dollars. Nevertheless, the lack of economic diversification and the underdeveloped private sector, and labor migration are the main threats to Azerbaijan’s economic security. In order to understand Azerbaijan’s capabilities to tackle economic aspects of civilian security one should look at the nature of the country’s institutions.

In the World Economic Freedom 2016 Index Azerbaijan occupies the 88 place with the biggest problems in areas such as property rights, freedom from corruption with scores of 25 and respectively 20 out of 100 (100 being the best performance and 0 the worse) and also investment freedom and financial freedom with scores of 55 and respectively 40 out of 100. First of all there is no clear separation of powers, the political power being dominated by the executive, while the Parliament has only very limited competences. Also, according to interna-

---

8 Interview with Azerbaijani MP, Baku, October 2013
tional documents the justice is highly influenced by the executive. Scholars speak about the existence of an interconnected patron–client system, organized around the access to, and distribution of material resources which are exchanged for political support and loyalty. For example, the presidential family controls the oil sector, having an authority over the state oil company SOCAR. Also, domains such as transportation or telecommunications are controlled by business elite related to the presidential family. Also, the private sector is very weak, and firms need access to governmental contracts in order to survive. More than that, despite the existence of a package of laws that encourages FDI attraction, being a foreign investor in Azerbaijan is difficult due to bureaucracy and corruption. Moreover, while the EU offers support for the SME development under the EaP’s multilateral track, in Azerbaijan, local experts admits that there is a lack of information about economic opportunities with the EU. In fact, Azerbaijan’s major long term problem might be the lack of economic diversification. According to statistics, 90% of Azerbaijani exports are represented by the oil sector. This fact is also recognized by local experts, and some of them see an interconnection between the lack of economic diversification and Azerbaijan’s economic institutions. The government does not want to diversify the economy in order to keep its monopoly over power. Politicians speak about diversification of economy but those political programs are not enforced. Considering this aspect, decision makers from Baku might think that economic diversification will give birth to a middle class asking for economic reforms. This aspect also has an impact on labor migration. For example, almost 3 million Azerbaijani work abroad in the Russian Federation. There is agriculture in the South of the country, but it lacks modernization. It also has to be mentioned that Azerbaijan has a mixed of skilled and unskilled workers, this being a result due to the decline in education and labor migration. Shadow economy is another challenge for Azerbaijan’s economy. While Azerbaijani newspapers considers that the shadow economy is around 9% of the GDP, World Bank Statistics considers

---

2 Farid Guliyev, op.cit., p. 122
3 Ibidem, p. 124
4 Ibidem, pp. 125-126
6 Interview with Azerbaijani lawyer, Baku, October 2013
8 Interview with Azerbaijani MP, Baku, October 2013
9 Interview with NGO expert, Baku, October 2013
that the shadow economy of Azerbaijan is around 40%. Most likely this is due to the so called informal economic institutions. According to statistics, almost 11% of the Azerbaijani population lives below poverty line, and there is a strong contrast between Baku and the rest of the country.

Development opportunities

Unlike the other two South Caucasus countries, Azerbaijan did not start negotiations for the DCFTA due to the fact that it is not a WTO member yet. On the other hand, Azerbaijan has to pay attention to its relations with Russia, Moscow being considered a strategic partner for Baku. However, Kremlin’s integration project- the Eurasian Union, is not very popular in Azerbaijan. A possible accession to the EAEU might bring several benefits in terms of GDP increase, but on the long run experts considers that the disadvantages are bigger. The EAEU asks for the uniformization of members’ energy policy and for the adoption of a common economic policy towards the non member states. This will bring lead to loss of control over oil reserves and money, loss of independence in setting economic and energy policy, particularly with respect to the European Union, and damage of reputation in the eyes of strategic partners. The association with the EU represents an opportunity for development, as it was highlighted above. For example, the country already receives technical assistance form the EU in order to facilitate its membership in the World Trade Organization. But there also several programs that Azerbaijan can benefit from, programs dedicated to SME development, transports, rural or agricultural development. In the Vilnius Summit declaration it was mentioned that the participants welcome the negotiations on the AA between the EU and Azerbaijan, and the EU “stands ready to launch negotiations on a DCFTA, as part of an Association Agreement, following Azerbaijan’s accession to the World Trade Organisation”. But on the other hand, while experts considers that the EU’s Association Agreement and the DCFTA might be suitable for Azerbaijan, it requires for the liberalization of internal market, and it is not sure if the decision makers from Baku will easily embrace such economic measures. Moreover, both Russia and Azerbaijan have a similar economic structure and they can be considered rivals, competing to some extent for the same markets. The EaP Riga Summit brought nothing new for Azerbaijan. Taking into account the new ENP/EaP approach it can be considered that Azerbaijan fits in the group of states that are not necessarily interested in an advanced cooperation with the EU.

1 Interview with Azerbaijani MP, Baku, October 2013
4 European Council, Joint Declaration of the Eastern Partnership Summit Vilnius…
Belarus

Interests

For Belarus, the European Union is the second main trading partner after Russia, comprising around 25% of all Belarusian trade volumes. But the country is very closed both politically and economically to Russia, taking part in all the regional integration projects initiated by Moscow such as Common Economic Space, the Union State, the Customs Union and the Collective Security Treaty Organisation. Russia has offered Belarus low prices for oil and gas, and has been a key buyer of Belarusian industrial products (predominantly food and machinery). Despite close ties, throughout times conflict of interest emerged between both parties. And in order to broaden their room of maneuver in dealing with Russia, the Belarusian authorities looked for closer relations with the European Union. Belarus is interested primarily in in enhancing economic co-operation and obtaining financial aid from the West.

According to some experts, the Belarusian political model is one supported by the population, due to the fact that is a socially oriented one, a political model who suits only Belarus and cannot be exported, and they do not agree with the phrase “the last dictatorship in Europe”. Belarus takes part only in the multilateral track of the Eastern Partnership.

Capabilities

For 2015 Belarus reported a GDP of around 168.2 billion dollars and a GDP per capita of 17,800 dollars. The country has a developed industrial sector, and a diversified economy, exporting machinery and equipment, mineral products, chemicals, metals, textiles, foodstuffs. The country also has a broad agricultural base, but which is dependent on government subsidies. On the World Bank – Doing Business report, Belarus is on the 63rd place overall – the ease of doing business -, and most important it occupies the 15th place at the “starting a business” category. But however, despite requiring just five procedures and no minimum capital completing licensing requirements takes over 100 days.

According to the World Economic Freedom Index, Belarus has a score of 50.1, being above Ukraine. It has poor performances in areas such as property rights, freedom from corruption, investment freedom and financial freedom, but on the other hand it has good performances in areas such as business freedom, labor freedom, fiscal freedom and trade freedom. In general, investment and financial activity are severely limited by state interference and controls. Soviet-era state ownership of land and government-controlled collective farms continues. Also, development of the financial sector has progressed slowly, and large state

---

1 EaP Community, “Belarus”, in http://www.easternpartnership.org/partner-states/belarus
banks continue to dominate the banking system. One serious problem of Belarus is its inflation rate. 2011 and 2012 were tough years for Belarus, the inflation rate being very high 53% respectively 59%.

**Development Opportunities**

Belarus is not a WTO member yet, and as a consequence it cannot start negotiations for the DCFTA. However, experts in Belarus do not see the DCFTA in a positive light. Belarusian experts believe that the economic relation with the EU cannot offer more than it already offered. First of all, the Belarusian companies cannot compete with the high standards of the EU, and their industrial output cannot be absorbed by the European market. The European Union is insistent on democratic reforms and liberalization in both the political sector as well as the economic one. According to experts from Minsk, the economic and political measures imposed by the EU are rooted into an ideological nature, which in time will lead to certain economic crisis in the (EaP) partner countries (or destroy them altogether and transform them into periphery states to extend the Western markets). For example, Belarus is in favor for Ukraine to associate with the EU, due to the fact that this will destroy Ukrainian economy and Belarus will win the Ukrainian markets in the West. This is crucial for understanding what needs to be done within the EaP in the relationship with Belarus in order to reach the stabilization which became predominant in 2015.

On the other hand, the Customs Union and the future Eurasian Union has much more to offer to Belarusian economy. The industrial system is vital for Belarus, both economically and politically because relies on it in order to maintain a high employment rate. And the Customs Union on the one hand maintains Belarus’ industrial system alive and working and on the other hand offers the perspective of maintaining their markets in the East. The Riga Summit brought nothing new for Belarus, but we have to take into account the fact that Minsk is struggling to diminish Russia’s leverage and it seems they returned to the cooperation with the EU.

**Georgia**

**Interests**

Georgian officials see the integration into the European Union in identity terms, feeling that their civilization is part of Europe, and the European Union is

---

seen as a way of maintaining their traditional status. In Georgia’s National Security Strategy it is mentioned that “For the stable and secure development of the country, it is critically important to maintain high long-term economic growth; this is achieved through the adoption of the free-market principles in the economy, strict fiscal discipline, and a healthy monetary policy. Open partnerships, free trade, and economic relationships with all nations and international entities—especially the European Union, the United States and the countries in the region—are important choices that Georgia has made”. But more important, the document also highlights the fact that “one of Georgia’s major foreign and security policy priorities is membership in NATO and the European Union”. In addition, “Georgia considers the European Neighborhood Policy and Eastern Partnership as important factors contributing to Georgia’s integration into the EU”. Nevertheless, it is difficult today, (when South Ossetia and Abkhazia have proclaimed themselves with Russia’s support the status of independent republics, and seceded from Georgia) to assess the country’s economic performances as it was the case of with the other EaP countries.

**Capabilities**

For 2015 Georgia reported a GDP of 35.37 billion dollars and a GDP per capita of 9,500 dollars, and an economic growth of 2%, lower than the previous three years. The foreign debt is about 13.5 billion dollars and the public debt 27.7 of GDP. The unemployment rate is very high at more than 16%, being the biggest among other EaP countries. Since the 2003 Rose Revolution, Georgia has made significant reforms in areas such as institution building, transparency, education policies and economy. In three years the government managed to eradicate almost entirely small corruption and the institutions became more functional. Georgia is opened to foreign investments. Legislation establishes favorable conditions for foreign investment, but not preferential treatment. For example, the Law on Promotion and Guarantee of Investment Activity protects foreign investors from subsequent legislation that alters the condition of their investments for a period of ten years. The economic legislation is stable, there is predictability, but however there are also some specific interests. According to World Bank’s “Doing Business 2016” report, Georgia is on the 6th position at starting a business, having the best position among other EaP countries.

---

2 Ibidem
3 Ibidem
4 Interview with political expert, Tbilisi, November 2013
5 "2013 Investment Climate Statement- Georgia", *US Department of State*, http://www.state.gov/e/eb/rls/othr/ics/2013/204646.htm
6 Interview with economic expert, Tbilisi, November 2013
government proudly advertises that an entrepreneur can start a business in three days. However, despite the encouraging efforts there are still some problems related to Georgia’s business climate. The World Economic Freedom 2016 Index, gives Georgia a relatively low scores in areas such as freedom from corruption (42 out of 100) and property rights (40 out of 100). Despite the fact that secured interests in both real and personal property rights are recognized and recorded, deficiencies in the operation of the court system can hamper investors from realizing their rights in property offered as security, and sometimes foreign investors’ interests have sometimes been harmed by biased court proceedings and by legislation and decrees that clearly favor a Georgian entity or partner involved in the enterprise.

Georgia also has an abundant supply of skilled and unskilled labors at attractive costs, its labor force being among the best from the former USSR.

In terms of approximation with the EU standards, unlike the previous government, the government ruled by Prime Minister B. Ivanishvili was more socially oriented, while continuing Georgia’s low regulation, low tax, and free market policies. Due to this aspect, experts consider that it is easier for Georgia to approximate with the EU requirements. The approximation with the EU laws is a source of legitimation for the current government, because they want to be seen as a European Government. Secondly, despite the fact that Ivanishvili Government tried to redefine the relations with Russia, in order to reopen the Russian market for Georgian wine, the European way remains Georgia’s main foreign policy objective. This commitment was strongly highlighted in Bidzina Ivanishvili’s speech on the Independence Day, on May 26 2013 highlighting the challenges facing Georgia: “democratic values, human rights, EU and NATO membership, mending ties with neighboring countries, de-occupation, establishing the rule of law, free judiciary and free media”. At the Vilnius Summit, Georgia initialed the Association Agreement, including the DCFTA with the European Union. While changing two prime ministers inside the Georgian Dream Coalition, the country’s foreign policy remained on the European track.

**Development opportunities**

On 22 July 2013, The European Union and Georgia successfully concluded negotiations for a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA), as part of

2. Ibidem
3. Interview with political expert, Tbilisi, November 2013
4. Ibidem
the Association Agreement between the parties. A study carried out for the European Commission, forecasts that the DCFTA will increase Georgia’s exports to the EU by 12% and imports from the EU by 7.5%. Full implementation of trade-related reforms could increase Georgia’s long-term GDP by +4.3% or €292 million. Georgia sees the EAEU as a project of rebuilding the Soviet Union, and economic integration is used as expressing Russian pressure to increase its power. For the moment, the Georgian officials have no interest of joining the Eurasian Union. Georgia might also benefit from other EU projects in areas such as SME development, transport, rural and agricultural development projects. The AA which also includes the DCFTA was officially signed in July 2014. The parties also agreed on an Association Agenda to help implement the AA/DCFTA through joint priorities for 2014-2016. This will replace the former EU – Georgia Action Plan for 2006. The Riga Summit can be considered a small disappointment for Georgia, taking into consideration the fact that Tbilisi was expecting the liberalization of the Visa Free Regime with the EU.

**Moldova**

*Interests*

According to Moldova’s 2008 National Security Strategy (which was updated in 2011) one of the country’s main objective is to accelerate the political, economical and social reforms, especially those connected with the EU’s standards in order to further qualify for integration into the EU. Several threats, related to the socio-economic area were mentioned in the document, such as unilateral dependency on foreign monopolistic energy systems, corruption and management deficits within the state administration, but also economic migration, unemployment, population aging and low birthrate phenomena. The European Union has been described as a “factor that stabilizes the European security system and broadens the geographic area in which political, economic and social developments on the basis of democratic principles …. The national security of the Republic of Moldova may not be conceived separately from the European security”, and the process of “European integration and acquiring of EU membership will positively influence and consolidate the security of the Republic of Moldova and will bring stability and prosperity to the country”.

1 Iris Kempe, “The Eurasian Union and the European Union Redefining their Neighborhood: The Case of the South Caucasus”, Caucasus Analytical Digest, No 50-51, p. 4
2 Interview with political expert, Tbilisi, November 2013
4 Ibidem
Capabilities

Moldova is one of the poorest countries in Europe, with a GDP of 17.4 billion dollars and a GDP per capita of 5,000 dollars, being the last among the EaP countries. More than that Moldova’s economy has a low diversification, relying heavily on agriculture, especially wine industry. However, Moldova continues to take steps towards the development of a stronger economy and the improvement of the business climate, and the present government is very committed to the European values and the approximation with the European standards. One such program for economic recovery was the Economic Stabilization and Recovery Program, approved in July 2009 and was focusing on balancing public finances and liberalizing the highly regulated economy.

Moldova relies heavily on investments, foreign trade and remittances for economic growth. Moldova profited from increased inflows of foreign direct investment (FDI) with eastward expansion of the EU. Attracting FDI is critical to enhancing Moldova’s economic competitiveness. Under Moldovan law, foreign companies enjoy equal treatment as local companies – also known as the “national treatment principle.” Despite having a trade freedom score of about 80 out of 100, according to WEF, investment freedom and financial freedom have a score of 50 out of 100, which reflect the fact that there are several impediments in terms of investments. Moreover, realization of growth potential remains constrained by state interference in the private sector, which has left the economy vulnerable in a changing political environment.

Despite the fact that the Constitution of Moldova guarantees the inviolability of investments by all natural and legal entities, including foreigners, the judicial system remains weak and does not always guarantee the rights of citizens and foreign investors. However, in terms of property rights according to the World Economic Freedom, Moldova has a higher score, at around 40 out of 100, than other EaP countries. Another problem is related to the labor force, due to the fact that with the past economic turmoil, many skilled laborers left for better paying jobs in other countries. This is also highlighted by the migration rate, Moldova having the biggest migration rate among the other EaP countries, at around -9.92 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2013).

Nevertheless, corruption is the country’s main problem. Despite the AA signing and the Visa Liberalization Regime (VLaP) there is a reform setback. In April 2015 the Central Bank of Moldova discovered that a billion dollars disappeared overnight. Moreover, several pro-Russian political parties hold important seats

---

in the Parliament and control (due to their winning in the local elections) certain areas of the country such as Balti and Orhei. Even the opinion polls from April 2015 indicates that only 40% of the RM’s population would like to integrate into the EU, while 42% prefer Russia’s EAEU.

**Development Opportunities**

At the Vilnius Summit, the Association Agreement between Moldova and the EU, including the DCFTA has been initialed.

According to the feasibility study made to the European Commission, the DCFTA might be beneficial for Moldova in several areas. For example, in terms of national growth income, in the long run the estimated change in national income is expected to be EUR 142 million each year for Moldova. Moldova is also expected to experience other positive changes at the macro level. Exports are estimated to increase by 16 percent in the long run, while imports are estimated to increase by 8 percent. In addition, wages are expected to increase by 4.8 percent, and in combination with the expected decrease in consumer prices (-1.3 percent) this means that disposable income would go up. The DCFTA will also bring about a reform agenda in the country, through the regulatory approximation that is part of the agreement, in the areas of sanitary and phytosanitary, trade, customs or intellectual property rights. However, the additional quantitative social analysis shows that poorer strata of the population appear to benefit less from DCFTA than those with above average incomes.

On July 2014, the EU and Moldova officially signed the Association Agreement which has started to be applied starting September 2016. The Agreement introduces a preferential trade regime. More than that, Moldova also enjoys a visa free regime which came into force on April 2014.

**Ukraine Interests**

Despite the present situation and the war in the East, some key documents adopted by the former Yanukovich Presidency were essential for understandings Ukraine’s identity in terms of foreign policy and its interests and preferences. According to the “Law of Ukraine about bases of domestic and foreign policy”, that the country’s major foreign policy priorities are the integration with the European Union and closer cooperation with Russia, both Russia and the EU being called Ukraine’s strategic partners. Furthermore, the National Security Strategy of Ukraine from 2012 – “Ukraine in Changing world” – also backs the coopera-

1 Ecorys, *Trade Sustainability Impact Assessment in support of negotiations of a DCFTA between the EU and Georgia and the Republic of Moldova*, Rotterdam, 2012, pp. 36-40

tion with both the EU and Russia but additionally it mentions that Ukraine has to pursue a balanced foreign policy in relations with key international partners. The documents mentions several economic threats to the country’s security: systemic corruption within the institutions, lack of scientific or technological innovation the dependence of the domestic market on the foreign economic situation, as well as the combat of smuggling, threats related to energy security such as “excessive dependence on imported energy, unresolved problem of diversification of sources and routes of supply, insufficient use of its energy resources, but also “inefficient use of energy resources, the relatively slow pace of introduction of new technologies”; are mentioned as vulnerabilities for the country’s national security.

Ukrainian decision makers recognize the fact that “Ukraine sees the process of European integration as a tool for systemic domestic reforms intended to draw our country closer to European standards, secure a decent place in the European economy and help the country become a powerful, advanced and high-tech state”, thus the European integration is a strategic goal for Ukraine and the European vector remains a foreign policy priority.

After 2014 there were some significant changes in Ukraine’s key documents related to foreign and security policy. The 2012 Law on the foundations of internal and foreign policy was amended in 2014, a new Security Strategy and Military Doctrine were adopted and a Strategy for Sustainable Development “Ukraine 2020”. First of all, perceptions about Russia have been changed dramatically. Thus, from a strategic partner Russia has been defined as an aggressor. Moreover, in order to ensure its security Ukraine needs to move towards the EU and also NATO. For example, Ukrainian president Petro Porosenko mentioned that NATO membership is his country’s strategic goal. “Our strategic goal is NATO membership. I insist: this pointer is motionless for us as the North Star in the starry sky.” Ukraine 2020 is to some extent similar to the documents adopted under the former government, recognizing some key threats associated with corruption, and emphasizing a lot on rule of law aspects such as judicial reform or fight against corruption but also compliance with EU standards.

---


2 Ukrainian Presidency, *op.cit*

3 Oleh Bilorus, Interview in Razumkov. *EU- Ukraine and Russia: Problems, Achievements, Prospects* 2012, p. 56


5 ***, *Ukrainian Prism: Foreign Policy 2015*, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2015, pp. 14-15


**Capabilities**

On November 2013, Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovych abruptly froze plans to sign the trade and reform deal with the EU, days before the Vilnius Summit. He defended his refusal by arguing that the EU was not offering adequate financial aid to upgrade Ukraine’s economy. “We will speak about the signature when we reach an agreement on normal terms, when we enter the level which is comfortable for us and which meets our interests. When will it be? Will it be soon or not so soon? The time will show. I would like it to be as soon as possible,”. In the given context, Viktor Yanukovych stressed that not less than 20 billion EUR per year were necessary for Ukrainian economy to switch to the European standards. “Overall, about 160 billion EUR are necessary until 2017,” he said1. Facing his own assessment Yanukvich, accepted a Russian economic offer consisting in a loan of 15 billion dollars and a reduction in gas prices from 400 $/cubic meters to 268/cubic meters.

Shortly after this decision people in Kiev started an uprising –the so called Euromaidan movement – which at the end of February 2014 ended with the flight of president Yanucovich and with the change of government, and in March 2014 Russia has annexed the Crimean peninsula. One month later massive violence emerged in the Eastern part of Ukraine in and around the Donbass area – an industrialized area, but mentally closer to Russia than to the EU. Those events had an important impact on Ukraine’s economic growth. Donbas was contributing with 12,4% of GDP, while Luhansk was contributing with 4% of the GDP2. The Minsk II agreement from February 2015 imposed a cease fire to some extent but violence did not stop. However, Ukraine has to tackle other domestic problems, primarily corruption and the influence of the oligarchs over politics. Political instability is another serious problem. Despite escaping a vote of no confidence in 2015, in the end former Prime Minister Arseny Yatseniuk had to resign. There were also corruption allegations against the Porosenko regime. A clear example is the February 2016 resignation of the Ministry of Economy Aivaras Abromavičius, citing government corruption and the Poroshenko administration’s lack of commitment to fight it3.

Due to the above mentioned conditions, the Ukrainian economy has contracted between 6-10% in only one year, from 2014 to 2015. According to statistics, for 2015, Ukraine reported a GDP of 331 billion dollars and a GDP per capita of 8.000 dollars. The foreign debt is very high at about 130 billion dollars and the public debt at about 94% of GDP. Also unemployment is around 9,5%. Despite

---

country’s desire to be integrated into the EU, according to the European Commission’s progress report for the 2015 there is still a lot of work to do in terms of approximation with the EU standards for both countries. The most important aspect is that corruption remains very high.

Firstly we should mention the country’s business elite. The business elite from Ukraine have a clear influence on the foreign policy conduct. Some experts even consider that the this business elites treat the political parties as tools, the same situation was under the Kuchma and Yuschenko presidency but it reached its peak under Yanovych1. For the small business elites which focus mainly on the internal market, foreign policy has no great importance unless these relations result in increasing competitiveness on the internal market. But for the big players the access to foreign markets is of key importance. Before the war in the East, the Ukrainian exports are strongly diversified towards both the EU and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), being difficult to indicate a predominant direction because they are distributed almost evenly. According to statistics, in terms of imports the EU 27 is Ukraine’s main partner with a percentage of 39%, while the Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan represent the source of almost 30% of the Ukrainian imports. In terms of exports, the EU 27 represents the destination of 21,8% of Ukrainian exports, while Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan represents the destination of 26,8% of Ukrainian exports2. Presently, the bilateral trade between Ukraine and Moscow has decreased dramatically, from 50 billion dollars in 2011 to only 12 billion dollars in 20153.

Secondly we have to speak about the present political class from Ukraine, which tends to oppose the process of political liberalization, being rather interested in preserving the status quo and preferring to maintain a monopoly over power. A clear example is the action from 2010 when the Constitution of Ukraine was amended in order to boost president Yanovych’s powers, thus transforming the country into a full presidential system4. More than that, the so called oligarchs are less in the approximation with the European standards, and more interested in the protection of their own business and in the absence of a foreign monetarization.

Conditions for doing business in Ukraine remain very difficult. In the 2016 World Economic Freedom index, Ukraine occupies the 155th place, with very

---


low scores, between 20 and 40 in areas such as freedom from corruption, property rights, financial freedom, investment freedom, and government spending. The Herititage Foundation Report, concludes that Ukraine’s economy remains “repressed.” Deeper institutional reforms are critical for the achievement of more broadly based development. The inefficient legal framework remains highly vulnerable to political interference, and corruption further undermines the fragile rule of law\(^1\). The worse fact is that, foreign direct investment (FDI) has been anemic in recent years, and a number of foreign financial institutions have pulled out of the market\(^2\). But an economic advantage for Ukraine is represented by its labor force. Ukraine has a well-educated and skilled labor force (about 20-25 million people) with nearly a 100 percent literacy rate.

**Development opportunities**

The Eastern Partnership represents a smaller priority for Ukraine, compared with the bilateral relations between the parties, but the DCFTA might have been the main source of motivation for Ukraine to continue the approximation process with the European Union. In fact the DCFTA was important for both parties\(^3\).

According to studies, the DCFTA will bring several benefits to Ukraine, such as improved welfare of people through better access to higher variety of products, stricter safety requirements, and higher incomes thanks to new business opportunities and improved domestic resource allocation; duty-free access to the largest world market for vast majority of products creating opportunities for exports; improved access to markets of the third countries through harmonization of standards with the EU and thus acquisition of internationally acceptable standards; better domestic investment climate as the adjustment to the EU regulations would means changes in national legislation. In turn, these changes would result in a transparent set of rules for the foreign investors. Nevertheless there are also several costs towards the DCFTA, such as spending associated with legal and administrative adjustments; or the market restructuring due to increased domestic competition as a consequence of tariff elimination which could be ‘painful’ on short term.

On March 2014 the EU and Ukraine signed the AA, and several months later on June 2014 both parties signed the remaining sectors of the AA, including the DCFTA. Some parts of the AA/DCFTA came into force on January 2016. It will fully enter into force after all EU member states will ratify it. Ukraine is also supervised by the IMF, institution who also asks for certain reforms in areas such as combating corruption.


\(^2\) ”2013 Investment Climate Statement – Ukraine”, US Department of State, in http://www.state.gov/e/eb/rls/othr/ics/2013/204754.htm

Recommendations

As it has been mentioned frequently, almost all the Eastern Partnership states seek closer ties, some of them even integration into the EU, primarily due to economic benefits. But most of those states have economic vulnerabilities due to the fact that political elites prefer a less opened business climate in order to preserve some of their privileges. Following on our recommendations the improvement of the relationship between the EaP countries and the EU which have been figured out throughout this project:

_The European Union should:_

- First of all, the European Union should improve its multilateral dimension of the Eastern Partnership and develop a mechanism capable of offering a quicker and stronger response for the EaP member states, and a better delivery of EU’s promises which will boost its credibility. During interviews many experts stated that the EU has a slow response due to its nature – many programs being delayed in the working groups from Brussels-, while Russia on the other hand has a much quicker way of responding.

- Secondly, the European Union should increase its funds allocated to the Small and Medium Enterprises in the six Eastern Partnership countries. In this way, groups from the civil society would become more aware of the EU and might put pressure on national government, asking for political and economical rights.

- The EU should invest much more in its visibility, due to the fact that most people do not know much about the EU or the EaP and do not know how to apply for EU programs. This might be done whether using the local media, or advertising campaigns.

- The EU should reduce its funds allocated to the government that do not approximate.

_Armenia should:_

- Strengthen the rule of law, especially in the area of property rights and fight against corruption;

- Eliminate the monopolies in the national economy and increase judicial independence and government transparency;

- Continue to diversify the economy.

Continuing with the EU reforms might lead to the signing of a new type of Association Agreement (negotiations already started in December 2015). It is important to highlight the Armenian case because this new type of Agreement might be used as a model for future interactions between the EU and other Eurasian Economic Union Members.

_Azerbaijan should:_

- Create a more business friendly environment, in order to attract more foreign investors and FDI;
- Diversify its economy, due to the fact that diversification provides other investment opportunities in the non-energy and private sectors to create more productive employment;
- Fight against political and economical monopolies, strengthen the rule of law, especially in the area of property rights and fight against corruption;
- Finalize WTO accession negotiations, and start negotiations with the EU on the Association Agreement and the Deep Comprehensive Free Trade Area.

Thus, a more vibrant private sector might emerge, providing incentives for individual actors and ultimately increases employment.

Belarus should:
- Create a more opened and friendly business environment;
- Develop the private sector;

Georgia should:
- Continue the European way by tackling corruption and attract more FDI;
- Strengthen the protection of intellectual property rights, deepen institutional reforms to enhance judicial independence and effectiveness.

Moldova should:
- Strengthen the rule of law, especially in the area of property rights and fight against corruption;
- Create a more opened business climate in order to attract more foreign direct investments;

Ukraine should:
- Fight against political and economical monopolies, strengthen the rule of law, especially in the area of property rights and fight against corruption;
- Promote a professional and independent judiciary system;
- Create rules for a more opened and fair business climate and fight against anti market practices;

References:
***, Ukrainian Prism: Foreign Policy 2015, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2015
Bayramov Vugar, “Considering Accession to the Eurasian Economic Union: For Azerbaijan, Disadvantages Outweigh Advantages” Caucasus Analytical Digest, No. 50-51, 2013,
Razumkov, EU- Ukraine and Russia: Problems, Achievements, Prospects, 2012


”Belarus”, EaP Community, in http://www.easternpartnership.org/partner-states/belarus

Ecorys, Trade Sustainability Impact Assessment in support of negotiations of a DCFTA between the EU and Georgia and the Republic of Moldova, Rotterdam, 2012


Kempe Iris, “The Eurasian Union and the European Union Redefining their Neighborhood: The Case of the South Caucasus”, *Caucasus Analytical Digest*, No 50-51


Malyarenko Tatyana, ”The War in Donbas”, *Academia.edu* 2015 in https://www.academia.edu/12663326/The_War_in_Donbas_Russias_Strategy_of_Societal_Destabilisation

Matuszak Slawomir, “The oligarchic democracy: the influence of business groups on Ukrainian politics” *OSW Studies* No. 42, Warsaw, 2012,


”2013 Investment Climate Statement – Armenia”, US Department of State, in http://www.state.gov/e/eb/rls/othr/ics/2013/204593.htm

”2013 Investment Climate Statement-Azerbaijan”, US Department of State, in http://www.state.gov/e/eb/rls/othr/ics/2013/204596.htm

”2013 Investment Climate Statement-Azerbaijan”, US Department of State, in http://www.state.gov/e/eb/rls/othr/ics/2013/204596.htm

”2013 Investment Climate Statement – Ukraine”, US Department of State, in http://www.state.gov/e/eb/rls/othr/ics/2013/204754.htm


2.3. HOW CAN ENERGY SECURITY CONTRIBUTE TO THE OPTIMIZATION OF CIVILIAN SECURITY NEEDS? 
CASE STUDY: EASTERN PARTNERSHIP STATES

Angela Gramada

The link between energy security and civilian security as the last one is defined by different actors is not very visible. In any case, analyzing the impact of the decisions taken in the energy field and the process of adopting and implementing the national strategies for security may influence the behaviour of all the participants involved in the social-economic development of a state.

This study provides an analysis of the interests, capabilities and opportunities for the energy sectors in the EaP memeber states, so that recommendations can be made to improve the activity and the functioning of different institutions responsible for implementing strategies and energy policies that have an indirectly effect on the field of civilian security.

To an invisible link between energy security and civilian security

Civilian security is a term that has emerged recently. Although most definitions seem to offer different perspectives on analyzing this domain, they intersect at a point - which it is trying to outline the capabilities and motivation of different actors to be involved in dealing with crises that may affect the safety of civilians, ie the population. For example, for the American perspective civilian security is complementary with areas such as “democracy” and “human rights.” The activities that are related with the civilian security point out first of all the actions taken by the state institutions: “... to contribute to the security of the American people and nations around the world by assisting countries to build more democratic, secure, stable, and just societies.” In this context, the authorities create independent partnerships “... to prevent and respond to conflict, promote peace and genuine stability, strengthen and develop the rule of law, achieve accountability for atrocities, counter terrorism and violent extremism, build democratic institutions, deepen respect for universal human rights, strengthen civilian protection and security, and advance the United States’ humanitarian policies, practices, and programs around the world.”

1 Ph.D., NSPSA Bucharest
2 Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights, http://www.state.gov/j
3 Ibidem.
The European perspective is not very different in content and objectives from that of the U.S. However, this policy brief focus will be on how the EU and its Eastern Partnership partners perceive the term Civilian security and create programs and capabilities to prevent potential risk factors. In a world engaged in extended development and risk factors, and threats arising from this development, diversify.

For these reasons it is necessary that the term Civilian security is defined not only fair, but also to be developed in parallel with an appropriate system for Civilian crisis management. The Civilian crisis management in the context of analysing the civilian security needs to take into account solving crisis or conflicts through civilian means, increasing the reactions of public and social institutions. As for the term „civilian crisis management” it is included in EU’s Common Security and Defense Policy.1

According to European Union External Action”Since its foundation, the European Community is involved in all phases of the crisis cycle; from preventive strategies, to post-crisis rehabilitation and reconstruction. She manages substantial resources devoted to countries in political crisis through its country programmes and specific instruments... .”2 Whatever name these tools held - policies, strategies, projects – their purpose is to produce the premises and the necessary conditions for democracy, social and economic development, political stability and predictability, human security. In fact, “stability” is the term that we associate most frequently with civilian security. In this context, how the Eastern Partnership project was both bilaterally and multilateral conceived allow a complex interaction between the Member States of the EU and EaP member states to mitigate the destabilizing potential of different types of crisis - institutional, political, economic or disasters caused by natural and / or technological factors.

It is very important to define correctly the risks and the threats implied by energy, political, economic, social or military crises caused either by the lack of a provider, the lack of a source of alternative energy, or the explosion that may occur at various facilities such as nuclear power plants or gas pipes to assure the security of civilians. According to Chris Lindborg, the civilian management of crises, including the non-military ones, implies “the intervention by non-military personnel in a crisis that may be violent or non-violent, with the intention of preventing a further escalation of the crisis and facilitating its resolution.”3 Regarding the energy security, this definition emphasizes the importance of political stability and the regional security in order to ensure a favorable environment for the economic development and clear

---

governance. A State is obliged to inform other countries what are the potential threats to their security if they arise from activities of strategic energy objectives which it manages. In this case, nuclear powers are just one example. The Russian-Georgian war or Ukrainian-Russian crisis also represents good examples in this sense, considering that a lengthier conflict could have caused a reduction of the Southern Caucasus’ economic potential for the possible investors, and it would have limited the access to the natural gas and oil resources in the Caspian Sea for various economic actors, including the EU. Consequently, a civil security dilemma will be face both in the EaP states and in the European Union.

Energy security cannot be limited only to the public debate about the need of all types of actors to ensure continuity of supply of energy resources. It influences the content of economic and environmental policies, the content of strategies and operating regulations of the various institutions charged with implementing these documents. But the most important thing is the fact that this area can affect on the long-term citizens’ economic, social, and political security if not given enough attention by all participants in the decision-making process. Moreover, the lack of good management and transparency in the decision making process, can cause damage to the proper functioning of economic and political institutions of a state or non-state actors. These are the problems that both the EU and the six Eastern Partnership member states must face. The lack of consensus regarding the decision-making process in the energy field at the European level or the lack of domestic political will to ensure transparent and effective governance in the former Soviet states are generating security threats for the citizens of those states and beyond their borders.

In fact, most of the energy sector problems often arise due to poor economic management of this area, the small number of foreign suppliers and higher energy prices\(^1\). Regarding the EaP actors, the level of development of the energy sectors of the Eastern Partnership member states differ greatly. Most of them, except Azerbaijan, are facing a shortage of energy resources required for the functioning of national economies and for assuring the energy security to final consumers. Diversification of suppliers is one of the solutions of these kinds of difficulties. But it becomes very difficult to achieve it when the main energy partner is the Russian Federation, which disagrees with the content of the Eastern Partnership project, and which has its own interests in the member states, which are strongly promoted. In addition to the dilemma diversification of supply sources, representatives of member governments EaP must also deal with other problems. Among them we can mention: obsolete energy distribution networks, low energy

efficiency, monopolies in the distribution and transportation of energy resources, outdated technical regulations, poor training of technical personnel, active seismic zones and hostility from the central authorities to give up sources of energy production with high potential risk (nuclear power plants, for example). In any case, all this combined with a system of organization, management and outdated mentality does not allow modernization and industrialization energy sectors in line with current standards and regulations imposed by membership in various regional and international forums and organizations. In the end the governmental authorities of all Eastern Partnership countries will have to achieve multilateral cooperation not only with neighbors. They will have to achieve an efficient cooperation at national level and to address such issues as: electricity, energy efficiency and renewable energy sources improve energy security by reducing dependence on imported fossil fuels and moving towards a low-carbon economy, a regulatory framework for nuclear safety and climate change.\footnote{European Union External Action, “The Eastern Partnership Multilateral Platforms”, Prague, 2009, http://eeas.europa.eu/eastern/platforms/index_en.htm}

In what follows we will analyze the needs, interests and capabilities of the member states of the Eastern Partnership in energy security field, so that we can in the end develop a set of useful recommendations for optimization of actors involved in making decisions in this area.

**Armenia**

This country is facing very serious economic problems due to regional political context. These problems are a threat the economic and social security of Armenian citizens. The authorities in Yerevan are not only facing the lack of energy resources (natural gas), but also the limited options when it comes to develop external partnerships. This is a state that has no access to different regional energy projects. This situation was created due to the lack of the diplomatic relations with Azerbaijan because of Nagorno Karabakh conflict, but also because of a difficult relationship with Turkey, generated by the Armenian genocide issue in the early twentieth century. Yerevan can assure the required energy resources only from two providers: Russian Federation and Iran. Armenia is the best example of how conflict and bilateral diplomatic difficulties can generate energy and economic isolation.

Russian Federation is the most important strategic partner of Armenia and the largest investor in the country’s economy. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has said in during a joint press conference in Armenia in April this year that the: “... trade and economic ties are developing very well. Despite the objective and subjective problems in global economy, our commodity turnover has not declined. This is very important. The total amount of the Russian companies’ capital investments in Arme-
nia’s economy has exceeded 4 bln USD.”¹ Many Russian companies are present with investments in Armenia, including in the energy sector which almost entirely controlled by them.² The collaboration between the two partners is subject to external threats when between Russia and Georgia, neighboring Armenia, appear military conflicts and political disputes because of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. After the military clashes in April 2016 in and around Azerbaijan’s breakaway region of Nagorno-Karabakh, Armenian citizens began to perceive Russia not only as a supplier of energy resources or guarantor of stability, but also as a supplier of arms for their enemies³. As it was known, Azerbaijan had acquired more quantities of arms and military equipment from Russia in previous years.

**Interests**

Due to the regional context, Armenia’s biggest interest in terms of energy security comes down to the identification of internal and external opportunities for energy supply in order to achieve *economic and energy independence*, taking into account international standards⁴. The failure of following these international principles can produce threats to national security, including those related to natural or anthropogenic disasters. Other objectives and interests arising from the need to secure the energy independence refer to:

- The settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict in a peaceful way and gradual inclusion of Armenia in regional energy projects. Most regional energy projects involving Azerbaijan as a supplier bypass Armenia. Currently Armenia takes part in the work of the Project INOGATE and Black Sea Synergy. Also, Armenia⁵ has ratified the Kyoto Protocol in 2002. Also, Armenian authorities are trying to ensure the presence of their country in several regional initiatives. On 23 December 2015 a joint meeting dedicated to regional cooperation with participation of the energy ministers of Armenia, Georgia, Iran, Russia and general director of Russian “Rosseti” OJSC was held in Yerevan. During the meeting was signed a “Memorandum of Understanding”.

---


According to experts’ recent assessments, Iran is interested, after the conclusion of the “nuclear deal“ (July 2015 ) to extend its regional involvement. But there are some issues that can affect the discussion with other interested partners. Armenia can be a key actor in those negotiations: “Exporting energy through Turkey would be more convenient for Iran, but difficult relations between the countries on issues including how to end the Syrian civil war ultimately make the Armenian route more viable. So far, there has been talk of building a $3.7 bn railway and of extending a natural gas pipeline between Armenia and Iran. However, that plan, too, is complicated for Tehran, because Moscow has repeatedly tried to stall or become a shareholder in major infrastructure projects so as not to lose its influence in Armenia.”\(^1\)

- Continuous modernization of the energy sector, harmonization of national energy legislation and compliance with international standards, especially in the production of nuclear energy. Currently, with the support of the USAID, Armenia is implementing several projects to modernize the energy sector of the country: Safety Analysis of Civilian Nuclear Use and Support for Critical Human Capacity Building at the Nuclear and Radiation Center (NRSC), Support to National and Regional Energy Planning, and Capacity Building at the Scientific Research Institute of Energy (SRIE), Assistance to Regional Energy Integration.\(^3\)


2 Ibidem.

- Improving the institutional and legislative system for the development of projects that promote renewable energy. European Bank for Reconstruction and Development will continue to support the development and implementation of such projects. The final goal in this case is to encourage the competition\(^1\) between the local economic agents that offer services related to the energy sector.

- The diversification of energy partners and insurance to have available resources for the internal energy needs\(^2\). In this regard, Yerevan has taken important steps to harnessing partnership with Iran. From 2007 to 2009 a pipeline was built to deliver natural gas from Iran to Armenia. The basis of another similar project have been established in 2010. However, Tehran’s international image may affect medium to long-term cooperation. It is a bilateral partnership which can easily be conditioned by external factors such as the internal situation in Iran and the position of the major international actors toward this state.

- Diversification of the potential buyers of electricity. Armenia has great potential in terms of electricity production. The state that currently purchases this type of energy resource from Armenia is Iran.

**Capabilities**

Armenia has a great potential to produce and export electricity. Country’s hydropower network is well developed, and the authorities have invested sufficient resources to ensure the needs for end users and economic agents from the internal electricity. If new nuclear power plant construction project will be implemented, Armenia will be able to export the surplus electricity to neighboring countries such as Georgia. A potential buyer of electricity could be Turkey. If the list of potential buyers will not be diversified\(^3\), the investment in the new plant will prove to be ineffective.

Research conducted by experts showed that Armenia has natural gas and oil in small quantities. However, exploration should occur at depths large enough, and this state does not have the needed technology because of the high costs. One of the most disputed strategic energy objectives of the post-Soviet space is in Armenia - Metsamor nuclear power plant. As a background to this issue should be mentioned that, according to an expert, "In 1988 after the earthquake in Spitak,\(^1\)"

\(^1\) "Document of the European Bank for Reconstruction and development. Strategy for Armenia As approved by the Board of Directors at its meeting on 29 May 2012", http://www.ebrd.com/downloads/country/strategy/armenia.pdf


many representatives of the Armenian intelligentsia and leaders of the rising independence movement actively convinced the public that the Nuclear Power Plant constituted an environmental threat to the country and its further operation would endanger the very existence of Armenia.”

As a consequence, the nuclear plant in Metsamor was temporarily closed. After several years, obliged by the growing necessity of energy, the Armenian authorities had reconsidered the decision. Reopening the nuclear plant was essential for Armenian economy; otherwise the economic security of Armenian citizens was endangered. The plant provided the necessary amount of energy for internal electricity consumption, which allowed the Armenian economy to resist during the crisis periods.

After the Fukushima nuclear accident (2011) in several European countries, including Germany began to promote a campaign to limit the use of nuclear energy worldwide. In this context, the Armenian authorities have been ordered to shut down the nuclear plant in Metsamor. Yerevan European partners have proposed a project to build a new nuclear power plants that will meet much higher safety standards. The European Union insisted after 2007 that the Armenian authorities will develop the energy sector in line with the new international safety requirements. The European Union insisted after 2007 that the Armenian authorities will develop the energy sector in line with the new international safety requirements, so receiving not only technical but also the financial support from the West to build a new nuclear plant. Currently, this project will be done with the Russian Federation, who proposed Yerevan its own plan for financially support of the initiative. If it is implemented, it is possible that Armenia has a large surplus of electricity and the problem will result in the finding foreign export opportunities of this type of energy resource. Until then, however, the plant in Metsamor will function.

**Opportunities**

According to available information, there are at that moment the following opportunities:

- To build a new nuclear plant and closing the one in Metsamor, which suffered during the earthquake in 1988, will contribute to enhancing the physical safety and economic security of Armenian citizens. The authorities in Yerevan have taken the decision to cease the nuclear power production in Metsamor in 2016. This decision may be reviewed.

- To finalize the construction of a new HVDC station in Ayrum, Armenia, close to the Georgia border and a power transmission line linking the two countries.

---

The main goal of the project is to connect Armenia and Georgia and close “a missing link in the regional power network”\(^1\).

- Improve the bilateral relations with Turkey and diversify the clients to export electricity. Armenia has significant electricity resources that can be proposed to the external partners for an affordable price.

**Recommendations**

- To continue the policy of diversification of gas suppliers, including by adhering to various regional projects and initiatives.

- Continue conducting feasibility studies regarding their potential for exploration of natural gas and its own oil. If these studies will confirm that the needed investments will be lower than the profit, the government should insist on creating the conditions necessary to attract the financial resources in this area.

- Allow the access to the energy market, including the electrical and nuclear, for investors who do not have Russian origin. Thus, the authorities will increase the interest of foreign investors for Armenian economy. Moreover, the openness of the economy for other economic agents will create increased competitive conditions and this way including Russian investors will be urged to lower prices for their services. For this to become possible, the Armenian authorities must demonstrate readiness to implementing the economic reforms and creating conditions for the development of an efficient market economy.

- Continue reforms in the energy sector, focusing on the improvement of the functioning conditions of Metsamor nuclear power plant (until cessation of its activity) so as to eliminate the risks for Armenian citizen’s safety. Here, it is important to continue the preparation of the population, and other authorized institutions for the possible disasters that may appear.

**Azerbaijan**

The only partner state of EaP, which can fully provide itself with the needed natural gas and oil, so and an independent foreign policy is Azerbaijan. The case of Azerbaijan within the EaP is different from the other participating countries, mostly due to the convergence of interests with the European Union on energy, but also in the fight against international terrorism (border security).\(^2\)

Although Azerbaijan is involved in several regional energy projects, which provide much of the energy resources for the functioning of the economies of several European countries, there are certain internal dissatisfactions that cannot

---

\(^1\) *Power Engineering International*, “Armenia and Georgia to get $123m transmission link”, March 23, 2015, http://www.powerengineeringint.com/articles/2015/03/armenia-and-georgia-to-get-123m-transmission-link.html

\(^2\) Interview with an expert in economy under the condition of anonymity, Baku, November 2013.
be ignored. The Azerbaijani civil society is the one accusing the EU of promoting peculiar double standards due to the energy interests it has in the country. Within the bilateral relationship between Brussels and Baku a greater emphasis is put on energy cooperation and less on democratization and human rights and this is reflected in the political environment within the country. It may be noted that Azerbaijan has an active participation in the multilateral cooperation format of the Platform 3 of the EaP - energy security and working groups of the platform, which are also concerned of the ecological issues that may arise from activities that have connection with energy field - and are less involved in platforms 1 and 4 of the EaP.

Also, it is important to be mentioned here the fact that Azerbaijan has heavily suffered due to lower oil prices in international markets in 2015 – 2016. A lower oil price on international markets poses real threats to macroeconomic and financial stability in Azerbaijan and could become an incentive for political instability.

Map 2. Major natural gas transit pipelines from Azerbaijan to Europe.
Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration, October 14, 2015

**Interests**

Although it is the state which succeeded to almost totally secure its energy independence (there are imports of processed energy resources, including diesel),

---


this South Caucasian state has in the basic documents predetermined several objectives and interests in energy field. Many of them also refer to Civilian security in the sense of concern for the safety and security of Azerbaijani citizens. Thus one of the main objectives is providing the necessary resources, including human and financial, for projects designed to collect waste from oil extraction. Other interests relate to the continuation of technologization of the energy sector, staff training and implementation of as many projects aimed to encourage the use of renewable energy, more efficient use of the funds derived from the sale of oil and natural gas, ensuring transparency of decisions in energy sector.

Political and economic stability of the region, and hence of its neighbors, is naturally an interest of Baku, the Nagorno-Karabah issue being a special file of this strive. Currently the company SOCAR\(^1\) is the largest contributor to the state budget of Georgia\(^2\). This interest is closely connected with the geo-strategic importance of the neighboring state. Being situated at the crossroads of the energy transport routes, Georgia has become an important element of several regional projects\(^3\).

**Capabilities**

Due to the rich deposits of oil and gas, Azerbaijan can provide by itself the internal needs in energy resources. Since 2007, this South Caucasian stopped importing natural gas from the Russian Federation, which later allowed it to promote an independent foreign policy. Revenues from oil and natural gas sale contracts have subsidized the purchase of needed technologies for extraction at great depths. The energy sector is one of the most developed areas of the Azerbaijani economy. Although it is one of the states with high energy potential, it should be noted here that this actor also has many opportunities for renewable energy development, insufficiently harnessed. This is clear from the low interest for green energy production projects.

As a matter of fact, Azerbaijan can provide with hydrocarbons more regional energy projects. Among these the most important for the member states of the European Union at this time is TAP - Trans-Adriatic-Pipeline - central link in the development of the Southern Corridor, which will provide energy resources for many European countries.\(^4\)

---

2. Interview with an Azeri official under the condition of anonymity, Baku, November 2013.
3. Georgia is a transit country for natural gases transported through BTC (Baku Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline) and is also included in the next TAP project.
Opportunities

Hydrocarbons, in general energy resources, are goods that sell themselves\(^1\) and create political opportunities for Azerbaijan, which has become a bridge between East and West. They also provide an opportunity for direct dialogue between Baku and Brussels, minimizing the role of multilateral cooperation platforms offered European Union. However, the big distance to Brussels’s is one that can generate deficiencies in communication between the parties involved in this dialogue. EU needs both energy of Azerbaijan, as well as its strategic positioning, which provides access to the Caspian Sea. In turn, the Azerbaijani authorities ask the EU to take a position regarding the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. Both sides gave up some of the principles and interests they promote at the regional and international level, preferring to focus on the pragmatic aspects of bilateral cooperation. Azerbaijan is among the few state members of the Eastern Partnership that has sufficient financial resources to develop projects that promote the efficient use of energy resources. However, the emphasis is more on an extensive type of energy sector development. There are internal options and even were developed some projects that support the promotion of energy efficiency, obtaining solar energy and capture of oil residues from hydrocarbons retrievals. These projects were financially supported by the state company SOCAR.

Recommendations

- Modernization and continuous updating technology of the sector and energy industry and training the personnel in the energy sector.
- Reducing the share of profits from the extractive industries of oil and natural gas in the national economy by encouraging the growth of other sectors of industry. In an analysis about the effects of declining oil prices on state budget, Fidan Bagirova, the Eurasia senior officer with NRGI (Natural Resource Governance Institute), has argued that Azerbaijan has depended on oil for more than half of its budget revenues since 2006\(^2\). Due to lower revenues in state budget, Azerbaijan’s government struggled to fulfil a variety of social and economic promises\(^3\). As a result there could occur premises for social instability and protests.
- Greater investment in efficient energy consumption. Like Ukraine, Azerbaijan does not invest enough in modernizing its energy system. Greater emphasis should be placed on efficient consumption, on modernization of distribution

---

\(^1\) Interview with an Azerbaijan official under the condition of anonymity, Baku, November 2013.


\(^3\) Ibidem.
system and transportation of different types of energy resources\textsuperscript{1}. There are lots of programs aimed to improve energy efficiency\textsuperscript{2}, including by encouraging renewable energy. However, the potential of these alternative sources is still insufficiently explored.

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|}
\hline
\textbf{Comparison of Budget revenues and SWF Transfers in Azerbaijan} & \\
\hline
\textbf{2016 (forecast)} & \\
\textbf{2015 (forecast)} & \\
\textbf{2014} & \\
\textbf{2013} & \\
\textbf{2012} & \\
\textbf{2011} & \\
\textbf{2010} & \\
\textbf{2009} & \\
\textbf{2008} & \\
\textbf{2007} & \\
\textbf{2006} & \\
\textbf{2005} & \\
\textbf{2004} & \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

\textbf{Table 1. Comparison of Budget revenues and SWF Transfers in Azerbaijan. Source: Natural Resource Governance Institute, January 19, 2016\textsuperscript{3}}

- Diversification of energy production sources and increased attention to renewable energy. This recommendation arises from the exhaustible character of hydrocarbons. Precisely for this reason Azerbaijan should invest in other types of energy to secure a part of internal consumption, but also to ensure continuity and presence on the international markets.

- Finding effective communication tools with Armenia in terms of Metsamor nuclear power plant. In this particular case civil society could be a bridge between the two hostile authorities - Baku and Yerevan. Official position of Azerbaijan coincides with the position of the UN for use of nuclear energy. The role of civil society in this regard is to communicate as effectively and as active to populations of the two neighboring states about the risks and threats for the civil security that


\textsuperscript{2} Interview with expert in ecology and also member of the National Platform of the the Eastern Partnership under the condition of anonymity, Baku, November 2013.

\textsuperscript{3} \textit{Ibid.}
may be caused in the future by the functioning of this plant. It is one of the risk areas where communication and cooperation should exceed the bilateral hostilities for the sake of avoiding disasters.

- Harmonization of national legislation in the energetic field to the international one. This is required even by the Azerbaijan’s involvement in regional energy projects. Legislative differences and different standards of the participants in the project development may create difficulties in the implementation. Regulatory systems and operation conditions must be the same for all. Otherwise, the response capabilities of the participants in these projects to act to minimize the risks and dangers of potential crises are diminished. Non-governmental organizations are actors who have the expertise to develop strategies and draft legislation projects to be sent to Parliament and at the same time can initiate media campaigns to promote them and gain the Azeri deputies support. At the national level in Azerbaijan is needed to encourage a more efficient cooperation between authorities and civil society in the field of energy, including the harmonization of legislation.

**Belarus**

Belarus is a participant in the EaP project more interested than the other partners in multilateral component of the initiative. Authorities in Minsk were more involved in harnessing the opportunities provided by platforms 2 and 3 of the Eastern Partnership. The bilateral dialogue between the European Union and Belarus is evolving hard despite the fact that European Union has lifted most sanctions against Belarus. This is due to different visions and interests of the two partners on the meaning of the democratization and good governance.

**Interests**

Given the general interest - to ensure energy independence of the country - Belarus has established over time many priorities and objectives in the development of the national energy sector so that it can ensure the energy security for Belarusian citizens. One of these priorities is to build nuclear power plant in Astravets, which sparked much debate within the civil society. The discussions do not relate just to the financial resources needed to build the plant and the acceptance of Russian aid in this regard. They also are related to the so-called “Chernobyl syn-

---

1 Ibidem.
“drome” that hardly disappears from the conscience of Belarusian public opinion. Belarus had most suffered from the accident at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant, Ukraine, which took place in 1986: “The territory of Belarus received 70% of the radioactive fallout from the Chernobyl accident. As a result, nearly 23% of its territory was contaminated.”

Even if the issue can be put in the “Civilian security” context, the Belarusian authorities insist on the implementation of the nuclear power plant at Astravets construction project: “It’s very important to have our own energy production. For these reasons we decided to build this plant. This forces us to have a response to civil emergencies system very well done.”

Nuclear power plant in Astravets construction project might endanger the national security of the Republic of Belarus, but not only. This initiative could not be implemented if the Belarusian authorities did not have the agreement of the neighboring states. Therefore, they much insisted on convincing their partners that the project will be implemented in maximum safety conditions for Belarusian citizens, but also for citizens of Ukraine and other East European countries. Ukraine had not objections to this, because it is a country that develops its own capabilities to produce electricity in nuclear power plants, which makes it more tolerant to the Belarusian authorities’ decisions in this field. The situation is different in terms of dialogue with Lithuania. Vilnius is openly accusing Belarus of violating two major international documents referring to safety: the Espoo and Aarhus Conventions. In May 2016 Belarus Ministry of Energy has confirmed the fact that an incident took place in April this year on Astravets, but also claimed that the supporting structure of formwork was only “partially damaged”. Previously, Eduard Sviryd, the spokesman for the Astravets Nuclear Power Plant, denied a report saying that there had not been any incidents at the construction site. As a result, on May 5, 2016 the Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania Andrius Krivas summoned the ambassador of Belarus to Lithuania Aleksandr Korol and requested him to promptly submit comprehensive information about the accident at the Astravets nuclear power plant.

---


The debate between Lithuania and Belarus around Astravets nuclear power plant was not limited only to the exchange of diplomatic notes. On June 21-22 Vilnius has organized consultations of the Belarusian and Lithuanian experts on assessing the impact of the NPP on the environment. According to EuroBelarus, Vitalius Auglis, the head of the department in the Lithuanian Ministry of the Environment, has stated that for Lithuania the possible environmental consequences are very important: “We suggested that the Belarusian side stops the construction until IAEA stress tests are introduced. (...) We realize it’s a hard question, but we hope that the Belarusian side lends an ear to our demands.”

Capabilities

Belarus does not have its own energy resources. However, projects that are in process of development for ensuring the energy security must be carefully analyzed and that’s because energy sector constitutes 30% of all industrial structure of the country. To build the nuclear power plant in Astravets, Belarusian authorities have contracted a 10 billion USD loan from Russia for a period of 25 years. This credit, the Belarusian experts say, is offered on very favorable terms, because it could contribute to achieving the national energy security. The plant in Astravets is seen by Belarusian citizens as a panacea for Belarusian because it will ensure reducing the energetic dependence toward Russian Federation. To the capabilities in the energy area can also be accounted the refineries for processing energy resources from Belarus. This former Soviet state is among the few who managed to maintain state ownership of key strategic objectives of national industry. Thus, some of the energy resources purchased from the Russian Federation are processed in Belarus and then exported to European countries. Moscow authorities shown to be dissatisfied with this because, this way, energy products processed in the Belarusian refineries are sold with higher export taxes than the prices on raw energy resources promoted by Russia in the bilateral relations with European countries.

Opportunities

Construction of the nuclear power plant in Astravets could be categorized as an opportunity by authorities, but it must be implemented in accordance with

3 Interview political analyst, Minsk, October 2013.
4 Interview European integration expert, Minsk, October 2013.
international safety standards, claim the civil society. The explanation for the civil society position against Astravets Nuclear Power Plant could be as follows: this nuclear plant may become an important tool for regional stability and strengthen Russia’s position in the region\(^1\). Consequently, even Moscow is the one interested in strengthening energy independence of Belarus, especially as the Russian Federation contributes to the implementation of the project. Belarus should further harness the potential offered by its quality of transit state for energy resources from Russia to the European Union, especially for processed energy products, which are sold at higher prices. This aspect is maintained by the fact that the economic infrastructure - refineries and other companies that carry out processing of hydrocarbons - has been developed over the twenty years of independence.

\**Recommendations**

The diversification of energy suppliers is one of the recommendations valid to all states that do not have their own hydrocarbons. Belarus is not an exception. Dependence on supplies from the Russian Federation may create problems for the national economy. Often this dependence is used as a pretext for obtaining certain political benefits in the bilateral relationship Moscow - Minsk. Those who bear the consequences are Belarusian citizens. Also, over-reliance on a single vendor leads to acceptance of higher prices for natural gas supplies. In the absence of alternatives, both in the East and the West, Belarus is forced to seek partners in other regions of the world, something which affects the efficiency of some policy decisions. In this case, the recommendation is to be harnessed all external opportunities, but also to rethink its dialogue with the European Union. European Union market is an alternative that do not require much investment. Furthermore, most European countries bordering the Republic of Belarus have implemented projects to improve transport infrastructure and that is easing considerably the cooperation.

The other recommendations are related to quality of work on future energy objective - the nuclear plant in Astravets. It must be a project that does not overlook the security interests of both Belarus and the neighboring countries. Project implementation should occur in parallel with the preparation of the population for possible risks involved. It must be developed a strategy for effective communication with citizens. So far opinions are divided: a part of the population considers this project as an opportunity to achieve energy independence, and the other part sees it as a tool to bigger involvement of Russia in the Belarusian economy.

\**Georgia**

Geographical situation of this state, near the Russian Federation and Azerbaijan, and at the intersection of interests of many great actors, creates both oppor-
tunities and threats to civil security of this South Caucasian state. Georgia takes part in the implementation of several regional energy projects. Among them: the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan, pipeline Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum, INOGATE, Black Sea Synergy and it is a signatory to several international documents with content that refers to energy area.

Despite the status of a transit country for different energy initiative, Russia insists to engage Georgia in its own regional energy projects. One of them refers to Armenia. According to an agreement signed in 1992 between Russia, Georgia and Armenia, Georgia takes 10% of the Russian gas supplies to Armenia as payment for transit. The agreement was regularly renewed every year since. In January 2016 Gazprom presented Georgia with a tough ultimatum by requiring “the monetization” of payment for transit of natural gas from Russia to Armenia instead of the previously applied 10% transit fee. The Jamestown Foundation expert, Georgi Menabde, says that: “…the fall in energy prices and the corresponding fall of the price for transit (a relationship widely accepted worldwide), combined with the lifting of the Iran sanctions and the rise of Russian ambitions in the region, prompted Moscow to change its tactics and deliver a harsh ultimatum to Georgia through Gazprom. Gazprom is rightly considered to be the Kremlin’s “geopolitical tool.” Energy dispute with Russia could result in increased prices for natural gas for domestic consumers. In the context of the approaching parliamentary elections in the autumn of 2016, the consequences could extend to the political life. Due to the importance of Georgia in Azerbaijan’s energy projects, governmental authorities in Tbilisi were able to avoid an energy crisis:

“Between February and March, Azerbaijan expressed interest to invest in gas storage facilities and reassured its commitment and ability to supply Georgia with natural gas until 2030 under the new gas agreement between SOCAR and Georgia. This eliminated the need for gas purchases from Gazprom with gas prices calculated in relation to the fluctuation in oil prices.”

---

1 This pipeline were launched in 2006. According to Caspian Barrel, gas delivers through this pipeline increased in 2013 with more than 20.7% compared to previous year. Caspian Barrel, “Average daily export of gas via South Caucasian Pipeline increased by 20.7% in 2013”, February 14, 2014, Baku, http://caspianbarrel.org/?p=5687


**Interests**

The greatest interest of Georgia is ensuring its energy independence. From this arise a multitude of other objectives and national interests in energy domain that the Tbilisi authorities should achieve:

- Territorial reintegration of the country. Mainly, energy hydropower of Georgia is situated in Abkhazia. Even if the electricity produces in these hydropower reaches in excess 50% the Georgian consumers, strategic decisions are taken by the authorities of Abkhazia. Such a situation complicates the energy security level of the Georgian state, especially in the case of new political or economic divergence with Russian Federation.

- Participation in as many regional energy projects and the exploitation of status of transit country for different types of energy resources and other economic goods. Fast implementation of strategic partnerships with Azerbaijan and other important regional actors is needed.

- The implementation of projects that encourage the usage of renewable energy and energy efficiency. Georgia has yet to fully exploit this potential, although there are many projects and social initiatives in this regard.

- Further institutional reforms to eliminate bureaucracy and corruption in state institutions that manage the energy sector. Georgia is an example of an effective fight against corruption at lower level, recording the highest performance among the member states of the EaP.

**Capabilities**

Although does not have its own energy resources, Georgia can capitalize its capabilities given geographical position near Azerbaijan and the Caspian Sea, and close to the area of interest of the great powers in the South Caucasus. Here it is also worth mentioning its human resources. Georgian civil society is very active. Many of the initiatives to amend the regulatory framework and to harmonize standards and rules in the energy sector are happening due to the dynamic work of non-governmental organizations. These are very much involved in the discussions held within the working groups of the 2nd and 3rd platforms of the EaP.

**Opportunities**

The ways the processes of regional integration in South Caucasus evolve are at the same time a threat and an opportunity. If the analysis is made of stand point of the external politics, then one can observe that the equation becomes more complicated. This is due primarily geostrategic interests of the Russian Federation. On the other hand, the interests that the European Union is developing in this region create windows of opportunity to receive the technical and financial support required to transform the energy section in this country from the inside.
**Recommendations**

For Georgia, just like for Ukraine and Belarus, the most important thing is the political and economic stability. This is the only way to exploit the status of transit country for the hydrocarbons coming from Azerbaijan and the Caspian Sea. The other recommendations arise from energy activities that are being carried out by the authorities in Tbilisi. First of all, that is related to the continuation of getting closer to the international standards and regulatory harmonization. We can also recommend the pursuit of transparency in the way public institutions operate, especially those related to the energy sector, but also those that influence the development of this sector of the economy. Even though there is a minim risk that some difficulties can appear during the gas supplies to Georgia from Azerbaijan, it is necessary that the Georgian authorities to continue supporting projects to get energy from renewable sources. An energy infrastructure modernization project is another recommendation.

**Moldova**

**Republic of Moldova** is an East-European country, that does not own energy resources and whose dependence on foreign energy turnover exceeds 90%. The difficult situation in the energy sector (excessive external dependence) has a considerable influence on the efforts of the authorities in Chisinau to ensure optimal economic and social stability. The most part of the required energy resources are being imported from the Russian Federation (100% natural gas is being imported). Moreover, the Russian state company Gazprom is the main stakeholder of Moldovagaz, which allows them to control almost entirely the national energy infrastructure.

The biggest challenge to the national security of this country, including in the energy sector, come from the fact that the authorities in Chisinau do not control the entire territory of country for more than twenty years (it is about the self-proclaimed Transnistrian republic). Such a situation creates increasing premises for an uneven development of the energy sector and selective implementation (in terms of territory) of the provisions signed by the Republic of Moldova in official documents.

**Interests**

Moldova’s biggest interest in the energy domain is to ensure its energy independence. From this strategic aim, as in the case of other partners of the EaP, emerge many other interests and objectives:

- To ensure energy independence by diversifying the state suppliers, and the energy resources. Republic of Moldova has shown its availability to participate in the development of the AGRI project\(^1\). According to the Azeri experts the

\(^1\) Azerbaijan-Georgia-Romania Interconnector:
discussions around this energy project with Azerbaijan involvement will resume only in 2017. Until then the Azeri decision makers will focus on the TAP\(^1\) and BTC\(^2\).

- To continue the implementation of the Energy Package II and III from the European Energy Community\(^3\). Implementing Energy Package II and III is conditioned by the political interests of the Russian Federation in the Republic of Moldova. The authorities of Chisinau have decided to postpone completing the implementation of the provisions of these energy packets, so solutions could be found to make sure that the Russian investments in the energy system of the country would suffer no prejudice.\(^4\) The Parliament of the Republic of Moldova adopted on May 27, 2016 new laws on electricity and natural gas in line with energy III package (Directives 2009/72 / EC and 2009/73 / EC)\(^5\).

- The completion of the works for the Iasi-Ungheni and Ungheni-Chisinau pipelines as soon as possible. This project has turned into a priority of the bilateral relations between Romania and Moldova. According to a study conducted by a team of Romanian and Moldavian experts, "The extension of the Iasi-Ungheni pipeline is a major objective for the Moldovan energy sector. Interconnecting Moldova with the gas market in Romania and Europe is the first step to diversify energy sources and routes, which would reduce the monopoly of Moldovagaz and consolidate the country's energy security."\(^6\) In order to achieve this goal it is necessary to assure a proper environment for political stability in Chisinau. For that governmental authorities will have to find a consensus and political will.

- Paying more attention to the development of renewable energy, a field with a great potential.
- Intensify the cooperation in various regional energy projects.
- The modernization of the national energy system by attracting foreign investors interested in developing this area of the national economy.

---

\(^1\) TAP gas pipeline project and the Trans-Adriatic-Pipeline were chosen by Shah Deniz II concern to be developed at the expense of Nabucco. It is one of the southern supply corridors for European countries with natural gas from Azerbaijan.

\(^2\) Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline.


\(^4\) Interview with a State official energy expert, Chisinau, September 2012.


**Capabilities**

Although it does not own any energy resources and imports almost one hundred percent of the energy resources needed for final consumers and businesses, Republic of Moldova, just like Ukraine, is a member of the European Energy Community. The energy potential of Moldova is reduced only to the unexplored possibilities of producing energy from biomass. But in order for this potential to be fully explored it is required that the local population takes a greater role in this process, through the creation of small companies. If these projects will be promoted on a national scale, then Republic of Moldova could then obtain significant results in terms of national interest to ensure energy independence.

**Opportunities**

- The European Energy Community membership and the successes regarding the harmonization of national legislation with the European one. The successes in this regard will facilitate the integration of the energy system of the Republic of Moldova.

- The constant approach to the European Union and the availability of other state actors to include Republic of Moldova to take part in the development of initiatives in energy domain.

- The progress made in recent years regarding the implementation of the project of building the pipeline Iasi-Ungheni.

- With Moldova’s proximity to Romania and other EU Member States and there is a good possibility of transferring best practices regarding the implementation of projects to increase energy efficiency.

**Recommendations**

- Diversification of energy suppliers to ensure energy independence of the Republic of Moldova and further work on the pipeline Iasi-Ungheni, in order to make as soon as possible the connection of the national energetic system to the European one.

- Continue the implementation of the II and III Energy Package provisions and enable the separation the provider from the carrier and dealer.

- The harmonization of the national legislation regarding the energy domain to the international one.

- Establishing policies and strategies to encourage the private initiative in renewable energy production, especially the ones based on the usage of biomass.

- Continue the negotiations regarding the debt for gas consumption by businesses and end-users in the Transnistrian region, which the Russian part uses in the dialog with Moldovan authorities. These debts belong to Moldovagaz Company and not to the state Republic of Moldova. If one can keep in mind the fact
that Gazprom is the major stakeholder of the moldavian gas company, then the negotiations could take a different turn.

**Ukraine**

One of the reasons why the Eastern Partnership project was created under the European Neighbourhood Policy of the European Union refers to energy interests that the European Union has in Eastern Europe and South. Ukraine is also a valuable link for the transit of the energy resources from East to West. The repeated energy crises from 2006 to 2009, which resumed in the late 2009, proved that Ukraine is one of the central elements present in the dialogue between Russia and EU. In fact, the importance of this state in this energy scheme can transform these bilateral conversations into ones of trilateral nature. So between these interdependencies”… the energy sector is one of the most important (and most controversial) spheres of cooperation in the EU-Ukraine-Russia “triangle”.”

The main threat on the Ukraine’s energy security is the pressure the Russian side puts on the decision makers in Kiev. After the orange revolution that took place in Kiev at the end of year 2004, ended with the victory of the orange camp and the defeat of the Moscow’s protégés, the Russian-Ukrainian bilateral dialogue went through many transformations. Russia wanted to take control over many more Ukrainian assets from the energy sector. Several projects have been submitted to create some mixed consortia, which would have allowed Russia to take decisive control of the Ukrainian energy system. Finally, bilateral dialogue for the supply of energy resources was further complicated by the Euro-Maidan phenomenon and especially by the annexation of Crimea by Russian Federation in March 2014. In the end, as in the case of Georgia, the military conflict between Ukraine and Russia has contributed substantially to the energy independence of Ukraine. However, the interests of the Russian Federation in the region are not the only major problem Ukraine is facing. Equally important is to observe the way the European energy legislation is being implemented. Ukraine is a member of the European Energy Community since 2009. Although many measures have been taken to harmonize legislation in the energy field, it is quite difficult to apply these rules while the necessary tools and means are missing. In the last two years Ukrainian authorities have diversified suppliers of natural energy resources and launched important reforms for an efficient national energy system. Nevertheless, everything is complicated by the continuation of the separatists uprisings in the East of the country supported by Russia and asking for a special status within Ukraine- practically to control the decisions in foreign policy - and the interference of the outside powers in defining the Ukrainian-Russian future relationship..

---

Interests

The biggest Ukrainian national interest regarding the energy domain is to ensure its energy independence, energy efficiency and the security of the main energy companies\(^1\) (electricity production\(^2\)) while conducting more active steps to multiply suppliers. Energy security means first and foremost the multiplication of the energy supply sources\(^3\) and obtaining the best purchase prices. Among other interests in the energy domain we can name: modernization and greening of gas transport infrastructure, to ensure that the natural gas distribution stations have reliable control systems, efficient use of all types of energy, attracting foreign investment to upgrade all elements of the energy system, the insurance of transparency when making decision in the energy domain, further harmonization of national energy legislation with the European and international ones and continue implementation the provisions of the II and III energy packages, included in the negotiations for the EU Association Agreement, to assume all the obligations that arise from the membership status of the of the European Energy, implementation of projects that support green energy production, including the wind energy, constant assessment and technical evaluation of the strategic objects that produce nuclear energy, taking all the necessary measures to improve their working, the implementation of the international standards and norms adopted in this area.

Capabilities

Besides its transit the status, meaning the pipelines through which Ukraine can facilitate the natural gas transit from the Russian Federation to the European countries, Ukraine can provide the European states with warehouses to store energy reserves for a long period of time. Ukraine also holds large quantities of shale gas, which explored could contribute to the interest of ensuring the country’s energy independence.

Opportunities

Ukraine is located at the intersection of the several routes for goods and services. This geographical position has allowed it in time to transform itself in a transit country for the Russian energy resources going to European countries. Once the North Stream project has been launched the status of “transit country”

---


\(^2\) The most part of the companies producing electricity are located in Eastern Ukraine, near conflict zone.

\(^3\) Interview with Ukrainian energy expert during the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum held in Chisinau, October 4th-5th, 2013.
could no longer be fully capitalized. However, the discovery of the shale gas in Ukraine and the interest shown by some foreign investors to explore these, can create great opportunities for the Ukrainian economy in general and partially ensure this country’s energy independence. Also, many European companies have shown their interests in the storage system that Ukraine has and can put at their service of many European states. This natural gas storage system is a concern for the Russian Federation.

**Recommendations**

- The Ukrainian authorities should capitalize on the potential of the signed partnerships regarding the energy domain and not give up on the opportunities offered by these in the favor of a single provider: Russian Federation. This recommendation comes through mostly in the context of the latest events in Kiev and the renegotiation of the purchase prices for Russian gas. In 2014 after signing a new gas supply agreement, Ukraine stopped the gas imports from European countries. After two years of military conflict with Russian Federation Ukrainian authorities have changed the approach in the energy sector. Now Ukraine is less energy dependent from Russia and has a proper vision of how reforms would have to be implemented.

- Improving the generation, delivery and consumption of all types of energy resources through the modernization and technological upgrade of the energy sector. Attracting the direct foreign investments in the energy domain is the best solution to provide all necessary capital to improve the energy sector.

- The development of efficient and transparent market mechanisms, that would create equal opportunities for all economic agents interested to invest in the energy domain. This recommendation is conditioning the previous one.

**Final recommendation**

- The energy efficiency is an issue common to all Member States of the Eastern Partnership. It is difficult to develop initiatives that would be equally supported by all participants of the Eastern Partnership project, in accordance with the requirements of the European Union and other regional organizations. Interests, capabilities and the availability of social and political actors involved in decision-making processes vary from one country to another. The harmonization of these interests will be a long and difficult process. A possible solution to this could motivate the Member States to start the transformation from the inside, but with external financial support.

- Preparing the local authorities and population to cope with situations of civilian crisis; reevaluation of local regulations in case of emergency situations,

---

including their adaptation to possible new threats that can arise from the lack of financial resources for the modernization of the energy policy objectives.

- The government central authorities should be paying more attention to the development and support of national projects for the production of energy from renewable resources by exploring the internal potential and stimulate interest in the investment in green energy on a local level.

- Encourage further reforms in the energy sector by separating the suppliers from carriers and distributors. Moldova and Ukraine are the only Member States of the European Energy Community that have achieved important results in terms of harmonization of the national energy legislation with the European. Other participants in the Eastern Partnership project, which are also signatories to several international documents, which stipulate the harmonization of national priorities to the international standards. Continuing the process of transforming the law is not just a symbolic act, but must be an act of assumption of some obligations in the interests of their own citizens for a better and safer life.

Here, it is important to mention that it is paramount that the Member States of the Eastern Partnership must make decisions that would discourage monopolies or oligopolies in the energy sector by creating equal conditions for all economic agents. Further harmonization of national laws to international standards and norms is another element that can ensure the success of these reforms.

- An effective communication with the citizens regarding the implications that some political decision have in the energy domain, so that they can take actions in case of technological accidents or natural disasters that may affect the functionality of some energy objects.

**References:**


“Natural gas pipelines under construction will move gas from Azerbaijan to southern Europe”, U.S. Energy Information Administration, October 14, 2015, http://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.cfm?id=23332


2.4. ANALYZING CIVILIAN SECURITY IN THE EAP COUNTRIES THROUGH THE LENSES OF PLATFORM 4

Mihaela-Adriana Pădureanu¹

Introduction

Platform four is composed of topics that can be considered rather “soft” such as education, culture and media, but is actually a very relevant step in deepening relations between different societies, although there are not so many activities as in platform one. The main objective is to boost cooperation among EaP partners, to improve those states’ capacity to reform and to “share good practice between education and training authorities, higher education and research institutions, and the youth or arts organisations of the EU and its partners”².

1. Armenia

A view from the Platform 4

Platform four of the EaP includes the topics of education, research, youth culture and audiovisual sector and information society³. On a cultural level, Armenia has probably one of the most important roles in the EaP and in Europe, due to its rich and important history. According to the latest official EU data on platform four: „Armenia participated in the Tempus programme with 29 projects out of which 8 were coordinated by an Armenian higher education institution. 246 students and staff were selected in 2014 for mobility within partnerships supported by Erasmus Mundus and five students were selected for a joint Master’s degree. Armenia also participated in the eTwinning plus action with 23 schools. Young people and youth organizations benefited from Erasmus+, with 1 443 participating in mobility projects and 123 in the action for young people and decision-makers.”⁴ In the EaP Civil Society Forum Working Group “Contacts between

¹ Ph.D., NSPSPA Bucharest
People”, responsible for this platform has also an area called Contacts between seniors and in Armenia there is the Union of Senior Generations, an organization that seeks to protect the rights of the pensioners. Armenia has also participated in the Marie Curie Actions and between 2007 and 2014, with 85 researchers as beneficiaries of this programme, while the Armenian organizations received €0.43 million.

As already mentioned, corruption remains a problem in Armenia including in the higher education and the topic has been tackled in the study: “Strengthening Integrity and Combating Corruption of Higher Education in Armenia. Risk Analysis of Issues Affecting the Integrity and Armenian Higher Education System” by Ian Smith and Tom Hamilton. In the study, the two authors have a number of recommendations for the Armenian government, aimed at improving its work in this very important domain.

Another tool used by the EU to improve the way in which the society functions and to increase the accountability of the public servants is trying to facilitate the dialogue between people. A major step in this direction came in the area of visa facilitation and at the Vilnius Summit, Armenia concluded the Visa Facilitation and Readmission Agreement that came into force on January 1st 2014. This topic is probably one of the well-developed areas of cooperation between EU and Armenia and improves the way in which the two actors cooperate.

Although the EU has tried to support the reforms in Armenia, it allocated only € 98.4 million between 2007-2013, through the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) National Indicative Programme (NIP) for reforms and between €157.3 million between 2011-2013 thus a small amount of money for the problems that exist in this country.

---


pean Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) mentions that: “bilateral assistance to Armenia may range between a minimum of €140 million and a maximum of €170 million”.

2. Azerbaijan

A view from the Platform 4

As for the platform four and its component Azerbaijan takes part in this platform in the programmes TEMPUS and ERASMUS MUNDUS. EU approved for 2014, €21 million for education, skills development and support for the civil society and between 2014-2017 will allocate between €77 and 94 million for: “education and skills development, justice, regional and rural development (...) capacity development and institution building”. EU is the biggest donor for the Azeri civil society and supported more than 60 projects in the areas of vulnerable groups, human rights, media freedom and free and fair elections, and also the joint working group on human rights between the government and the civil society representatives. Therefore, we can say that some progress, although a very slow one is taking place also in the relation between the civil society and the officials, but the efforts in this domain should continue with support from both sides.

Regarding the free movement of people since 2013, Azerbaijan is part of important agreements: Visa Facilitation Agreement and Readmission Agreement and a Mobility Partnership. Azerbaijan is also active in the Eastern Partnership Connect project which aims to increase scientific cooperation between EaP members. Azerbaijan can also take part in the Marie Curie Actions and between 2007 and 2014, 37 researchers benefited from this programme and Azerbaijani organisations received €0.256 million from the EU.

---

1 Armenia, European Commission http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/neighbourhood/countries/armenia/index_en.htm (05.07.2016). The same document mentions that for the period 2007-2013 that the EU allocated €281.5 million for bilateral assistance to Armenia, although the number does not appear in another EU document, as far as I know.


3 Ibidem

4 Ibidem


As for the financial resources, according to the National Indicative Programme (NIP) for 2007-2010 Azerbaijan had access to approximate €92 million¹ and for 2011-2013, European Commission allocated for bilateral assistance to Azerbaijan €122.5 million².

3. Belarus

*A view from the Platform 4*

Belarus is a very active member in the working group of platform 4 (education, research, culture). It is also part of the Bologna Process, participates in the Comenius, Erasmus, Grundtvig, Leonardo, Jean Monnet and Transversal Programme and also in the special two programmes “EU Language Courses for Young Belarusians” and “Mobility Scheme for Targeted People-to-People Contacts”³. Also, a number of 229 researchers benefited between 2007 and 2014 from the Marie Curie Actions and the Belarusian organizations received €1.3 million for their activities⁴. Another important fact is that research organizations and businesses from Belarus can participate in the Horizon 2020. In 2015, eleven project brought €1.5 million to Belarus⁵.

This figures show that the Belarus has the opening needed to be an active participant in the processes opened by the platform four, especially the links that can be formed between societies.

4. Georgia

*A view from Platform 4*

According to the EU official documents, “in 2014 Georgia participated in the Tempus programme with 35 ongoing projects (…) and also participated in the eTwinning plus action with 68 schools”⁶. The document mentions that Georgia

---

has also participated in the Erasmus+ programme (2111 participants in mobility projects). As a member of the Marie Curie Actions, Georgia benefited from 152 exchanges for its researchers through this programme between 2007 and 2014 and EU offered to Georgian organizations € 1.2 million\(^1\).

Georgia is very active in the Creative Europe Programme (part of Culture and audiovisual sector, dimension four of platform four\(^2\)) and presented in June 2016, its plan for the Creative Georgia Forum, which will aim to collect: “all the governmental agencies in order to implement different programmes, projects and events aimed at developing creative industries in Georgia”\(^3\). The Forum will take place in Georgia, December 8-9, 2016 and will aim to link the cultural and creative sectors in order to facilitate economic results.

Regarding the civil society, Georgia is also ahead of other EaP countries when it comes to the official support for this sector. In 2014, the Georgian Parliament made impressive progress when “unanimously adopted a national human rights strategy and action plan, largely based on recommendations made by the EU Special Adviser Thomas Hammarberg in his report “Georgia in Transition”\(^4\). EU will support the financial costs of the strategy’s implementation.

According to the Eastern Partnership Media Freedom Index that uses data from 2014, Georgia is the ruler of the chart of the EaP member states (followed by Moldova and Ukraine) as the country with the highest degree of media freedom which only strengthens the argument that Georgia is the EaP country with the best results in the initiative\(^5\).

Also, Georgia has made good progress in order to obtain free movement in the EU for its citizens who have a biometric passport and look for short stays there. The European Commission issued four reports (the last one in December

---


2015) about the progress made by Georgia in this area¹. On March 9, 2016 the European Commission acknowledged the fact that Georgia fulfilled all the benchmarks from the Visa Liberalisation Action Plan².

As for the financial assistance, between 2007 - 2013, Georgia received from the EU €452.1 million and the amount of money for 2014-2017 is between €335 and 410 million³.

Georgia has shown, at the level of both political elites and at societal level its willingness to become a part of the Euro-Atlantic space, but because of external reasons it seems unlikely that this will be the course of its foreign policy.

5. Republic of Moldova

A view from Platform four

Education, research, innovation and culture have important roles in Republic of Moldova. Starting from 2011, Moldova has been a member of the EU’s Seventh Research Framework Programme (FP7)⁴ and since July 2014, Moldova has gained full access to the Horizon 2020 programme⁵. Between 2007 and 2014, a number of 127 researchers benefitted from the Marie Curie Actions and the 18 Moldavian organizations participating in the programme received € 0.781 million from the EU⁶.

In the area of freedom of press, the last country report for Moldova, mentions the fact that the (new, from 2011) Audiovisual Code has not been adopted and that many problems persists in this sector such as: “ownership transparency,


editorial freedom, media plurality and independence of the Audiovisual Coordination Council\(^1\). The role of Russian propaganda in the country and the huge visibility of the Russia media have to be addressed in order to offer a more balance view of and for society\(^2\).

As already mentioned, Georgia is the country with the highest media freedom in the EaP, but Moldova manages to lead the section regarding the Internet and new media, which measures the level of freedom of the internet and access to it\(^3\). Therefore, Moldova should try to expand and consolidate its position in the region on this section and use its resources for more visible results in this area – such as increased digitalization of the public administration and access to internet for its citizens as less than half of Moldova’s population has access to internet\(^4\).

The Moldavian civil society has progressed in the years that followed the launch of the Eastern Partnership and lead to an increased role of this sector in the decision making process, as noted by the European Commission in the latest country report for Moldova\(^5\). The Moldavian civil society should continue to be supported by the officials and its expertise can be used more by different institutions in order to try to improve their outputs.

Regarding the free movement of people, Moldova made a great breakthrough in April 2014, when the EU decided that the Moldavian citizens with a biometric passport can benefit from visa free regime and those without a biometric passport will continue to have access to Visa Facilitation Agreement\(^6\). That made Moldova the first EaP country that obtained the visa free agreement and the decision can be seen also as a reward for the progress the country made in the last two years. On the other hand, the 2015 events changed the relation with the European partners and they proved that the political elite in Moldova is not committed fully to

---


the European path. In the education and culture area, Moldova is an associate of Horizon 2020 and participates into the “Creative Europe” programme.1

At a symbolic level, another recognition of Moldova’s role was in October 2013, when it was the first time when the Civil Society Forum of the EAP was organized outside the EU, in Chișinău. Overall, in the platforms one and four Moldova managed to be successful, although there are still things to be done.

On the financial level, between 2007 and 2013 through the European Neighborhood Instrument, Moldova had access to a sum that varied between €335 million and €410 million2 - between 2011 - 2013 had access to € 273.14 million from the European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI)3.

6. Ukraine

A view from the Platform 4

Platform four and its sections are well represented in Ukraine, and the AA even has references to the modernization of the higher education4. According to Ihor Savchak from the Centre for Cultural Management in Ukraine present at the latest meeting of the working group „Contacts between People”, culture is a very significant topic in Ukraine these days5. The official EU documents show that Ukraine has participated in the Tempus programme (60 projects), eTwinning programme (with 86 schools) and Youth in Action programme (2 349 people participated in mobility projects)6. Ukraine takes part in the Marie Curie Actions and though this initiative, 951 researchers received support between 2007 and 2014, while Ukrainian organizations were the beneficiaries of € 6.1 million7. These figures show the role of education and culture in deepening the relations between the EU and Ukraine. The implementation of future programmes and projects that will help increase the contacts between people should be supported even


5 Ibidem, p. 3.


more after the 2014 events, because these actions cannot be interpreted as external interference nor can be considered political support, they only show the common features of different societies.

After the subject of border management, the next important topic for Ukraine is the visa-free regime for its citizens. In April 2016, European Commission has proposed visa-free regime with Ukraine and a decision on the part of the Council is expected in September 2016 at the earliest. But due to EU’s other major problems, such as the Brexit or terrorism it is very possible that this subject will be delayed for December 2016.

Conclusions
Although can be seen as the less developed platform of the EaP, this section manages to adress the relevant topics, such as education and culture in the Eastern neighbourhod. Thus, it can be seen as related to the core identity of the member states. Trying to find and understand the major influences or features of one’s identity, roots, culture and heritage can also influence the way in which the country will respond to different situations and what directions will chose for itself. For example, stressing the European identity in the member states can have an impact on the way in which the citizens and the elites will perceive the differences and the similarities in relation to others. In the same time, research and innovation are extremely important topics for the present and future of the EU. The scientific perspective also allows for a more objective view on many topics. It also helps to show that the EU is still interested in the importance of non-material factors in its relation(s) with its neighbors and that values these factors.

References:


**Documents**


„Visa liberalisation with Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia”, Migration and Home Affairs, European Commission http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-
do/policies/international-affairs/eastern-partnership/visa-liberalisation-moldova-

„Western Balkans countries, Moldova sign up to Horizon 2020”, Press Release, 

„Working Group 4 “Contacts between People” Annual Meeting 15-16 June 
Meeting%20Report.pdf.
PART II

“THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP AND CIVIL SECURITY ISSUES OF THE MEMBER STATES: PAST REALITIES AND PRESENT TRENDS” INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
Day 1: June 29

9.15 – 9.50 Registration of participants at the conference

9.50 – 10.15 Opening remarks:
- Remus PRICOPIE, Rector, National School for Political Studies and Public Administration
- Professor Mihail E. IONESCU, Director, Center for East-European and Asian Studies (CEEAS, NSPSPA)
- Răzvan RUSU, Director, Regional Affairs Directorate, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

10.15 – 13.00 Panel 1
10.15 – 11.00 Session 1
The Eastern Partnership at the crossroads: what will the future bring?
Moderator: Mihail E. IONESCU, Ph.D. Director, Center for East-European and Asian Studies (CEEAS)
- H.E. Mihai Gribincea, Ambassador of Republic of Moldova
- H.E. Anne Lindahl Kenny, Ambassador of Sweden

11.15 - 12.30 Session 2
Presenting the outcomes of the project „EASTERN PARTNERHIP. Civilian Security Need-Assessment and Development Opportunities/Options”
Moderator: Mihail E. IONESCU
- Mihaela Pădureanu
- Bogdan Popescu
- Angela Grămadă

12.30 – 13.30 Book and study presentation
- Study Ukrainian Prism, *Foreign Policy 2015*
- Vasile Rotaru, *The Eastern Partnership. A turning point in EU-Russia relations?*

14.30 – 17.30 Panel 2
14.30 – 16.00 Session 3
From Vilnius to Riga: institutional evolution regarding the following aspects of the civilian security within the EAP member states (rule of law, border management, economic reform, human rights, corruption, and transparency)

Moderator: George Niculescu, Centre for East-European and Asian Studies, Director of Programs, Romania

- Nika Chitadze, Associate Professor International Black Sea University Director, Black Sea Region Geopolitical Research Center, Georgia „Democracy development and Human Rights Protection - Main guarantee of the European integration of Georgia”
- Nino Gaprindashvili, Project Manager, Caucasus Environmental NGO Network CENN, Georgia „Environmental and Socio-Economic Implications of the Mining Sector and Prospects for Responsible Mining in the South Caucasus”
- Tural Abbasov, London Metropolitan University (Azerbaijan) „Public Administration reforms in Azerbaijan within the context of Eastern Partnership: Problems and Opportunities”
- Laurenția Ungureanu, Professor, Deputy director of the Institute of Zoology Academy of Sciences of Moldova „Biodiversity in the context of national security of the Republic of Moldova”

16.15 – 18.15 Session 4

The effects of the Ukrainian crisis on its neighborhood (economic, social, politic, migration, refugees, IDP, border management, health systems, projects for reforms in the neighborhood Georgia and Republic of Moldova)

Moderator: Armand Gosoșu, Associate Professor, University of Bucharest, Romania

- Viorel Cibotaru, Executive Director, IESPM, Republic of Moldova „Republic of Moldova Seeking for Security Options: Facing Endemic Corruption, Hybrid War and Verisimilitude of a Real Turmoil from the Next Door Real War in Ukraine”
- Yuri Tsarik, Head of supervisory board, Center for Strategic and Foreign Policy Studies, Republic of Belarus „Belarus Regional Agenda after the onset of Ukrainian crisis: within and beyond Eastern Partnership”
- Hennady Maksak, President of the Administrative Council, Foreign Policy Council „Ukrainian Prism”, „Russian Aggression in Ukraine as a game changer for the Eastern Partnership: the limit of possible for “prosperity and stability” in the region”
- Iulian Chifu, President, Center for Conflict Prevention and Early Warning, Romania „Informational warfare in the East. Stratcom and suitable tools to enact insidious influence on decision making system”
- Adrian Pop, Professor, National University of Political Studies and Public Administration, Romania „A Typology of Theoretical Approaches for the EU-Russia Confrontation in the Shared Neighbourhood”
Day 2: 30 June
9.45 – 13.00 Panel 3
9.45 – 11.00 Session 5
What future for the EAP? Opportunities and challenges
Moderator: Liliana Popescu, Associate Professor, Vice rector, National University of Political Studies and Public Administration, Romania

- Hanna Shelest, Editor in chief, UA: Ukraine Analytica, Ukraine „Hybrid war and the Eastern Partnership: waiting for the correlation”
- Mikayel Avetisyan, Head of Strategic Gaming Group, Institute for National Strategic Studies, Armenia „Peacekeeping as a new possible field of cooperation between the EU and Armenia”
- Zlatogor Minchev, Director, Joint Training Simulation and Analysis Center, Institute of Information and Communication Technologies, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences „Foresee of Hybrid Security Trends in the Eastern Partnership Wider Context”
- George Vlad Niculescu, Centre for East-European and Asian Studies, Director of Programs in Brussels, Romania „The Consolidation of the Inter-Institutional Cooperation and Communication Mechanisms on CSDP of the Eastern Partnership Countries”

11.15 – 13.00 Session 6
The role of Romania in the ENP: expectations from Moldova, Ukraine, Georgia, Bruxelles
Moderator: Ambassador Sergiu Celac, The Black Sea University Foundation, Romania

- Adam Balcer, Conference director, College of Eastern Europe, Poland „Poland and Romania: advocates of the EU engagement with societies in the Black Sea region- opportunities and challenges”
- Sergiy Gerasymchuk, International Programs Director, Strategic and Security Studies Group, Ukraine „The role of Romania in the ENP: expectations from Ukraine”
- Eugenia Gușilov, Director, Romania Energy Center, Romania „Ukraine - Economic Reform in Times of War”
- Mihai Sebe, Project Coordinator - European Affairs Research and Training Unit Institute of Romania, Romania „Romania’s position regarding the ENP in the broader context of European and Romanian politics. Between Scylla (internal constraints) and Charybdis (abroad expectations)”

13.00 – 13.30 Concluding Remarks
• Mihail E. IONESCU, Director, Center for East-European and Asian Studies (CEEAS)

• Răzvan RUSU, Director, Regional Affairs Directorate, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
1. Vision

1.1 The conference is organized as a deeper, feedback-based dialogue between practitioners (governmental and civil society) and academics with the intention to promote an exchange of ideas, perspectives and best practices in the field of EAP as well as to coordinate research interests, collaborative projects and identify priority topics regarding EAP.

1.2 The conference is developed through the PN-II-PCE-2011-3-1014 project and his premised on the following principles: regional ownership-regional responsibility-regional networking.

2. Organizers: The Center for East-European and Asian Studies (CEEAS) within the PN-II-PCE-2011-3-1014 project at the N.S.P.S.P.A. headquarters in Bătistei Str., Bucharest.

3. Venue: Minerva Hotel, Bucharest, Romania.


5. Topic: The Eastern Partnership: Bridging Communication between the EU and the EaP Partner Countries

6. Purpose

The overall objective of the project is to enhance qualitative knowledge and research about the civilian security aspects of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) within the Romanian academic and political elites. In this respect, the Conference will support not only this objective, but will also respond to the following research needs: greater access to (regional) research on EaP civilian security aspects; greater capacity of Romanian researchers to provide relevant, qualitative, policy-oriented research at ERA level; mid-term perspective on EaP civilian security research in Europe; improving coordination between Romanian and other international, European, regional researchers.

Thus, the conference will focus on bringing together in an open dialogue the representatives from the EU and the EaP partner countries in an effort to identify, explore and understand the civil security challenges faced both by the

---

1 The concept was submitted to the conference’s participants two months before the reunion in Bucharest.
EaP tools of cooperation as well as the emerging challenges the parties face in the changing world of the XXI-st century, understanding and taking into account the genuine interests and priorities of the parties concerned and of the individual pressures they are subjected to, from the economic crisis to the different political agendas.

The goal is to identify and explore several high priority topics in the field of civilian security challenges and potential solutions or ways to address them conjointly at the regional level, in order to consolidate the EaP tools of cooperation and dialogue.

The EaP countries are a part of a currently shifting region of political crosspressures while the EU is undergoing a deep process of reform and reorganization under the impact of the economic difficulties experienced by its members. Under these circumstances, the conference will attempt to identify some of the dynamics of and emerging civilian security challenges presented by this shifting background of international and regional relations through open dialogue among specialists in the field.

7. Tentative Agenda:

Panel 1

• Presenting the outcomes of „EASTERN PARTNERSHIP. Civilian Security Need-Assessment and Development Opportunities/Options”

• The Eastern Partnership at the crossroads: what will the future bring?

The conference will aim to analyse a general overview of the Eastern Partnership in the last three years. As a specific goal, the project team will present the research’ results and outcomes to the Romanian and international experts. After almost five years we are proud that the region that we are studying has been recognized as extremely important for the European and regional security.

Panel 2

• From Vilnius to Riga: institutional evolution regarding the following aspects of the civilian security within the EAP member states (rule of law, border management, economic reform, human rights, corruption, transparency)

• The effects of the Ukrainian crisis on its neighborhood (economic, social, politic, migration, refugees, IDP, border management, health systems, projects for reforms in the neighborhood Georgia and Republic of Moldova)

The second panel aims to investigate the institutional evolution with regard to the civilian security in the EAP countries. In our research, civilian security has been understood as:

„Civil security is variously called civil protection, homeland security, internal security, national security, public security and domestic security. Regardless, defining features are that civil security’s ultimate goal is the protection of civilians within the borders of the state. In contrast to military security, civil security is mainly focused on internal threats and generally under civilian rather than military administration (Boin et al 2007:3)”.
At the political level the most important tools used for interacting with the EAP countries were the summits. Our conference will cover the effects of the Vilnius summit and of the Riga summit on the different aspects of the civilian security. The panel aims to give the EaP partner countries a stronger voice in the self-evaluation/perception of the objectives and priorities their nations have achieved in the framework of the EaP.

This panel might entail discussion on some of the following subjects:
- Evaluation of effects of the Riga summit and Vilnius summit on the internal development in the EaP countries and how can we understand them
- Evaluation of the impact and results of comprehensive or sector-related policies and initiatives in the EaP so far;
- Evaluating the DCFTA in Republic of Moldova and Georgia;
- The most succesful and the most least succesful evolution of a country in the EaP framework (please fell to use what country youl would like as an example)
- Stage of national reforms in the field of modernization of national emergency situations management
- Regional solutions for responding to the Ukraiani crisis
- What are the sectors most affected by the Ukrainian crisis?
- What reforms have taken place at the national level in order to implement or respond to the EU’s requirements?
- Policies on education, migration, liberties and rights, stage of cooperation in this field.

Participants are encouraged to develop policy papers based on a comprehensive or sector-based evaluation of the policies adopted and implemented within the EaP framework so far as well as an assessment of their results.

Panel 3:

- **ENP review: what future for the EAP? Opportunities and challenges**
- **The role of Romania in the ENP: expectations from Moldova, Ukraine, Georgia, Bruxelles**

This topic is relevant for our conference because the initiative has already produced effects in the Eastern neighbourhood and we what to see if there are still high expectations for this policy. Because the three countries mentioned in session’s six title are those that signed the Association Agreements, we want to give a special attention to them. What lessons can be learned from their experience by the other three countries.

This panel might entail discussion on some of the following subjects:
- Evaluation of the EU assistance in this field provided so far to the partners;
- Identification of several high priorities to be pursued at the regional/bilateral level;
- Self-evaluation of the objectives, priorities, policies and initiatives implemented at the national level in the EaP framework
- Stage of national reforms in the field of modernization of national emergency situations management;
- Complementarity/Duplication with other international/regional mechanisms and effects on the EaP framework;
- National recommendations for development/improvement of EaP framework and cooperation.

The panel aims to give the EaP partner countries a stronger voice in the self-evaluation/perception of the objectives and priorities their nations have achieved in the framework of the EaP, seeking to redress the balance of dialogue between concerned parties pursuing genuine legitimate interests.

*This panel might entail discussion on some of the following subjects:*
- Self-evaluation of the objectives, priorities, policies and initiatives implemented at the national level in the EaP framework;
- Assessment of the achievements and failures at the national level in relation to the EaP framework;
- Integration of lessons learned, regional exchange of best practices and their impact on cooperation within the EaP framework;

8. **Target audience - see tentative guest list attached**

The target audience will be as inclusive as possible. It should include representatives of governmental agencies and policy makers, security professionals, academic specialists from national, regional and international institutions, NGOs and representatives of civil society, and journalists dealing with civilian security issues in the EU member states, the EaP partner countries, as well as other third parties - Russian Federation, the US, etc. The selection of participants is intended to facilitate the development of networks of specialists working to enhance regional civilian security cooperation within the EaP framework.

9. **Working language**

The proceedings of the conference were conducted in English.

10. **Funding**

The funding covering expenses will be provided through the PN-II-PCE-2011-3-1014 project.

11. **Submission of research papers**

The speakers will be requested to submit a paper version of their presentations within two weeks after the end of the conference.

12. **Findings**

12.1 The findings of the conference will be elaborated in a summary of proceedings including recommendations for regional policy initiatives targeted primarily at stakeholder policy makers.

12.2 The CEEAS will support an edited volume based upon the conference papers that will make the proceedings available to the broader scholarly and political community.
13. Calendar

15 March 2016 – sending of invitations to prospective speakers and guests
30 March 2016 – receipt of confirmations of participants
31 March 2016 – purchase of international transportation
1 April 2016 - contracting services required for the conference (accommodation, meals, internal transportation, office supplies, etc)
15 April 2016 – definitive conference agenda
15 June 2016 – gathering and preparation of participant presentations
25 June 2016 – printing of EAP Dossier to be circulated at the conference
25 June 2016 – preparation of conference materials
28 June 2016 – receipt of participants papers
30 September 2016 – editing and publishing of the international volume
Dear friends,

First of all, welcome in Bucharest, welcome for all of you at the reunion. As we all know, due to the EU’s enlargement towards the East, there was a need for a new type of relationship between Brussels and its new neighbors from Eastern Europe. Thus the Eastern Partnership was an offer addressed to Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine in order to consolidate the “ring of friends” proposed by the European Neighborhood Policy as a reachable goal in its neighborhood. According to the EU’s philosophy, if the countries around its vicinity become more “European”, a win – win situation can be achieved. This initiative – the Eastern Partnership – does not concern only the decision makers within Brussels, but also people from the academia or civil society, who have the responsibility to examine, criticize and send feedbacks to the decision makers.

Thus, our project - **Eastern Partnership: Civilian Security Need-Assessment and Development Opportunities/Options** – is an effort to understand, but also to familiarize (mainly, the Romanian) public with the EaP’s implications, objectives and accomplishments, but also its weaknesses and the way ahead. It started in 2011, in what might be considered the enthusiastic period of the Eastern Partnership initiative. After the Vilnius Summit from 2013, as we all know the first serious challenge came. New transformations came after the Riga Summit and the 2015 Review of the ENP. A change of attitude can be noticed, Brussels preferring to speak about the stabilization of the neighborhood, rather than transformation. This was also a challenge for our team due to the fact that EaP was covered in a kind of uncertainty, many voices predicting the end of the initiative. New challenges have appeared in 2016, even several days ago, when unexpectedly the British electorate voted for Brexit.

The project aims at a detailed research of the civil security aspects of the Eastern Partnership. This dimension, generally associated in the early 2000s with EU’s extension, remains little researched. However, in this region the EU has identified in that specific field a whole plethora of security risks and threats of the most diverse natures: from natural and man-made disasters, to human trafficking, to organized crime, etc. Unlike some other foreign policy initiatives within the EU, which have had the privilege of extensive research, the Eastern Partnership
was less analyzed when the project started at the end of 2011. It was due mainly to the fact that the initiative has been launched in 2009, so to say it was in the upbringing phase. This project aims to fill this research void. We chose to focus on civil security because of the repeated crises in this region of late. Moreover, we built upon the expertise and best practices in the field of natural and man-made disasters in the Greater Black Sea Area gained during a previously implemented (by some of the members of the team) project.¹

The first aim of the project is to develop a resilience index for the Eastern Partnership member states. The term resilience is very complex having multiple understandings and being used in different areas (ecology, psychology, economics, disaster studies, geography, political science and archaeology). In their project about resilience in the metropolitan regions in America, the researchers from Berkeley Institution consider that, the concept typically connotes an ability to ‘bounce back’ from a stress or disturbance, potentially returning to a pre-stress norm or a transformed post-stress condition”. Others see the resilience as, the capacity of a system to absorb disturbance and reorganize while undergoing change so as to still retain essentially the same function, structure, identity, and feedbacks”. As an example, the OECD defines resilience in opposition with fragility which is a function of disequilibrium between state functions and capacity on the one hand and social expectations on the other. It arises either from the paucity of the political process for managing agreement on the social contract (issues of political governance) or from extremes of incapacity or illegitimacy. The European Commission, in its last review of the European Neighborhood Policy from 2015 indicates that the EU’s “…measures set out in this Joint Communication seek to offer ways to strengthen the resilience of the EU’s partners in the face of external pressures and their ability to make their own sovereign choices”. Thus the EU takes into account the idea of boosting the EaP countries’ capacity to tackle external shocks.

The idea of the project starts from the concept of civilian security, a new approach towards security studies, which is still under development. Summarizing from the literature at our disposal, civil security is variously called civil protection, homeland security, internal security, national security, public security and domestic security, with the ultimate goal being the protection of the civilians within the borders of the state. In contrast to military security, civil/civilian security is mainly focused on internal threats and generally falls under civilian rather than military administration².


² Emil Kirkhner, Evans Fanoulis, Han Dorussen, An Analysis of Civil Security Systems in the UK and Ireland, UACES 42nd Annual Conferences, Passau, 2012, p. 3
Starting from this concept, the main tasks of the project were to analyze the Eastern Partnership member states’ resilience and to develop a resilience index for the EaP states, in order to examine their capacities, threats and vulnerabilities. One of the most coherent definitions of “resilience” was put forward by a team of researchers from the Berkeley University. Briefly, resilience means a state’s ability to recover from a crisis, be it internal or external, and to adapt to a post crisis situation. Drawing from this, our definition will examine the Eastern Partnership member states’ capacity to face and implement necessary reforms, in order resist certain domestic and external crisis. Furthermore, the present EU foreign policy addressed to the neighborhood focuses on the resilience enhancement of those states. This is clearly mentioned in the 2015 ENP review who emphasizes on the measures in order to strengthen the resilience of the EU’s partners\(^1\). Also, one the principles stipulated in the new EU Security Strategy from 2016 speaks about the efforts to boost the “state and societal resilience to our East and South”\(^2\). After the index has been established, our next objective is to develop four scenarios for the EaP states (Best case; Worst case; Self Made; Prodigal Son)\(^3\), each state fitting in one of the scenarios from 2012 to 2015.

The data for the index were collected from several sources such as: interviews following study visits in Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus, Russia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia; Russia, Poland and Brussels, key documents: security strategies, national security strategies, speeches delivered by political elites; numerical data from World Economic Freedom, World Bank Doing Business, Freedom House – Nations in Transit, BTI. A scale from 0 to 4 (0 – worst; 4 – best) has been used in order to quantify the EaP member states resilience. In order to integrate both the interviews and data from secondary source, we used a linear transformation (mathematical formula).

Four main categories of indicators were chosen, in order to respect our focus on civilian security: political indicators (Governmental Stability, Consolidated Institutions and the rule of law, Transparency, Societal Conflict and instability), economic indicators: (Macroeconomic figures, Economic Stability, Investments profile, Social Factors, Energy (resources and vulnerabilities), security - non military (Natural and Man Made Disasters, Law Enforcement/Law and Order) and regional profile (International Cooperation, Regional Cooperation).

The Resilience Index is important because it shows the EaP states’ capacity to tackle domestic and external shocks. Moreover, it highlights some “vulnerable”


areas where those states need help from the EU and it measures a state’s evolution over time. According to our studies and calculations different trends have been observed: stability, low decrease, and slight increase. In terms of scenarios, Armenia was positioned in the Self Made situation most of the time; Georgia managed to go from Prodigal Son to Best Case situation, while Azerbaijan, Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine at a certain point downgraded from the Self Made situation to the Worst Case situation as it will be shown in the analysis.

The data for the index were collected from interviews following several study visits in the EaP countries, Russia, Poland and Brussels, official documents, but also from a variety of secondary sources. In the following papers, the team will present in the details the research work and also the resilience index and the results obtained.

**The work so far.** The organization of study visits and semi structured interviews with several decision makers, persons from the Academia, NGO members, and journalists from the EaP countries was a crucial part of our research and information gathering. Between 2012 and 2014 we made a number of 10 research visits in all the six member states of the EAP, in the Russian Federation (Moscow), Poland (Warsaw) and in Belgium (Brussels). Several dozens of research interviews were carried during this time. The interviewers were experts from different areas like human rights, economy, environment, energy, journalists, officials, politicians and members of the academia. Due to the special conditions in the EaP countries almost all interviews requested that their name be kept under anonymity.

Beyond the research activities, the project also organized an international conference called “The Eastern Partnership: Assessment of Past Achievements and Future Trends” on November 22-23, 2012 in Bucharest, Romania. The event focused on bringing together in an open dialogue the representatives from the EU and the EaP partner countries in an effort to identify explore and understand the civil security challenges faced by those countries. In particular, the conference tackled several issues such as democratic institution building in both its structural and process-related dimensions, capacity building with an emphasis on coherence, consistency and sustainability, democratic control and public awareness/participation, and regional cooperation and best practices sharing. All the contributions of the invitees to this international conference were published in a consistent volume together with the findings of the research team in theoretical field of civilian security.\(^1\)

The project organized four regional round tables gathering experts from the EaP member states in Kiev (2012), Chisinau (2012) and Bucharest (2013, 2014). This was an opportunity to facilitate the dialogue among several experts, members from the academia and diplomats in a framework based on trust and solidar-

---

1 Mihail E. Ionescu, editor, *Eastern Partnership The Road so Far*, *Center for East European and Asian Studies*, Editura militara, Bucuresti, 2013
ity. We can also mention the in-door meetings with representatives of the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which were meant to be open discussions with practitioners and decision-makers in both Romania and the European Union’s institutions that, based on Chatham House rules, address in depth the research findings of the EAPR project.

Moreover, research members had the opportunity to apply for and participate in international research conferences with topics in the field of project research in order to further promote the visibility of Romanian research at the international and European levels. Also, a number of scientific articles were published. You can find out more about this by accessing our project’s website.

We also issue a monthly newsletter in order to highlight the most important issues connected with the Eastern Partnership within the six member states, the EU but also Russia. Moreover, the team issues periodically brief analysis. Those are in-depth analysis focused on civilian security matters inside the EaP member states (parts of some of them will be used *per se* in the final volume where the proceedings of this conference will be published).

The beneficiaries of this project are first and foremost, Romanian researchers who have the opportunity to have their voice heard in European research area with a topic of real strategic interest at the national and regional levels. Moreover, another set of beneficiaries is the policy-making community and the civil society in EaP countries as well as within the member states. Last, but certainly not least, the indirect yet ultimate beneficiaries of this research in a research-based society are the citizens of EU member countries and EaP countries alike. This project is predicated on the belief that through knowledge comes acknowledgement and awareness and through them comes empowerment of the citizen which is essential especially in the field of civilian security.

For methodological reasons we have opted for the presentation of our findings in accordance with the structure of the EaP, namely following its platforms. Each member of the team has been responsible for a specific platform. So the next contributions will cover the findings and recommendations identified during the research for each of the platforms.

**Platform 1** of the EaP includes an extremely high number of important topics under the title of democracy, good governance and stability. Only by looking at this title, we can say that the platform addresses the sensitive dimension of political and administrative reform. The way in which the countries responded to the requests of the EU were different for each partner, something that lead to the so-called “more for more principle” as an incentive for the competition in promoting the required reforms. For example, Georgia, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine managed to deepen their relation with the EU by signing the Association Agreements – this outcome can be considered as a success for the EaP initiative, for both parts EU and the member states. These three countries made very important steps towards consolidating their political stability and the democratic system, al-
though corruption, for example continues to be a problem in all three of them. Looking at the EaP from this perspective we can say that progress has indeed been made and that this policy has to receive further support from the EU. Visa liberalization a topic that is comprised under the Platform 1 is one of the best results of this initiative with Republic of Moldova as the first country member of the EaP that received for its citizens the right to travel free in the EU, while Georgia and Ukraine are waiting for the Council’s final vote on this topic these days. From a policy-oriented perspective, we consider the Action Plans for visa liberalization as the most important outcome of the EaP initiative due to the fact that it will have a rapid and direct effect on the citizens’ everyday life.

Platform 2 is connected with the economic dimension of the EaP. The type of political institutions within each EaP partner is critical for their economic development and for the approximation with the EU’s standards. According to EBRD, economic and political institutions play a key role in defining a country’s long-term growth potential. Countries with a stronger institutional environment – effective rule of law, a good business climate, more secure property rights and market-friendly social norms – are better positioned to attract investment, to participate in trade and to use physical and human capital more efficiently.

Among the main problems found within the EaP member states we can mention: corruption, lack of economic diversification, the presence of monopolies in the national economy, bureaucracy, low FDI attraction, lack of respect for property rights. On the other hand, there are certain positive aspects: human capital, meaning that all those states have skilled and well educated workers; some countries encountered a slow GDP growth throughout the period mentioned in the present study and experienced limited market liberalization. In terms of economic cooperation with the EU there were different responses from the EaP states. Armenia decided to join the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), but kept the door opened for a future cooperation with the EU, Azerbaijan is not a WTO member yet and thus it cannot start DCFTA negotiations, Belarus is a EAEU member states and similar with Azerbaijan is not a WTO member yet, while Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine successfully negotiated and signed DCFTA with the EU, which according to European calculations will bring certain benefits to both their national economies and to the EU.

For much better results we consider that the EU should: improve its multilateral dimension of the Eastern Partnership and be able to develop a quicker response to the needs of the EaP states;
• increase its funds allocated to the Small and Medium Enterprises in the six Eastern Partnership countries;
• invest much more in its visibility.

---

Moreover the EaP partners should strengthen the cooperation with the EU; to amplify the fight against corruption; to diversify the economy; and to finish negotiations and enter the WTO (the non WTO member states).

The third platform of EaP is about energy security and is considered to be one of the most pragmatic parts of this project. The participants’ countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine and also interested actors from EU) address multiples issues such as: energy security, renewable energy, energy efficiency, and nuclear safety. Also, this platform addresses the issues that relate to climate changes that occur as a consequence of using energy resources. The main topics discussed under this multilateral cooperation platform are: developing electricity, gas and oil interconnections in order to integrate European energy markets and Eastern Partnership countries; energy efficiency and renewable energy sources – to improve energy security by reducing dependence on imported fossil fuels and moving towards a low-carbon economy; establishing and strengthening a regulatory framework for nuclear safety as an important part of the dialogue in the energy field between EU and its partners. Efficient energy security policy can contribute in the end to a favorable environment for business and can ensure the necessary conditions for economic development. The decisions taken in the energy sector may influence the behavior of many interested economic actors but also can affect the functioning of different public institutions responsible for implementing strategies and energy policies that have an indirectly effect on the field of civilian security.

Finally, the platform 4 can be seen as also the most inclusive of all the platforms due to the topics that it includes: culture, research and education. Research and innovation are important topics for the way in which the EU relates to the Eastern countries – offering to many students the opportunity to study in the EU countries or in the EaP member states. Consolidating the relations between different societies through these informal networks helps increase the EU’s attractiveness and the image it has for the citizens of these countries. These kinds of exchanges also have an impact on the way in which the European citizens view the EU’s foreign policy and can help increase the support for it. Culture allows to a great number of people to enhance their knowledge of different spaces and to have access to a very beautiful part of the history of humanity – if we take the example of the cultural significance of the South Caucasus.

Before entering into details concerning “civilian security” concept and the practical application of the “resilience matrix” or to present the findings and recommendations of each platform I like to stress the importance of your reactions and assessments to our efforts because in such a way we have a necessary feedback to finalize the work on the project.
June 28-30, 2016

Eastern Partnership (EaP) – the Swedish take

We have been deeply involved from the beginning. The first idea to launch an Eastern Partnership was by Sweden and Poland in 2008.

Why did Sweden get engaged in the Eastern Partnership? Sweden had for some time been focusing on supporting reforms in neighbouring countries, in the Baltics, Poland and Russia. It was done with financial means allocated from our budget in a “Baltic Billion Fund”. We supported EU enlargement in general and this has been a Swedish policy regardless of the governments formed by different political parties, since the 1990’s. And the same policy continues today. The EU Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) for all of EUs neighbours is a main foreign policy priority in the EU for Sweden.

Has there been important progress within the Eastern Partnership? Yes we believe so! We have AA/DCFTAs (Association Agreements and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements), visa liberalization (Moldova, and hopefully soon Georgia and Ukraine), and important reforms in many different areas. We now have a community of practitioners and Governments used to cooperating with the EU, and each other on reforms.

Though developments have been different in the countries we have seen reforms that we probably wouldn’t have seen otherwise.

What should happen now?

For our partners: Sweden believes that for those countries who want to become as close as possible to the EU – it is important now to implement reforms and it is also very important that the countries show political will to do so. We believe that further efforts are needed in order to deliver on the full potential of the Eastern Partnership in all policy areas. Reforms with a direct and tangible impact on peoples’ lives are needed.

For us as EU-MS: We believe that there is a need to do more to support reforms, when partners are willing and able. There is also a need to inform our citizens better within EU and the Partner countries about all the good work that is being done.
Sweden firmly defends the sovereignty and integrity all partnership countries, and it is also important to note that the Eastern Partnership is for the partner countries, it is not against any country.

We need to see reforms in the broader perspective. They do not exist in a vacuum. Quite the opposite: they also contribute (and should contribute) towards commitments made under the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Sweden is very serious about our responsibilities to fulfil all our commitments regarding these two agreements.

Regarding Swedish support in the Eastern neighbourhood it aims at supporting reforms and is linked to the Eastern Partnership. It follows the priorities of the countries and focus is on Democracy, Human Rights the Environment and developing sustainable societies through institution building. The Swedish support amounts to 450 MEUR over a seven year period; and in 2016 it is 50 MEUR. Sweden and Romania are, I believe, for example at the moment the biggest bilateral donors in Moldova.

In the future we believe we can do more to support fully developed states under the Rule of Law. This includes the important fight against corruption. It is also important to support Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) – people to people contacts including youth and student exchanges. Sweden would also like to see increased emphasis on equality between women and men. This is an issue of rights, but it also contributes to sustainable social and economic development, it strengthens institutional capacity and the overall resilience of societies.

To conclude: Sweden will continue to engage in, and support and further develop the Eastern Partnership.
DEMONCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS PROTECTION AS ONE OF THE MAIN GUARANTEE OF THE EUROPEAN INTEGRATION OF GEORGIA

Nika Chitadze

Abstract

In the research paper, the main attention is paid on the geopolitical aspects of the EU policy toward enlargement and perspectives of Georgia to be integrated to the EU, also, on the main obstacles on the way of European integration of Georgia, which are interrelated to the several factors and among of them first of all the attention is paid on the role of democracy and increasing democratic cultural through the education and teaching the subject: democracy and human rights at the schools of the Georgia (10-11th classes) and introduction the subject: EU Studies at the different Universities of Georgia.

Keywords: EU, Georgia, Democracy, Human Rights, Education, University

Introduction: Perspectives of EU Enlargement

Western experts in the framework of the project “the maximization of the integrated opportunities of the European Union” work out the concept of “integrated abilities” and are introducing the model for the scientific research of the processes, related to the European Union’s enlargement.

By the using of this approach, it is possible to consider the opportunities of Georgia to resolve one of its strategic tasks – integration to the European Union.

There are proposed two concepts for the analysis of the integrated opportunities: “internal ability” and “external ability”:

- “Internal capability” means the opportunities of the European Union for the enlargement.

- “External capability” signifies the opportunities of the countries – which are not the members - to be integrated to the European Union.

The main components of “internal capability for the integration” - there are resources for the policy formulation process (opportunity of adopting the political decisions, their realization and financing), public support and institutional reforms inside the European Union. The main components of “external capability for integration” there are democratic values, free market economy, the adoption of the system of rules of legal norms by the standards of the European Union and public support inside the country-candidates for the entrance to the European Union.

1 Ph.D. Associate Professor, Director of the Black Sea Region Geopolitical Research Center
Opportunities of Europe to integrate new countries and to be enlarged

This approach for the analysis has become necessary after the long years of difficult practice interaction inside the European Union between old and new members. In 2004 there were admitted at the same time 10 countries (Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia and Mediterranean island states Malta and Cyprus), in 2007, two other European countries Rumania and Bulgaria become the plenipotentiary members of EU. In spite of the fact, that these countries reached the Copenhagen criteria of 1993 (1. the stability of institutes, which guarantee democracy, the supremacy of law, Human Rights, respect and protection of minorities; 2. existence of the functional market economy, also, the ability to manage the competitive pressure and market prices within the Union; 3. The ability to accept the obligations of membership including adherence to the political, economic and monetary and credit purposes of union.), and also additional requirements on the harmonization of legislation and conducting of the special administrative and judicial reforms, which were determined in 1995 during the meeting of the European Council in Madrid, but they significantly decreased the capabilities of the European Union both for the integration1.

It was expressed in the fact, that the population of a several countries of the European Union (Denmark, Great Britain, Poland, France and the Netherlands) blocked the adoption of Common European constitution of 2004. As a result, the broken out political crisis in the European Union was possible to prevent only by the adopting the Lisbon agreement in 2009. However, it is impossible to overcome it completely, until now.

After the world economic crisis of 2008, which was begun in the USA within 2007-2008, the indicators “internal capability for the integration” of EU are descending. The continued second recession in 2011-2013 placed in the catastrophic position of the economy of Greece, Spain, Portugal, Ireland and Cyprus.

In other words, substantially are reduced the economic opportunities of the European Union to integrate new countries. From the other side, strengthening political euro-skepticism in the countries of the European Union both at the national level and in the European Parliament considerably reduce the chances, of so-called aspirant countries to be integrated to EU in the nearest future.

The special institutional features of the European Union, including Euro-bureaucracy, under the conditions of contemporary international reality, create the need for constantly reforming and adapting their institutes according to the external threats and challenges. The weak protection of the national institutes before the inflow of refugees, mass illegal and legal migration decreases the level of the support of population not only in a question of the adoption of new members in the European Union, but also European Union itself.

Perspectives of Georgia for the Integration to EU

For Georgia, as to the other countries - those who are desiring to be integrated in the European Union, in the connection with “internal capability” of EU for integration, should be also realized the European approach itself to the enlargement. With the exception of Croatia, adoption of which in 2013 became the symbolic message about the stabilization of processes in the European Union and restoration the “internal capability” for integration, in the remaining cases the enlargement occurs “as a difficult process”, including all or majority of the countries from one or another European micro-region.

As circumstantial evidence of existence of this approach to the enlargement can serve the examples with Turkey, which is actually the country “out of the European micro-region” and due to it is complicated to pass the tests of the opportunities for integration.

It was partly understandable for the Georgian society. Declaration about Georgia as the “the lighthouse of democracy” and confrontation with Russia, they were natural and logical actions on the way of integration in the family of European democratic states. Sooner or later, by means of the benefit of the free market and trade with the new independent states from the post-soviet space, and also by the neighborhood with the democratic Georgian state, entire Caucasian region could gradually be transferred to the direction of the democratic changes. Thus, democratic Ukraine possesses the function of the lighthouse of the promoting the democracy in its European micro-region – (Ukraine, Belarus, Russia).

The swiftness of the Georgian democratic reforms frightened Russian leadership and it preferred to become one of the basic threats both “to the internal” and “external ability” of integration in the European Union, risking in another case to lose authority as a result of the democratization of Russia.

After annexation by Russia the territories of Georgia, occupation of the Crimea and by the beginning the “hybrid war” against Ukraine and also confrontation of Russia with Turkey, the increasing of the influence of the European Union on the post-soviet space is possible only by the including of the entire zone of the Black Sea coast as a sphere of strategic interests of EU.

Problems of democracy in Georgia as a one of the main obstacles on the way of integration to the European Structures

Taking into account the realities in the South Caucasus Region including Georgia after the period of the disintegration of USSR, it should be mentioned, that none of the countries in the South Caucasus region, neither Armenia, nor Azerbaijan, nor Georgia has experienced longer periods of stable democratic rule in their history. The forceful integration into the Soviet Totalitarian Empire in the early 1920s has negatively affected on the beginnings of all democratic processes in the South Caucasian societies. In 1991, all three countries of South Caucasus
declared the independence and adopted democratic constitutions. Soon afterwards, all three states of the Region struggled with various transitional problems – especially related to the transition from a totalitarian system to a democracy and still could not resolve all of them up to today.

Most severe for Georgia was the civil war (Abkhazia, South Ossetia) which broke out in the early 1990ies. These wars in the two Regions of Georgia have torn apart the country and region politically and have become protracted conflicts which last up to today. Peaceful conflict resolution is still not working as the war between Russia and Georgia in August 2008 has highlighted. Mutual allegations of war crimes and mass murder as well as extremely negative stereotypes restrict the possibilities of governments and political parties for finding peaceful and stable conflict resolutions.

The socio-economic development and democracy promotion suffers not only from the protracted conflicts in the country, but as well from shortcomings in the sectors of democracy, rule of law and human rights. Democratic political institutions as foreseen in the supreme law - constitution of Georgia are not yet fully operating according to Western Democratic standards. Political decisions in the framework of legislative or executive branches of power are normally taken with a limited number of the public debate and participation. Main subjects of political socialization like family, peer groups, mass media and schools still fail to transmit a proper understanding of democratic political procedures. Young people under 20 years make up little more than 25% of the population of Georgia. Their attitudes and capacities to be actors in the democratic life will determine the future of the development democratic institutions in Georgia. Young people from the different regions of Georgia are barely participating in the political processes. But: without political participation and political representation Georgia will not be able to be transferred to a stable and prospering democracy. Taking into consideration the importance of the democratic thinking of the young population of the country, It should be mentioned in general, that the transition from a totalitarian system to a democracy and a market economy has turned out to be extremely difficult and painful process. The main reasons, which seriously hampers development of the democratic Institutions in Georgia and increasing the democratic thinking of the young population of the country are the following issues:

- Absence of democratic traditions in local political and economic culture and weakness of the civil elements including the representatives of the young generation;
- The presence of `Soviet mentality` and Soviet management culture among the representatives of the State Authorities.

In this regard the following issues are worth of mentioning:

In our point of view, one the main reason of the existence the weak democratic institutions is the factor of lacking information among Georgian Society regarding knowledge of by citizens of Georgia their own civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. It is concern especially the young part of the population. In this regard it is necessary to point out the following issues:

- Lack of information about main principles of Human Rights Protection and models of Democracy – political participation in Georgian society, particularly among the Georgian Scientific circles, representatives of the governmental agencies, school pupils, students, NGO-s from the different regions of Georgia etc.

- Despite the fact, that today in Georgia more than 1000 (public and private) schools are registered, there is almost no school where discipline - Human Rights or Democracy (including political participation issues) or other directly related to Human rights protection subject is taught.

- There is lack of reference literature-for example books about Human Rights Law and Models of Democracy, political participation etc. in Georgian and languages of the ethnic minorities. And if we take into consideration the fact, that today approximately in 90% of the Georgian schools the lessons are given in Georgian, it is almost impossible for Georgian pupils to study about human Rights and Democracy, principles of political participation in Georgian and languages of the national and religious minorities.

In general, According to the information in 2015 of the most authoritative organization “Freedom House”, which determines the level of freedom in the different regions of the World, Georgia is still included to the list of the partly free countries under the status Transitional Government or Hybrid regime, with the democracy score 4.64\(^1\).

It should be pointed out, that the democracy scores and regime ratings are based on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 representing the highest level of democratic progress and 7 the lowest\(^2\). The 2015 ratings reflect the period January 1 through December 31, 2014. During the characteristic by the Freedom House the different indicators of democracy within the 2014, it is necessary to point the following:

“National Democratic Governance. During 2014, new laws were passed to protect minority rights and reduce surveillance, though critics argued that they were insufficient. Parliament continued to expand its role in lawmaking and governance. However, tension between the prime minister and president regarding their respective powers persisted, and the sudden departure of the ministers of defense, foreign affairs, and European and Euro-Atlantic integration in November raised questions about the stability of the government. Georgia’s rating for national democratic governance remains unchanged at 5.50.

---


Electoral Process. Local elections held in June were considered relatively free and fair, with a total of 12 cities directly electing their mayors. However, the GD expanded its dominance of elected offices, winning control of every local legislature and succeeding in every mayoral election. Observers noted some violations during the campaign, including abuse of administrative resources, as well as persistent barriers to participation by minorities. Georgia’s electoral process rating remains unchanged at 4.50.

Civil Society. Civil society organizations continued to play an important role in Georgia’s political and democratic development in 2014. They acted as valuable watchdogs and engaged in several successful advocacy campaigns around issues such as surveillance and human rights. The prime minister repeatedly made statements that were very critical of civil society, but the government took no serious steps to restrict activism. Georgia’s civil society rating remains unchanged at 3.75.

Independent Media. Georgia’s media outlets have grown somewhat more independent from their owners and collectively carried a diversity of political views and opinions during the year, though partisan bias remains a problem. As with civil society, the prime minister made statements that suggested a degree of contempt for the press, but the government did not seek to translate these views into practical restrictions on media operations. Georgia’s independent media rating remains unchanged at 4.00.

Local Democratic Governance. An amended code on local self-government was adopted in February, increasing the autonomy of several cities, and the subsequent elections in June brought more democracy to the local level than had ever been experienced in the past, with more mayors directly elected and multiple parties represented in local legislatures. However, local self-governance bodies still have a limited ability to raise and spend money, as most power remains concentrated in the central government. Georgia’s local democratic governance rating improves from 5.50 to 5.25.

Judicial Framework and Independence. Although the human rights environment in Georgia has improved in recent years, including with respect to prison conditions, the spate of prosecutions and investigations aimed at the government’s political opponents continued to stoke concerns about the rule of law during 2014. An antidiscrimination law passed in May included protections for sexual orientation and gender identity, but a track record of enforcement had yet to be established. Georgia’s rating for judicial framework and independence remains unchanged at 5.00.

Corruption. Aggressive enforcement of anticorruption policies during the period of UNM government greatly reduced low-level graft, most notably in the civil service, but a number of problems persist. Following the 2014 local elections, some civil servants were reportedly forced to resign, replaced by individuals without formal qualifications. Payment processes in the public sector lack trans-
transparency, as do certain large government tenders. Georgia’s rating for corruption remains unchanged at 4.501.

Outlook for 2015. Several major factors will shape Georgia’s political and democratic trajectory in 2015. The first is the continued fallout from the cabinet shakeup that occurred in November 2014. It is possible that as new ministers take office, the government will regain its stability, and former defense minister Alasania and his allies in the Our Georgia–Free Democrats party will become a major opposition force. However, it is also possible that the government will target the three former ministers with criminal prosecutions.

In 2014, Georgia continued, albeit slowly, to roll back some of the limits on civil liberties from the UNM era, but the GD government frequently complained about the media and civil society. If these complaints are turned into government actions or restrictive legislation in 2015, Georgia will begin to reverse the advances it has made over the last two years.

The influence of informal political power, specifically that of former prime minister and GD founder Bidzina Ivanishvili, threatens to weaken Georgia’s formal institutions of government. Ivanishvili, who currently holds no elected or appointed office, has been a behind-the-scenes actor since resigning in late 2013. He appeared to be assuming a larger role in November 2014, when the changes to the cabinet occurred, as he made more media appearances and public statements than in previous months 2.

Ways for the problem’s solution through the process of education

As it was mentioned above, one of the main reasons of the weakness of the democratic institutions in Georgia is determined by the lacking knowledge in the Georgian Society regarding the main aspects of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. It is concern especially the young part of the population. Taking into account this issue, for the resolving the problem in the long-term perspective and promoting the further integration of Georgia to the European family, it is important to introduce at the all Universities and Institutes of Georgia the subject: Human Rights Protection and democracy studies as a mandatory discipline. One of the main result of this project will be interrelated with the development and consolidation of democracy in Georgia by the promotion of the political participation of young people from the different regions of the country.

With regard to the project objectives, they will be the following:

Overall objective: Development and consolidation of liberty values in the different Regions of Georgia. Specific objective: A mechanism has been established

for the continuous promotion of the political involvement of the future generation from the different areas of the country in Georgian civil society and political activities.

With regard to the main topics, which will be discussed during the study process, should be the following:

- International Conventions
  - Universal declaration of Human rights;
  - International Bill of Human rights;
  - Economic, social and cultural rights;
  - Civil and Political rights;
  - The Convention on the protection and punishment of the crime of Genocide;
  - The Convention relating to the status of refugees;
  - The International convention on the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination;
  - The convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against Women;
  - The Convention against torture and other Inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment;
  - The Convention on the rights of the child;
  - The International Convention on the protection of the rights of all migrant workers and members of their families;
- European Convention on Human Rights;
- A Single Court of Human Rights;
- The European Social Charter;
- The European Convention for the Prevention of Torture
- The Framework Convention for National Minorities;
- Other Conventions adopted by European Union and Council of Europe
- National legislation of Georgia in sphere of human rights
- Constitution of Georgia;
- The Judiciary system of Georgia;
- Election legislation and voting process in the country;
- National Minorities Protection issues;
- The Law of Georgia on mass-media;
- The labor law of Georgia;
- The Law of Georgia on protection political, economic, social, religious, civil rights;
- Taxation and custom systems in Georgia
- Models of Democracy-Classical Democracy, Republicanism (Liberty, Self-government and the active citizen);
- The development of liberal democracy, pluralism.
- Political and legal systems of the leading democratic states-USA, EU member states, Canada, Japan etc.

At the same time, it is important more active role of the civil society to work over the increasing the public awareness about European Union, which also will be possible by the introduction the subject EU studies at the first stage at the appropriate faculties of the leading Universities of Georgia.

The pilot project can be characterized by the following issues:

Due to it that one of the most important foreign political and national security priorities of Georgia is development of the integration processes with the European Structures, also taking into consideration the fact, that: a) There is almost no University and Institute in Georgia, where subject related to EU is taught; b) There is lacking of the literature in Georgian on EU issues; c) There are only few organizations in the country which are working on EU issues-one of the main purposes of the project is to organize one-semester study course on subject: EU Studies at the one of the leading Universities of Georgia.

By the introduction of the modern European educational style, organize the 4-month study certificate course with its own credit system thus deepening knowledge of future generation – students on EU issues with further purpose to introduce the course – EU Studies into curricula of the one of the leading Universities of Georgia, it will become possible To share an experience on EU Studies with the representatives of the different leading Universities of Georgia with the further perspective of the introducing the subject EU Studies to the curricula at the appropriate faculties of the different Universities of the country. With regard to the other purposes of the project, it should be pointed out:

Publishing book in Georgian with the inclusion to the book all topics, discussed during the lecture course and seminars together with other important issues related to the European Union;

Taking into account the fact, that together with the above-mentioned issues one of the main purpose of the project is to teach and inform society of Georgia on EU related issues, the Center is going to organize short-term lecture course (1-2 days long) at different Universities and other educational Institutions of Georgia and arrange seminars and workshops with participation of the leading experts from Georgia and foreign countries.

During the study program and at the different seminars the following topics will be discussed:

- History and main reasons of the European Community foundation;
Main EU Institutions (The European Parliament, The Council of the European Union, The European Commission, The Court of Justice, The European Court of Auditors, The European Central Bank etc);
- EU Energy Strategy;
- General information about all 28 EU member states (Geographical location, history, population, state system, administrative-territorial division, economic situation, transport and communications, external relations, regions etc.).
- EU-Georgia Relations
  - History of the EU-Georgia relations;
  - National Security of Georgia and role of the European integration;
  - Role of the Caspian energy resources and geopolitical location of Caucasus in the EU strategy;
- EU Neighborhood Initiative for Georgia;
- EU and Black Sea Security;
- EU-Georgia Action Plan;
- EU Eastern Partnership Program.

Conclusions
What will be achieved as a result of the implementation the two above-mentioned projects:
- Generally, implementation of the projects will play an important role in informing the public about Human Rights and Democracy, will show the importance of Democracy for the development of the country, strengthening statehood and providing national security. This factor will promote the further introduction of the liberal-democratic values in the Georgian society; will raise the support of the political forces, which are supporters of democracy in Georgia;
- At the leading Universities of Georgia, for the first time long-term study course in Human Rights Law and Democracy Studies will be organized, and this factor will play the key role for the introduction to the curricula of the subject Human Rights Law and Democracy Studies and by this way students of the next courses-future specialists in Political Science, International Relations, International Law, Legal Studies etc. will also have a possibility to get significant knowledge about Human Rights Protection and models of Democracy;
- Publishing for the first time the book on Human Rights and Democracy issues in Georgian Language will give an opportunity to the people who are interested in Human Rights Law and Democracy related issues (Scientists, students, government officials, journalists, NGO representatives, etc.) to get for the first time book in native language on the Human Rights Law and Democracy related issues and by this way to become familiar with such important topics, as Inter-
national Conventions and National legislation on Human Rights issues, Models of Democracy, Political and Legal models of the leading democratic states in the World, situation with human rights protection and democracy development in Georgia etc. and use the book in practice. This book will play a key role in using the materials in Human Rights Law and Democracy and writing the research papers, articles. With regard to the EU Studies project, its fulfillment will promote informing the public about EU and EU member states, will show the positive role of the Union in the spheres of Economic cooperation, Human Rights Protection, International security, conflict resolution, scientific cooperation, development of democratic Institutions, also will show the different models of the Political and Legal Systems of the EU member states etc. This factor will promote the further introduction of the liberal-democratic values in the Georgian society; will raise the support of the political forces, which are supporters of the European integration of Georgia.

References:
The mining industry is an important part and one of the main driving forces of the country’s economy. It contributes to infrastructural development of regions, creates employment and increases the possibilities for diversification of public revenues. However, if mining operations are performed in an irresponsible manner, in the long-term, the highly negative environmental and social impacts significantly outweigh the short-term economic benefits.

It shall be noted that current and future economic impact of mining poses a serious risks to the natural, cultural and socioeconomic environment. State regulations relevant to mineral extraction and processing either do not exist or are ineffective. The risks of negative impact are associated with human health, restriction of other economic activities (agriculture, tourism, etc.) near mining sites, degradation of the terrain, pollution of air, water and soils, destruction of important species of flora and fauna, damaging and destruction of monuments of cultural heritage, etc.

According to the dynamics of the development of mining industry, industrial mining in Georgia began in the middle of the 19th century when the development of coalmines in Tkibuli (1846) started. By the 1980s the mining industry of Georgia was extracting 45 types of solid minerals accounting 20-22% of the country’s economy. In the 1990s, the mining industry of Georgia was hit by a severe crisis, which resulted in the closure of almost all mining enterprises extracted minerals included: polymetals, manganese, coal, oil, barite, arsenic, diatomite, bentonite clays, raw materials for cement manufacture etc. creating a favorable basis for the development of a processing industry. The collapse of the Soviet Union resulted in the decline of industry, including mining in Georgia. Since gaining independence, the Government of Georgia has initiated a number of unsuccessful reforms. A unified state policy and a long-term strategy on the development of the mining sector have never been adopted.

In Armenia, in spite of the global economic crisis of 2008, mining production and revenues grew significantly in 2009 due to a rise in global prices of copper, gold, and other base metals. The major mineral resources extracted in Armenia

---

1 CENN – Caucasus Environmental NGO Network
are copper, gold and molybdenum. Armenia also has smaller deposits of lead, silver, and zinc as well as deposits of industrial minerals, including basalt, diatomite, granite, gypsum, limestone and perlite. As of 2011, the mineral industry accounted for over half of the Armenia's exports.

Azerbaijan is rich in deposits of natural minerals that are useful in chemistry, metallurgy, construction building and health therapy. These include ferrous and non-ferrous ores, rare and fine metals and semi-precious stones. The minerals produced in Azerbaijan are mainly alumina, aluminum, bentonite, bromine, crude Iodine, gold, gypsum, hydraulic cement, iron ore and raw steel, in addition to the well-known oil and gas deposits. The raw material basis for the ferrous metallurgy consists of large deposits of high quality iron ore, bentonite clay, and dolomite and flux limestone. All of the magnetite ores are concentrated in Dashkesan, located in the Ganja-Qazakh economic region, which is an important mining industrial center of Azerbaijan.

These days European integration is seen as a one way to overcome the shortcomings of the current legislation. In this regard the EU–Georgia Association Agreement signed in 2013 may lead to important changes in the mineral extraction and processing industry. The document commits Georgia to approximate its legal, economic, social, political and environmental standards to those of the EU member states. Article 313 of the Chapter 5 of the Agreement deals with industrial and enterprise policy and mining: “Enhanced cooperation should improve the administrative and regulatory framework for both EU and Georgian businesses operating in the EU and Georgia, and should be based on the EU -'s SME and industrial policies, taking into account internationally recognized principles and practices in this field”. Moreover, the agreement stresses, that “the Government of Georgia shall carry out gradual approximation of its environmental standards to those of the EU aimed at preserving, protecting, improving and rehabilitating the quality of the environment.

In general, the economic gains from the mining industry are one of the driving forces of the country’s economy. It contributes to infrastructural development of regions, creates employment and increases the possibilities for diversification of public revenue. According to 2015 data, there are 6,115 people employed in the mining sector in Georgia, which is 5.8% of overall employment. However, the average salary, 700 lari (about $ 320), is quite low. Despite the positive sides of the mining sector in Georgia, like employment and revenue, mining regions face huge environmental and social complications. We should mention that many fatal and non-fatal accidents occur in mine sites because of poor occupational conditions. Despite minimum labour standards being defined in Georgian legislation, mining companies still do not adhere to them. One of the main reasons for this could be that there are no government or third party monitoring systems. In addition, workers are not aware of their rights.
- From the perspective of the negative impacts of mining, open-pit mining should be mentioned first. In this context, the most notable is the Chiatura plateau, where manganese and industrial quartz sands have been mined using open-pit mining. (The total area of quarries used to extract manganese and quartz sands exceeds 1,200 ha; the area of separate quarries is 2-10 ha. The depth of some sand quarries reaches 30-40 m). Especially after mine closures, empty abandoned, holes are left untreated. Rainwater mixes with extracted manganese waste and flows to the groundwater, which is a source of drinking water in affected villages. In addition, as result of outdated water filters, the local population receive contaminated drinking water.

- In terms of surface water, because of untreated extraction, total Mn levels in waste discharged from the Chiatura Manganese (Mn.) factories, downstream of the main ore processing facility are 15 times the maximum allowable concentration relative to upstream locations. The black colour of the Kvirila River illustrates this problem.

- The concentrating mill operating at the Kazreti copper-pyrite and barite-polymetal deposit can also serve as an example. Water polluted with sulphur oxides flows from the large open quarry and the mill to the Kazretula River – a right tributary of the Mashavera River used for irrigation of agricultural lands in Bolnisi and Marneuli municipalities.

- The landscape close to populated areas has been completely transformed due to mining activities. Companies have undertaken no reclamation works after mine closure. After the extraction of ore, companies have left villages in black mud. The consequences for the villagers are dire: landslides, collapsed houses, cattle falling in huge open quarries, which are left uncovered. Some houses with cracked walls are still inhabited, causing fear and frustration among their inhabitants. Landslide processes continue and there is a risk of the effects spreading to surrounding areas over time.

- The term “particulate matter” (PM) refers to air pollution from a mixture of solid particles and liquid droplets found in the air. The pollutant can be composed of many types of elements and chemicals. Particles that are small enough to be inhaled can cause long-term health problems. They have the potential to enter deep into the lungs through the throat and nose, even entering the bloodstream. Various scientific studies have linked particle exposure to different health problems, including:

  – premature death in people with heart or lung disease,
  – nonfatal heart attacks,
  – irregular heartbeat,
  – aggravated asthma,
  – decreased lung function
In addition to those implications, no reclamation works have been undertaken after mine closure, and in several cases toxic waste is left untreated and uncontrolled around mine sites. In addition to the degradation of biodiversity, there is a high risk of development of health problems over time.

CENN – Caucasus Environmental NGO Network is a non-profit organization which has been working since 1998 alongside local communities and with national governments throughout the South Caucasus to protect the environment and foster sustainable development. In 2014 CENN started the implementation of the project _Promoting Environmental and Social Accountability in the Mining Sector in the Caucasus_ aiming to reduce poverty, enhance environmental education and awareness, enhance environmental and social security related to mining activities, and foster sustainable rural development in South Caucasus Countries. CENN has been working with mining affected communities and local and national authorities in Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia to introduce safe and responsible mining. This process has already seen significant success, although there is still much work to do.

The following measures have to be taken for the mining industry to be considered part of the green economy. Otherwise, the negative long-term environmental and social implications will outweigh the short-term economic benefits gained from the mining industry in Georgia.

– Set up a legal framework for responsible mining,
– Improve transparency and access to information at all stages,
– Establish compliance system with relevant EU directives and international standards
– Introduce systemic air, water, and soil quality monitoring systems.

The legislative and executive authorities of Georgia are facing challenges that need to be addresses in a way that balances the EU requirements and standards on the one hand and facilitates the development of this industry and the growth of state revenues and employment on the other.

Carrying out reforms consistent with the best international mining practices will ensure a safe working environment for miners, the protection of human life and the environment on mining sites and adjacent areas, increased investments and the stable socio economic growth of the country. All these will have a positive effect on the international image of the country and the prospects for its future development.
THE EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY AND THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN IDEALISTIC INTENTIONS AND REALISTIC DRAWBACKS

Adrian Pop

The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) initiative was launched in 2003 to spread stability, security and prosperity in the EU’s neighbourhood as a means to mitigate security risks from the latter with spill-over effects for the EU’s borders and to avoid new divisions and feelings of exclusion in Europe after the EU gained ten countries, mainly from the former Soviet space². Called by some the ‘big bang’ enlargement, this enlargement wave fundamentally changed the geopolitical context in Europe and created the conditions for the EU’s external vocation.

The ENP was initially meant for the eastern European neighbours. At the insistence of countries in the EU’s south, the programme was extended to ten countries of the southern and eastern Mediterranean and eventually to the southern Caucasus. Through long-term engagement, the ENP aimed at supporting the deep structural transformation of the EU’s partner countries, promoting democratic reforms, the rule of law, and a successful market economy, which could be progressively integrated into the EU’s own internal market. The hope was that by ‘sharing everything with the Union but institutions’ – as Romano Prodi synthesized initially the ENP’s strategy in December 2002 – over time the initiative will bring about an area of prosperity and good neighbourliness at the EU’s external borders, thus surrounding the Union with a ‘ring of friends’³. Combining in fact elements of both the accession process and the association model, the ENP’s underlining logic rested somehow in-between the access and

---

¹ Professor, Ph.D. National University of Political Science and Public Administration, Bucharest, Romania


the convergence logics\textsuperscript{1}. Based on this Janus-faced nature, the ENP aimed at adjusting the instruments used in the enlargement process (priorities, evaluation criteria, country reports, specific financial instruments) to a regional cooperation post-enlargement context.

Torn between the idealist vision of creating a ‘ring of friends’ around the EU with ‘frontier zones’ where prosperity and stability should be promoted and the realist one of policing the new EU borders and surrounding them with ‘well-governed countries’, the ENP found itself trapped in a sort of in-built predicament.

More than a decade after the framework-document of the ENP was issued, due to a series of drawbacks, not only has the ENP failed to achieve its aims, but the EU has also lost considerable influence and soft power in its southern and eastern neighbourhoods. Among the various factors which led to this outcome one could cite: the lack of political will among EU Member States to deal with the issue of the strategic finality of relations with the ENP partner countries which affected the credibility of the policy\textsuperscript{2}; a faulty conceptual framework – the ENP has been conceived as a ‘catch-all’ policy covering sixteen countries in the Middle East, North Africa and Eastern Europe that have little in common except a certain geographic proximity to the EU, and its methodology has been derived from the EU’s enlargement, but deprived of the promise of the EU accession, an approach which has not worked well for countries that do not want close association with the EU and has generated frustration among those countries who do; Eurocentric illusions – the EU’s approach to its neighborhood has been characterized by a rather naive, Eurocentric attitude which has often ignored the role of outside players in the EU’s neighbourhood as has become evident in the case of Russia’s behaviour towards East European countries; inconsistent conditionality – while insisting on conditionality on its relationship with its neighbours, the EU has often applied those conditions inconsistently and selectively; illusive partnership – in spite of being a cornerstone of the ENP, the joint ownership of the Action Plans has been devoid in practice of substance as the various tasks within the Action Plans have been biased towards EU interests, a situation conducive to cases in which the partners’ benefits of implementing the Action Plans were rather vague and illusive\textsuperscript{3}; disengaged Member States – with the exception of the summits of the Eastern Partnership and the Union for the Mediterranean, only the European Commission and the European External Action Service have been engaging the partner countries directly (other EU institutions lacking similar authority regarding the ENP) and when it comes to regional conflicts there has been some-

\textsuperscript{1} Dimitar Bechev and Nicolaïdis Kalypso “From Policy to Polity: Can EU’s Special Relations with its ‘Neighbourhood’ be Decentred?” \textit{Journal of Common Market Studies}, Vol 48, No. 3, 2010, pp. 475-500

\textsuperscript{2} Richard G Whitman and Stefan Wolff. \textit{op.cit.} p. 14

\textsuperscript{3} Ibidem, pp. 13-14.
time a lack of coherence between the collective efforts under the ENP and the individual policies of the Member States; flawed instruments – the ENP’s main instruments, i.e. financial support, easier travel conditions, and enhanced access to EU markets were designed for a more stable and peaceful environment, which is no longer the case as far as the EU’s neighbourhood is concerned; and an insufficient regional and multilateral approach combined with the lack of a multilevel approach based on variable geometry involving subsets of partners according to the functional requirements of the various subject areas at hand. What is more, with the ENP the EU aimed for an approach that would go beyond traditional geopolitics. In fact, as the neighbouring regions have experienced dictatorships and state failure, harassment behaviour by powerful neighbours, international and civil wars, revolutions, insurgencies, political and religious conflicts, military coups, and terrorist attacks, traditional geopolitics has resurfaced in the forefront of the EU agenda.

Premised on the novel but ill-defined and ambiguous idea of a special relationship between the EU and its neighbours introduced by Article 7a of the Treaty of the European Union (TEU), the Eastern Partnership (EaP) has tried to correct some of the drawbacks of the ENP framework. Introducing an enhanced regional focus and more differentiation among partners, the EaP aimed at creating ‘the necessary conditions to accelerate political association and further economic integration between the EU and interested partner countries’. By the help of four thematic platforms and five flagship initiatives, the EaP aimed at fostering ‘a more ambitious partnership’ with the eastern neighbours, premised on mutual interests, shared ownership and responsibility. However, the tensions generated by a concept of partnership devoid of a membership perspective as well as the vagueness of the concept of partnership per se and of the related ones of ‘joint ownership’ and ‘shared values’ led the EU to opt for a ‘conditionality-lite’ approach vis-à-vis its neighbours. Moreover, there was a certain lack of coherency and strategic vision as well as large discrepancies in the formulation and evaluation of the...
EaP at the level of the EU official and public discourses. Furthermore, hunting individual success stories of ‘Europeanisation’ as well as the more ‘pro-European’ sections of the ruling elites in the EaP countries mistakenly taken for granted as ‘pro-reformist’ ones, the EU’s resources and political attention have zigzagged between Moldova, Georgia, or even Ukraine (before 2012), somehow loosing from sight the big picture and Russia’s changing role in it. Last but not least, there was a mixed response from the neighbours to its implementation with serious gaps and misconceptions between the partner countries and the EU.2

Against this background, one of the EaP’s unintended consequences was the fact that via the originally soft power-oriented EaP, the EU has been gradually drawn in a rather traditional hard power-oriented geopolitical competition with Russia over the shared neighbourhood, in spite of not having appetite for a strategic game in its eastern neighbourhood and being rather ill-prepared to handle it. The case in point highlights the role of geopolitical space in shaping the foreign policy action of great powers in the periphery areas where their interests are overlaid and the interdependence and entanglement of their actions and mutual perceptions are fully manifested. Although the geopolitical and geo-economic aspects of the relations between the EU and Russia have been generally ignored by the four platforms of the EaP, they have been gained increased importance in bilateral relations as it eventually became painfully obvious around the Vilnius summit of the EaP. As a pivotal country in this new geopolitical and geo-economic game, Ukraine has become a battleground between Russia and the West as exemplified by the EuroMaidan protests, the annexation of Crimea and the hybrid war launched by Russia in eastern Ukraine.

Eventually, the Eastern Partnership summit in Riga on 21-22 May 2015 has reiterated the main principles of the future development of the EU initiative: differentiation, flexibility, compliance with views and mutual interests. Even before the summit, the European leaders made clear certain basic points: the EaP aims at deepening cooperation and not EU membership for the partner countries; the level of cooperation would be determined according to the partners’ needs, readiness and sovereign choice; the development of the initiative would follow a step-by-step approach and accompanied by irreversible changes in the partner countries; and the fact that it is not directed against Russia. By conceiving of differentiation as a cornerstone of the future EaP strategy, the EU has in fact acknowledged that it should move at different speeds in its eastern neighbourhood. In terms of differentiation between the six eastern partners, the EaP summit in

---


2 Elena Korosteleva, op.cit., pp. 11-16.
Riga has confirmed the overall trend of the previous summit in Vilnius: three countries – Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia – seem to be more resolute about their European aspirations, although one of them, Moldova, once a front-runner in the EaP, has lagged behind along its European path, being engulfed in high-level corruption scandals; and the other three – Belarus, Armenia and Azerbaijan – seem to be more cautious about cooperating with the EU, two of them (Belarus and Armenia) because of their membership in the Eurasian Economic Union and one (Azerbaijan) because of Russia’s role in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. By listing the strengthening of institutions and good governance, mobility and people-to-people contacts, market opportunities and interconnections as shared priorities, the EaP summit in Riga has created a flexible enough framework able to adapt to the needs and interests of both parties concerned. Security-wise, one particular outcome of the EaP summit in the capital city of Latvia is to be noted. The Riga summit Declaration devoted a special attention to strengthening bilateral and multilateral cooperation on the EU Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), and it stated the EU’s willingness to give opportunity to Ukraine and other partners concerned to take part in CSDP activities, missions and operations and to deploy to this effect an Advisory Mission in Ukraine, a development some analysts had long argued for.

Eventually, by the help of a comprehensive review of the ENP published in November 2015, the EU has not only recognized that not all partners might be interested in the EU rules and standards, but it has also laid down the guiding principles which would allow the new ENP to better reflect each country’s wishes as far as its nature and focus of its partnership are concerned. Geared towards more differentiated partnerships between the EU and each of its neighbouring partners, a greater mutual ownership, a deeper involvement of EU Member States, a more coherent approach between the EU and the Member States, and a more coherent and flexible use of available instruments and resources, the new ENP would like also to see a strengthened regional dimension. The latter would be implemented by the use of thematic frameworks, particularly in the fields of migration, energy and security, and by engaging other regional actors, including other international organizations, beyond neighbourhood, where appropriate, in addressing regional challenges. From a security viewpoint, besides an intensified cooperation addressing the current pressing inter-related challenges of migration, mobility and border management, some particular areas of cooperation will be prioritized: the security-sector reform; cooperation in dealing with terrorism and radicalization, organized cross-border crime and corruption, and cyber crime; the judicial cooperation on criminal matters; and the cooperation on matters related to the CSDP, including the management of crises and the settlement of protracted conflicts in

---

the neighbourhood, as well as close partnerships in civil protection and cooperation with the EU’s civil protection mechanism.

Overall, now the EU seems intent to be geared towards a more realistic and pragmatic mode premised on both a bilateral and a regional approach in dealing with its partners. The EU’s challenge now is to go beyond the traditional two-speed strategy towards tailor-made, individual strategies based not only on the ‘more for more’ policy, but also on the ‘less for less’ one, and engaging partners by mutual consent in its various external governance boundaries, namely the institutional and legal, transactional, geopolitical and cultural boundaries, thus applying externally in its troubled southern and eastern neighbourhoods its rather traditional internally-oriented concentric circles approach.

References:


---


2 Irina Kuzņecova, Potjomkina Diāna, and Vargulis Mārtiņš “From the Vilnius Summit to the Riga Summit: Challenges and Opportunities of the Eastern Partnership” Riga: Latvian Institute of International Affairs, October 2013


Kuzņecova, Irina, Diāna Potjomkina, and Mārtiņš Vargulis. “From the Vilnius Summit to the Riga Summit: Challenges and Opportunities of the Eastern Partnership” Riga: Latvian Institute of International Affairs, October 2013


Abstract
This article discusses the possibility of establishing a new field of cooperation between Armenia and the EU in the context of the European Neighbourhood Policy Review (ENP). The ENP Review sets up a new strategic agenda, where the EU’s cooperation with its neighbors in the field of security plays an important role. The EU has accumulated significant experience in conflict prevention and crisis management in different regions of the world. This, and Armenia’s active engagement in peacekeeping operations and policymaking internationally can facilitate the dialogue between the parties to discuss the possibility of participation of the Armenian Peacekeeping forces in the EU missions and operations within the framework of the restarted negotiations around a new agreement between the EU and Armenia.

**Keywords:** EU-Armenia cooperation, European Neighbourhood Policy, security, peacekeeping, CSDP.

From the very first days of its independence, Armenia has considered the establishment of ties with both Russia and Euro-Atlantic power centers – the US, NATO and the EU – as a high priority for its foreign policy. In 1996, the EU and Armenia signed the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) regulating bilateral relations, which entered into force in 1999. The EU assisted Armenia to implement institutional, legal and administrative reforms, thus reducing the negative consequences of the transitional period. The cooperation has been focused on political and economic dialogue, lawmaking, culture and education.

One of the most important steps taken towards European integration was Armenia’s accession to the 2004-launched European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP).

---

1 Mikayel Avetisyan is the Head of the Strategic Gaming Group at the Institute for National Strategic Studies of the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Armenia (INSS, MoD, RA). He holds Ph.D. in Political Science.

2 Hayk Torosyan is a research fellow at the Strategic Gaming Group, INSS, MoD, RA. He holds Ph.D. in Political Science.
The Program became a catalyst for reforms in various critical fields ranging from legislative synchronization to financial support to economic projects.

In May of 2009, the inception of the Eastern Partnership (EaP), the new policy platform of the ENP, marked a new phase of cooperation between the EU and Armenia. On July 19, 2010, in the framework of the EaP, negotiations started between the EU and Armenia over the signing of the Association Agreement (AA), which aimed to strengthen political and economic cooperation. The negotiations were successfully finished in the summer of 2013.

However, Armenia’s decision of September 2013 to join the Russian-led Customs Union (CU) and later the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) created a need for rethinking the future of bilateral relations. As the Head of the Institute for National Strategic Studies (INSS) of the Armenian Defense Ministry Dr. Hayk Kotanjian puts, this decision was largely due to the military-security realities in the South Caucasus, as well as to the symmetric and asymmetric threats and challenges to the security, caused by the armed conflicts in the surrounding region.1

This move resulted in a one-year phase of uncertainty with the sides trying to find feasible options to continue the cooperation under the new political and economic juncture. The exacerbating relations between Russia and the West due to the Ukrainian crisis further complicated the situation. However, Armenia demonstrated a strong commitment to continue the cooperation with the EU in all possible fields of mutual interest that would not contradict its obligations within the EAEU – including human rights, legal reforms, cooperation in science, education and culture, as well as other fields contributing to the democratization of the state. On May 2015, during the EaP Riga Summit, sharing the concerns and views of Armenia, the EU announced the restart of negotiations with Armenia around a new agreement. On December 7 of the same year, the negotiations started.

Armenia’s commitment towards European integration is based on rationally calibrated calculations of Armenian leadership and benefits the country derives from the cooperation with the EU. It is noteworthy that the EU is the main trading partner for Armenia, accounting for around 29.7% of the country’s total trade.2 The EU’s financial aid to Armenia for 2014-2017 amounts to 140-170 million Euros and is focused on private sector development and reforms of the public administration and the judicial system. In 2005, the Bologna Process was initiated in Armenia; this became an impetus for significant reforms and promotion of European standards in higher education. On May 2016, Armenia joined the EU’s research and innovation funding program, the Horizon 2020 project, which gives

1 See INSS Head Hayk Kotanjian’s interview at the session of the Integration Club under the chairmanship of the Speaker of the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the RF Valentina Matvienko, MGIMO University, Moscow, 18.11.2013: http://vmeste-rf.tv/news/29531.do
the researchers from Armenia an opportunity to work with the EU in the fields of research and innovation.\(^1\)

Considering the initial steps towards negotiations around signing the AA with Armenia were taken in a different geopolitical situation, the signing of a reconfigured agreement requires sober consideration from both sides to more efficiently meet the present and emerging challenges and opportunities. In these terms, the ENP Review, adopted by the European Commission in November 2015, recalibrates the EU’s policy towards its neighborhood and deems to be critical in guiding the formulation of a new policy between the EU and Armenia.\(^2\)

According to the Joint Communication of the European Commission on the ENP Review, “the consultation showed a very widespread wish to see security given a stronger place in the ENP, in order to make partner countries more resilient against threats they currently experience. The new focus on security will open up a wide range of new areas of cooperation under ENP”.\(^3\)

One area of cooperation in the security dimension is offered to develop within the framework of the EU’s Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP). It is envisaged to actively use this platform for the exchange of best practices and capacity building. The CSDP is a catalyst for the development of both civilian and military capacities for crisis management and prevention of conflicts internationally. Thus, the ENP Review considers it as an instrument for promoting the participation of partner countries in the EU’s missions and operations.

As for now, under the roof of the CSDP, the EU is actively engaged in about 20 missions and operations in Europe, Asia and Africa, including the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean.\(^4\) It should be noted, that among the EaP countries Georgia, Ukraine and Moldova already have their contribution to the EU missions and operations. The EU also established operational-level cooperation with Russia, and crisis management is considered to be an important pillar for the further development of security cooperation between the sides.\(^5\)

Some European experts think that the participation of third countries in the CSDP operations is considered to be mutually beneficial. Non-EU states with

---

\(^1\) European Commission - Press release, Armenia joins Horizon 2020 to work with EU in research and innovation, 19.05.2016: http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/armenia/eu_armenia/political_relations/index_en.htm


\(^3\) Ibid.


varying geopolitical agendas and capacities contribute to missions for different reasons ranging from purely “security interests and the acquisition of operational experience to broader institutional motives”.¹

In this regard, along with the further development of the traditional fields of bilateral cooperation between Armenia and the EU, the engagement of the Armenian peacekeepers into the EU-led missions and operations seems to be a new and interesting sphere. This can contribute to the peace and security globally, deepen the relations between the sides, enhance their peacekeeping capabilities and provide Armenia with the possibility to develop the interoperability and compatibility of Armenian peacekeeping forces with partner states in Europe.

Being engaged in international peacekeeping operations for more than ten years with the constant increase of venues and the number of troops during this period, Armenia has accumulated an impressive experience in peacekeeping operations and attaches great importance to fostering its peacekeeping capabilities.

In 2001, Armenia signed a Memorandum with the UN in New York to join the peacekeeping system of the Organization, after which the process of building the Armenian peacekeeping forces was launched.² Skilled commanders with considerable military experience have been appointed to lead Peacekeeping Forces and represent Armenia through this unique division within the Armed Forces in various international platforms, taking into account not only the important military but also political role peacekeeping plays in international relations.

The first six-month rotation-based mission of the Armenian peacekeeping forces started in 2004 with the involvement of the detachment from 34 soldiers in the Greek unit within the NATO-led Kosovo Force (KFOR). So far, about 70 Armenian soldiers have yearly participated in the mission with about 800 being engaged in total.

The following deployment venue for the Armenian peacekeeping forces became Iraq. In January 2005, with the approval of the Armenian National Assembly, a group of 46 servicemen from doctors, field engineers and drivers joined the US-led Multi-National Force – Iraq (MNF-I) to participate in the post-war recovery process in Iraq under Polish-led multinational division. The mission ended in October 2008 with the total number of the Armenian peacekeepers having served reaching 368.

Since January 2010, the Armenian peacekeeping forces have been engaged in another NATO-led security mission under the German command – the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan. By deploying 80 addi-

² On August 23 of 2001 the Peacekeeping battalion of the Armenian Armed Forces was formed, which was transformed into the brigade on 1 October of 2007. See A. Simonyan. “The Brigade of the RA Armed Forces’ Peacekeeping Forces”. Working Notebooks 1-2 (33-34): 2015.
tional personnel in 2011, the number of troops engaged in ISAF reached 120.\textsuperscript{1} Since April 2014, groups of 56 peacekeepers have been sent to serve in Afghanistan.

The NATO-Secretary General’s Special Representative for the Caucasus and Central Asia, James Appathurai, expressed his gratitude for Armenia’s involvement in NATO-led peacekeeping operations during his meeting with the President of Armenia Serzh Sargsyan in early 2015.\textsuperscript{2}

In 2015, the Armenian soldiers from the Peacekeeping Brigade impressively accomplished earning the combat readiness certification by passing the evaluation of the Operational Capabilities Concept of NATO’s Partnership for Peace program. This solidifies the capabilities of Armenia to support NATO peacekeeping operations.\textsuperscript{3}

The next venue for the Armenian peacekeepers became Lebanon. 32 Armenian peacekeepers joined the Italian contingent of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) to serve under the Italian command.\textsuperscript{4} Getting involved in the first UN-led mission, as a UN member state, Armenia once more manifested its commitment to contributing to the global peace and security.

In May 2015, the Armenian government adopted an official decision to deploy peacekeeping forces to the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). These Armenian peacekeepers will be under French command.\textsuperscript{5} As for now an Armenian officer serves in MINUSMA.

As previously mentioned, Armenia considers peacekeeping not only as a field of purely military cooperation, but also as a platform for establishing academic-political dialogue internationally to promote peace and security in different regions of the world. In this connection, Armenia’s accession to Partners’ Committee of the International Forum for the Challenges of Peace Operations in October 2014, represented by the Institute for National Strategic Studies (INSS) of the Defense Ministry, should particularly be mentioned. The Committee is the governing body of the Forum that unites representatives from all partner organizations of the Forum.

\textsuperscript{1} Relations with Armenia. http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_48893.htm

\textsuperscript{2} President receives James Appathurai, Nato Secretary-General’s Special Representative for the Caucasus and Central Asia, 15.01.2015: http://www.president.am/en/press-release/item/2015/01/15/President-Serzh-Sargsyan-meeting-with-NATO-representative-James-Appathurai/

\textsuperscript{3} Armenian Peacekeeping forces earn NATO combat readiness certification, 24.09.2015: https://www.dvidshub.net/news/177149/armenian-peacekeeping-forces-earn-nato-combat-readiness-certification#.V1lG09J971W


\textsuperscript{5} Peacekeeping Contributor Profile: Armenia, 14.12.2015: http://www.providingforpeacekeeping.org/2015/12/14/peacekeeping-contributor-profile-armenia/
The Forum that unites 22 countries, including the five permanent members of the UN and four EU member states, is one of the most prestigious peacekeeping organizations of the world and the collective author of the UN Peacekeeping Strategy. It pools the expertise of policymakers, practitioners and experts from all over the world to formulate peacekeeping policies.

One of the important achievements of Armenia and the INSS, in particular, was the organization of the Annual 2015 Challenges International Forum in Yerevan. More than 100 highly qualified international experts and practitioners from Challenges Forum Partner Organizations, from the UN and civil society took part in the dialogue that culminated in the development of the Forum’s Annual Report.\(^1\) The UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon emphasized the importance of organizing the Forum in Armenia\(^2\).

This successful experience led Armenia to become the co-organizer of “The UN Peacekeeping Operations 2020” International Conference hosted by the Forum in New York in May 2016.

To sum up, the ENP Review opens new opportunities for closer cooperation between the EU and its neighbors. Given security’s central role in this policy document and Armenia’s impressive experience in peacekeeping, the participation of the Armenian Peacekeeping Forces in the EU-led crisis management operations seems to be an interesting domain for furthering bilateral cooperation. Moreover, as the strategic ally of Russia, the co-founder of the CSTO and the partner of the US, the EU and NATO, Armenia can also play an important role in establishing a dialogue between different power centers that will foster regional and global peace and security.

References:

INSS Head Hayk Kotanjian’s interview at the session of the Integration Club under the chairmanship of the Speaker of the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the RF Valentina Matvienko, MGIMO University, Moscow, 18.11.2013: http://vmeste-rf.tv/news/29531.do


Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. Review


\(^2\) President Meets With UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon, 30.09.2015: http://www.president.am/en/press-release/item/2015/09/30/President-Serzh-Sargsyan-meeting-with-Ban-Ki-Mun/


President receives James Appathurai, Nato Secretary-General’s Special Representative for the Caucasus and Central Asia, 15.01.2015: http://www.president.am/en/press-release/item/2015/01/15/President-Serzh-Sargsyan-meeting-with-NATO-representative-James-Appathurai/


President Meets With UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon, 30.09.2015: http://www.president.am/en/press-release/item/2015/09/30/President-Serzh-Sargsyan-meeting-with-Ban-Ki-Mun/
Abstract
The chapter describes an approach for comprehensive understanding of hybrid threats and challenges that have to be adequately coped for effective meeting of future security environment evolution in the EaP region. Whilst the proposed ideas are related to foreseeing the results that are difficult for direct validation, a plausible future context understanding is practically assigned. Both social and technological aspects are considered in this sense, implementing joint modelling solution of expert beliefs and selected reference results. The outreached findings are further explored for sustainability, using an ad-hoc probabilistic validation and interactive verification with human-in-the-loop active role.

Key words: Eastern Partnership, hybrid threats, modeling, foreseeing, validation & verification.

1. The Eastern Partnership Wider Context
The present geopolitical evolution of EU is inevitably producing some new challenges to Eastern Partnership (EaP) initiative progress. From one hand the Ukrainian crisis is a main enabler of this and from another the complexity of Post-Soviet space is obviously generating numerous ‘unknowns’ in this context. Apart of this the EaP leaderships are claiming sympathies to both EU and NATO democratic values that in the moment is in strong contradiction with the regional Russian policymakers’ objectives. These in practice provoke, as a whole, social hybrid threatening and general instability that was very recently observed in Armenia, against the old-fashioned Post-Soviet system, similar to other EaP member states like: Ukraine and Georgia, but still excluding from this serious dispute Azerbaijan, Belarus & Moldova.

---

1 Prof. Zlatogor Minchev is director of Joint Training Simulation & Analysis Center, head of IT for Security Department, Institute of ICT, Institute of Mathematics & Informatics, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia 1113, Acad. Georgi Bonchev Str., Bl. 25A, Tel.: +3592 979 6631, E-mail: zlatogor@bas.bg
Unfortunately, it should be noted that between EaP countries and their neighbours there also exists some old semi-frozen conflicts like: Nagorno-Karabakh, Transnistria, Abkhazia and South Ossetia that are natural sources of internal instability for the region. Beyond the wider context, the overall migration pressure in EU, mainly emerging at the moment from the Syrian crisis and Arab Spring long term effects, is also producing a negative wave to EU, together with the expected future complications in the economic situation and the resulting trends for exiting the union, recently marked with UK Brexit referendum results.

In this sense, the Eurasian SCO extension is also having a significant regional effect to EaP as possible both economic and military alternative, complicated with the new Russian-Turkey friendly activities after the unsuccessful coup d’état and some tensions in this sense with the USA officials.

Regarding this the post Warsaw Summit plans for augmenting the presence of Alliance in South-East Europe, due to the Ukrainian continuous military problems with Russia and the new NATO strategic ideas of nuclear weapons possible predislocation after the Summit for achieving effective deterrence are also a potential source of hybrid threats for the EaP geopolitical future.

These socio-political trends need to be taken with great attention, especially to EU political support for EaP initiative and the real short and long term benefits that could emerge for the member states.

The outlined tensions and benefits for the EaP wider context should be examined in nowadays radicalization and terrorism trends that have different origin, gaining instability and uncertainty that are threatening the overall environment.

Moreover the new digital age is setting multiple ambiguities and giving numerous opportunities to the wider EaP context, using e-innovations: modern e-environment of governance, living, work and production with various e-services to note: real-time multimedia information, spreading with fast mobile Internet

---


access, cloud services, social networking and smart devices everyday integration. Though rather convenient, this technological privilege is also forming a new mixed reality of virtual and real 'things' that could provoke: critical e-infrastructure cyberattacks, false impression, disinformation, espionage, social engineering, artificially generated news, monitored blogs and thus – hybrid threats to the civil society and governance security, skillfully and anonymously controlled by state and non-state actors as a result of the new socio-technological and cultural clashes. Further on the chapter will address these hybrid threats aggregated model interpretation and its follow-up implementation as a foreseeing base in the wider EaP context. This will support a better understanding of future security problems and the establishment of more resilient society in the new digital 21 century.

2. EaP Hybrid Threats Modelling

The idea behind the modelling implementation in exploring hybrid threats for security was initially marked in 1 and further extended in 2. Basically it is combining expert beliefs with literature data in a complex system causality interpretation, trying to mix both social and technological entities for achieving threats detailed understanding. For the present study, an aggregated system model was developed, using a generalization of the high-level expert discussions during ‘The Eastern Partnership and Civil Security Issues of the Member States: Past Realities and Present Trends’ event (see Section III.2). Additionally, other studies of EaP literature data 3, and the wider technological trends recent survey findings up to year 2020, among more than 400 academia, universities and industry representatives 4 were used. The results were summarized, using I-SCIP-SA, v.3 5 software environment for the generalized EaP wider context, omitting specific details of the


countries for achieving politically neutral, holistic assessment and giving accent to studied threats hybrid nature from socio-technological perspective.

The accomplished approach is utilizing Chen’s ‘Entity – Relationship’ interpretation\(^1\), implementing a causality modus between every two entities, creating a holistic model, after the ideas of Vester for discrete system representation\(^2\). ‘Entities’ are presented as labeled round rectangles, while ‘Relationships’ are marked with weighted bi-directional headed arrows. The resulting entities classification is provided, using expert based evaluation of Influence/Dependence relations weights (defined as a single or multiple array values and measured in percentages from the interval \([0, 1]\)): Influence – \(x\) (feed-forward), Dependence – \(y\) (feed-backward) and their relation – Sensitivity – \(z\) in a ‘3D Sensitivity Diagram – SD’ with four sectors, following \(x\) and \(y\) values: ‘Buffering’ – green, ‘Active’ – red, ‘Passive’ – blue, ‘Critical’ – yellow. The model \(z\) values define additional sub-classification of: active \((z > 0)\) and passive \((z < 0)\) entities in each of the four sectors from the SD. All entities from the model are visualized in SD 3D cube with indexed balls. The practical application of I-SciP-SA, v.3 environment system modelling and classification, concerning hybrid threats exploration in EaP wider context, produced as a result of socio-tech clashes in the new digital age is shown on Figure 1.


This, in practice, could be explained as EaP socio-tech clashes with priority granted to: social entities, actively supported from new e-reality and innovations, used by mediators (third-part players) in multiple cooperation activities, combined with simultaneous sources of hidden risks, related to the necessity of digital space establishment of: e-regulations (regarding digital world daily life) and protection of the critical e-infrastructure (encompassing vital systems and services in modern digital societies), together with non-state actors observation and control (e.g. adversaries & criminals deterrence, counterterrorism, etc.).

What is important also to note here are the expert understandings for absence of cultural and values clashes, in general, for the wider EaP context on the background of: critical social dynamics fluctuations (e.g. colour revolutions, rebels, frozen conflicts, global terrorism, migration, etc.), public sector overall crisis

---

and weak current governance model population feelings, due to: low economic standard, corruption presence, political disorientation and naïve expectations for fast and easy social reforms and rapid economic growth.

The presented model findings are just a snapshot of expert beliefs generalization that need also to be studied in future dynamic evolution context – a research challenge that will be examined in the next section.

Figure 1. Hybrid threats system exploration model, based on socio-tech clashes in I-SCIP-SA, v.3 environment (a) and resulting sensitivity diagram (b) for the wider EaP context.
3. Model Trends Foreseeing

The outlined model classification results in Section II, though reasonable in general are static. What in fact is important to study further is the dynamic evolution of the socio-tech clashes, producing as a result new hybrid threats. In this sense some preliminary findings of social processes evolution could be used as a starting base\(^1\), \(^2\). The key moment is to properly validate and possibly verify the obtained trends dynamics. In this study a dual approach, implementing: (i) probabilistic validation, combining expert beliefs with machine simulation and additional (ii) interactive gaming verification with human-in-the-loop active role, is proposed.

III.1. Probabilistic Validation

Extrapolation of future behavior trends, concerning complex social and tech-social systems models is a rather arguable research field, due to multiple uncertainties, mostly originating from the human factor. The present approach is based on the expert beliefs, noted by Forrester\(^3\) further extended in ‘Limits to Growth’ with recent update\(^4\), and the general assumption of complex systems behavior dynamics studying, ranging from growth (both positive & negative) towards equilibrium or instability (chaos)\(^5\). Following some already noted other authors’ ideas of social systems cyclic nature\(^6\), these behavior changes could also be consider and in the broader dynamic sense with multiple time horizons. In practice, the already marked modelling classification (see Figure 1b) is used as system model behavior objectives growth area, combined with probabilistic distribution foreseeing support, following\(^7\). The distribution shape parameters modification could have different nature but more interesting is the chance for possible results extrapolation, due to this change.

In other words: to move a model entity from one SD class to another, following a probability trend shape, defined over certain interrelations, using expert be-

---


\(^2\) Dark, K. The Waves of Time: Long-Term Change and International Relations (History and Politics of the 20th Century: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016


The outlined ideas are graphically illustrated on Figure 2, for the hybrid threats model, ‘Non-State Actors’ – ‘6’ entity (see Figure 1) and desired objective (positive influence growth, marked with arrow repositioning ‘Non-State Actors’ from Passive to Critical model SD class, Panel I), together with respective other model entities (‘E-Innovations’ – ‘10’, ‘Social Dynamics’ – ‘5’, ‘Public Sector’ – ‘11’, ‘Governance’ – ‘1’) relations’ influence probabilities, both: a priori (using initial expert beliefs, Figure 2a) & a posteriori (after a five-years or steps) numerical simulation (Figure 2b, Panel II).

The results from Figure 2, though limited, are outlining several important findings, regarding the objective for increased influence (in next five years) validation of ‘Non-State Actors’ entity: (i) the expert probabilistic objectives (see Panel II-a) are giving positive growth to: ‘Social Dynamics’ & ‘Governance’, combined with sustainable one of ‘E-Innovations’ and negative towards ‘Public Sector’; (ii) the numerical simulations from Panel II-b are slightly rearranging the results, giving the highest probability of expert foresees of: ‘Social Dynamics’ – 0.83, ‘Governance’ – 0.68, ‘Public Sector’ – 0.64, while ‘E-Innovations’ – 0.34 are less probable to be significantly influenced by ‘Non-State Actors’ in the next five years.

(iii) It is also important to note here some changes, due to ‘Non-State Actors’ – ‘6’ influence growth from model system perspective (see Figure 2, Panel I), except the major change of its SD class from Passive to Critical (marked with arrow, after the expert prognosis), but transforming some entities class sensitivity nature as follows: entity ‘6’ from Passive to Active, ‘Social Dynamics’ - ‘5’ & ‘Public Sector’ - ‘11’ from Active to Passive. These validation details have significant social value and could be further studied for multiple scenario sets, including the external sources of influence towards: corruption, criminals and foreign state actors unofficial, hybrid influence in wider EaP region. However the proposed ideas are lacking, in general, an ability to meet more complex changes and uncertainties understanding, either not included in the system model or having origin that requires new entities or relations involvement or removing.

So, in the next paragraph an approach, based on interactive verification with human factor active role, was decided to be added for comprehensive understanding of proposed foreseeing approach.

**III.2. Interactive Verification**

The verification process of future foresees, based on interactive exercises, is a well-known technique that is widely used in the security field independently (table-top exercises, discussions, round tables, forums, etc.¹) or as a human &

---

technological mix (e.g. training lab polygon observations¹ & Computer Assisted eXercises²).

It is important to note that the accomplished approach is with holistic and consistent objectives, combining expert based system modelling and assessment with probabilistic validation decision support in a plausible scenario context. Ad-


ditionally, as the human factor has a rather significant role, a suitable psycho-physiological monitoring could also be added. Being rather complex by nature socio-tech hybrid threats are difficult to be comprehensively explored without human-in-the-loop active role. In this study two social and a technological interactive verification examples are briefly outlined. At the end of this section in support of expert foresees, selected (Section II & Section III.1) results verification game feed-backs are given.

The first example is CYREX 2016 – an international training exercise with more than 30 participants from Balkans, organized by Joint Training Simulation & Analysis Center – JTSAC on February 27, 2016 in Plovdiv University ‘Paisii Hilendarski’ with industrial, IFIP & NGO support.

The event took approximately four hours and used a complex hybrid interactive simulation in mixed reality environment, encompassing: multimedia avatars, advanced communications, multiple cloud services (social networks, chat, storage), smart gadgets, augmented reality QrS, hidden encryptions, malware and DDoS attacks. The exercise explored industrial espionage risks, due to insider based social engineering and hacktivism motivation for achieving digital society resilience, giving feedback for future technological trends & security challenges.

The second gaming support was from JTSAC Security Challenges 2020 Table-Top Exercise ‘New NATO Cyber, Social & Economic Security Foresees 2020’ on hybrid threats identification in NATO security context, organized by JTSAC during a weeklong 3-rd NATO Summer School in Bulgaria – ‘NATO Challenges & Concerns on the Eve of 2016 Summit’ in the period May 30 – June 5, 2016 in the town of Smolyan by the Bulgarian Euro-Atlantic Youth Club with more than 40 participants, together with the lectures from 17 countries from Europe & Western Balkans, both NATO members and partners. The main results from the exercise were focused on hybrid threats evolution in the context of future military conflicts, social dynamic and economic challenges for the Alliance.

The selected results from previous two events were further implemented in the wider EaP context, during the discussions of EaP International Conference 2016 ‘The Eastern Partnership and Civil Security Issues of the Member States: Past Realities and Present Trends’ event with more than 30 participants (organized in Bucharest during June 28 – July 1, 2016) with representatives from 10 countries.

---


in the wider EaP region by Center for East-European and Asian Studies & Școala Națională de Studii Politice și Administrative.\(^1\)

**Figure 3.** Selected moments of CYREX 2016 (a), JTSAC Security Challenges 2020 Table-Top Exercise ‘New NATO Cyber, Social & Economic Security Foresees 2020’ (b) and EaP International Conference 2016 ‘The EaP and Civil Security Issues of the Member States: Past Realities and Present Trends’ (c).

Selected generalized results of three verification events for hybrid threats evolution trends, emerging from the foreseen socio-tech clashes within the next five years (following III.1 validation prognosis findings) are graphically summarized in Figure 4.

**6. Discussion**

Evidently the comprehensive and proper near future understanding of modern hybrid threats evolution in the wider EaP context is a rather challenging task, especially for the quite dynamic geopolitical character of the region.

The proposed methodological approach is suitable enough for neutrally extracting and adequately using the available expert beliefs and objectives in a holistic system environment for successful achieving a plausible research landscape. The outlined results aim is to raise the policy makers and analyzers attention towards critical and hidden hybrid threats components that require adequate studying as potential evolutionary foresees.

Being complicated from both social and digital factors, numerous foresees are expected to be studied for the research context, to mention: state, non-state actors, mutual conflicts and contradictions. These are easily emerging into hybrid war concept new mutation. That also change results into continuous local military conflicts and disinformation flooding in new mixed digital reality. At the same time it is targeting the broad e-critical infrastructure, and encompassing the rich modern quality of life landscape, together with adequate governance necessity.

This evolution is growing as well, due to the political and economic drivers and could provoke a strong negative influence to the region economic growth, social dynamics and Euro-Atlantic security partnerships strengthening. Further on, the threats have also to be considered and in the context of other armed forces initiative establishment. Besides, to note cooperation with EU, SCO or UN, suitable enough for successful countering the military part of the local problems at hand. Additional social regulation is necessary to be arranged and in the digital space for successful countering the information component of hybrid threats. Finally, though not quite promising, this EaP wider context foresees have to be taken with care. Minding the subjectiveness of expert opinions nature and being, at the same time, a preliminary alarm for possible further region destabilization that needs to be adequately met.
Acknowledgement

The presented study is partially supported by: Romanian National Authority for Scientific Research, CNCS – UEFISCDI, project number PN-II-ID-PCE-2011-3-1014. Special appreciation is also given to: Plovdiv University ‘Paisii Hilendarski’ as CYREX 2016 hosting institution and Bulgarian Euro-Atlantic Youth Club as main organizer of 3-rd NATO Summer School in Bulgaria – ‘NATO Challenges & Concerns on the Eve of 2016 Summit’.

References:


Zanotti, J. & Thomas, C. Turkey: Background and U.S. Relations in Brief, CRS Report, August 21, 2016, Available at: https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/R44000.pdf [Accessed 2 September 2016]


Dark, K. The Waves of Time: Long-Term Change and International Relations (History and Politics of the 20th Century: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016.


“In today’s world there is no way we can isolate ourselves from the outer world. We cannot “fence out” our problems. Europe needs to engage, inside our region and beyond. Engagement is our key, our core interest.” HR Federica Mogherini, at the EU Global Strategy Conference organized by EUISS and Real Institute Elcano, Barcelona, on 26/11/2015

1. The Geopolitical Context

The Black Sea is located between Europe to the West, the territories of the former-Soviet Union, and Asia Minor to the North and South respectively, and the

---

1 Director of Programs in Brussels, Center for East European and Eurasian Studies, Ph.D. Candidate at the NSPSPA
Caucasus to the East. Referred to as Pontus Euxinus in antiquity, the Black Sea has played an important economic and political role in the wider-region within which it is located for millennia. Its geopolitical importance has survived the ages, losing none of its significance during our present time. According to some opinions it is still, just as in the Nineteenth Century, the door to the heartland of Eurasia, the domination of which has eternally played a role in the struggle for global hegemony.

The realignment of geopolitical and security strategies in Eurasia during the last two decades has led to the “re-discovery” of one of the world’s most significant geostrategic areas. Securing access to new energy deposits from the Caspian and its potential links to the complex geopolitical games in the Middle East (most notably those related to Syria, Iran and Iraq) have heightened the strategic significance of the Wider Black Sea (WBS) in Western external policy thinking. Unfortunately, since the early 1990s, the region has been bogged down in a belt of protracted conflicts that could potentially threaten both European stability and energy supply, while trans-national crime and other asymmetric security threats are thriving.

Experts have noted the rise of the region’s “old powers”, Russia and Turkey, while arguing that prominent “external actors”, namely the United States and the EU, are seeing their roles increasingly reduced to mere monitors of the situation. While it can be argued that Russia and Turkey have for centuries served as the “gatekeepers” of power-politics in the WBS, their newfound zest for asserting their power in the region and beyond – particularly in the last decade or so – has resulted in medium-sized littoral countries, such as Bulgaria, and Romania having to re-consider their options in the new geopolitical environment. These trends go further down the power-chain, with other local regional actors including Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine, which are all directly involved in the “frozen conflicts”, re-balancing their policies against those of the key regional actors, with a view to placing themselves in tune with any potential wave of geopolitical change in the highly fluid and dynamic regional environment.

Regionalism in the WBS has been hampered by the lack of consensus over its geographical definition, as well as by political, security, economic, and cultural differences among regional states, which undermined the development of a regional identity. The lack of regional strategic leadership was also obvious and it has been related to a large extent to the current shifts in the global and regional patterns of power.

2. The Geopolitical Confrontation with Russia

In a region where – due to its strategic significance – a comprehensive regional dialogue and cooperation between all local and external actor-stakeholders

---

would be arguably more necessary than ever, sometimes belligerent Powerpolitik appeared to have won the order of the day.

The Ukrainian conflict, started in December 2013, has signaled the end of cooperative security, and the shift to a new stage of evolution of the European system. This new stage will be most likely defined by a geopolitical confrontation between the West and Russia, which seems to reshape the relations within the post-Cold War European regional system.

Many Western strategic thinkers have generally perceived the rejection of the Western democratic values by the Russian president Vladimir Putin as the main driving force of this confrontation. However, ideology is just one of the drivers of the current confrontation between Russia and the West. Other major disagreements persist on the structure and operation of the post-Cold War European security architecture (including the interpretation of the OSCE Decalogue, the management of the frozen conflicts, and the implementation of the arms control agreements- in particular the CFE agreement), as well as on how to solve the dilemma of the post-Soviet states on European vs Eurasian integration.

Over the last decade, many international observers have noted a deepening gap between perceptions in the West and in Russia on democracy, and individual rights and freedoms. Russia and the West seem to have embarked on another ideological competition, resembling that during the Cold War. The difference is that Moscow is now supporting a sort of anti-Americanism consisting of a mixture of state-based nationalism and autocratic traditionalism against Western support for democracy and individual freedoms across Eurasia. However, the current geopolitical competition between Russia and the West is likely to worsen the state of democracy in this geopolitical area in the years to come.

Russia has become a problem for Europe since the OSCE system has failed to accomplish its tasks in the post-Cold War era, while Moscow has sought to impose its own security arrangements in Europe. NATO and the EU brought peace to former Yugoslavia in the 1990s, while the OSCE had continuously failed to provide effective conflict resolution in Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Nagorno-Karabakh and Transnistria. Moscow has simply ignored the OSCE Decalogue in Ukraine/Crimea and in Georgia, while seeking to justify itself through alluding to others who have arguably done the same (i.e. NATO in Kosovo).

The chronic persistence of the protracted conflicts might be also seen against the backdrop of Russia’s recent refusal to accept OSCE rules. A parallel might be drawn between the Donbas conflict and the protracted conflicts in the South Caucasus and Transnistria. In all these conflicts, Russia tacitly prevented a peaceful solution to the conflict, while formally playing the role of peacemaker/provider of humanitarian relief. Moscow might continue to do so until a more favorable geopolitical configuration of the European security system is agreed with the West. Alternatively, it may implement the policy of the *fait accompli*, whereby
it imposes its own geopolitical plans, irrespective of what the OSCE and its other members are saying or doing. The Russians have already played out this scenario in Crimea, and are striving to have it repeated in Donbas, although, this time, Moscow is trying to operate under the cover of the Normandy Group and the Minsk Agreements.

The steps taken by Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan to create a Eurasian integration project have spurred suspicions in the West about an emerging geopolitical project aiming to re-build the Soviet Union (or the Tsarist Empire) into a new institutional outfit. Consequently, a Western myth of the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) as a means to “re-Sovietize” Eurasia has emerged. This myth has not been supported by the realities of the EEU so far. However, according to most experts, the project of the EEU might be evolving towards deeper political integration in the future.

In the views of many experts, Turkey is emerging as a regional power. It has not yet become one for a host of reasons, including limited institutions for managing regional affairs, a political base that is not yet prepared to view Turkey as a major power or support regional interventions, and a region that is not yet prepared to view Turkey as a beneficial, stabilizing force. “At present, Turkish strategy finds itself in a transitional stage. It is no longer locked into its Cold War posture as simply part of an alliance system, nor has it built the foundation of a mature regional policy. That being said, geopolitical factors such as instability to its south, the rise of an Iranian sphere of influence, the deepening of Russian influence in the Caucasus, and the likelihood that at some point the United States might change its Middle East policy again and try to draw Turkey into its coalition, all allude to the view that there is no particular light yet visible at the end of the transitional tunnel.”

While the West cannot prevent Turkey from playing a more prominent regional role, Ankara should also admit that the political stability and economic growth fueling the last decade of Turkish prosperity were underpinned by the democratic and socio-economic reforms inspired by Turkey’s EU candidate status, and by the security blanket offered by its NATO membership. Turkey’s strategic relations with the EU and with the US are essential to Ankara’s aspirations for regional leadership. As E. Alessandri and J. Walker have put it: “Turkey’s increasingly strong performance in recent years has led some to think that a resurgent Ankara could take on an ever-larger share of the responsibility for governance in the vast expanse of the former Ottoman lands it once ruled. This so-called “neo-Ottoman” dream, serving Turkey’s rising regional ambitions while relieving Western countries at a time of economic weakness and shifting U.S. attention to the East, has been a re-occurring theme in Washington and other Western capitals.

---

Turkey may have the greatest future potential as a regional player, but it needs the United States and the EU now more than ever. Simultaneously, the reverse is also true for its transatlantic partners.”

On 15 November 2015, during their meeting on the margins of the G20 summit in Antalya, Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin, greeted each other in their normal cordial manner as they began planning the next steps in forging a more than a decade long strategic partnership. Nine days later, their world turned on its head. Turkey shot down a Russian SU-24 bomber operating in the Syrian theatre on 24 November, and the two leaders were instantly at each other’s throats: “Everyone should respect the right of Turkey to defend its borders,” said Erdogan. Putin replied with all of his usual color: “the shooting down of a Russian jet by Turkey is a stab in the back committed by accomplices of terrorists”. The subsequent military measures and sanctions imposed by Russia have further raised bilateral tensions, apparently shattering mutual trust, and shaking the Russian-Turkish strategic partnership. However, at the end of June 2016, after president Erdogan expressed his “regret and sorrow” in a letter to his Russian counterpart addressing the downing of the Russian jet and the killing of its pilots, the Turkish-Russian relations appeared to return to where they have been left on 24 November 2015. “The letter states, in particular, that Russia is a friend to Turkey and a strategic partner, with whom Turkish authorities would not wish to spoil relations.”

The WBS region is at a turning point: is it to remain a closed Nineteenth Century type of regional space dominated by the two “old powers re-emerging” which would make and enforce arbitrary political and security arrangements? Or will it move into the Twenty First Century by opening itself up to Europeanization through free trade, the knowledge revolution and democratic development? Against this complex and deeply worrying regional background, how could a revised European security engagement in the WBS, featuring the Eastern Partnership at its center stage, look like?

3. The Current Role of the EU in the WBS

The EU is a relative newcomer in joining a range of external, as well as local actors seeking to project themselves as regional powers in the WBS area. In April 2007, the European Commission produced its first substantive policy document relating to engagement with the Black Sea on a regional basis, the so called “Black Sea Synergy: A New Regional Initiative”. Although this document was not the first

---


EU paper making reference to the Black Sea region in policy terms, given the fact that its promulgation was almost immediately preceded by the entry of Romania and Bulgaria into the EU (on January 1, 2007), it was immediately identified by experts as the announcement of the Union’s new Black Sea policy.

By the time the Black Sea Synergy (BSS) initiative was promulgated in 2007, Brussels had already a wide range of existing institutional instruments at its disposal relating to countries in the WBS regional vicinity, including the EU-Turkey accession talks, the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with the Russian Federation, and the (Eastern) European Neighborhood Policy (ENP), later turned into the Eastern Partnership, applied to Moldova, Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan. The BSS would essentially draw from this previous body of documents in order to further project EU policy into the region. The BSS should be seen as Brussels’ effort of spreading Europeanization – European rule of law and governance culture – into the newest territories which have come under the scope of the Union’s Eastern neighborhood. Energy has acted as a key driver for Brussels’ increasing engagement with the WBS, while the steady process of Europeanization in the context of the Union’s eastward expansion has provided both an instrumental and legal basis for strengthening the security of energy supply.

Now that some nine years have passed since the European Commission published the BSS Communication heralding Brussels’ contribution towards a Black Sea strategy, the scope for projection of EU policy into the region remains in flux. The BSS has helped clarify the fact that the EU has “put its hand on the table” and declared the intention to participate as an actor in one of wider Europe’s most important spaces of geopolitical and geo-economic competition. However, the projection of the process of Europeanization in the WBS got bogged down in the hard-nosed geopolitical realities which have dominated the history of the Black Sea for centuries. The EU has increasingly found itself in a position of having to react to events rather than showing leadership in the WBS. In this context, the European Commission’s BSS Communication of April 2007 currently appears to be little more than just an afterthought.

The “rise” of Turkey and Russia in the WBS region is increasingly a consequence of shifting strategic interests of the United States, as well as of EU’s turn towards itself, matched with lower appetite to deal with external issues which might currently look like less pressing than the evolving Arab uprisings. The “old powers re-emerging” will continue to shape the regional order in the WBS, in ways that might sometimes recall the old patterns of the Nineteenth century, as long as the West will remain complacent with its current role of mere monitor of the regional situation. Eventually, this trend might be inevitably leading towards growing regional instability and insecurity in the European Eastern neighborhood, given the Russian attraction for interventionism, and Turkey’s vital need to maintain an independent, multi-vector foreign and security policy. In addition,
the outcomes of conflicting Russian and Turkish policies in the Middle East have also spilled over in the WBS.

The Black Sea Synergy raised the level of EU engagement in the WBS, but it also highlighted its limitations. For example, while the EU has increasingly been seeking to project Europeanization into the WBS, the degree to which the European political and economic norms have established themselves in the region is questionable. Needless to say that, in case the current course is maintained, the prospects for the future are even gloomier. Therefore, the case for rethinking EU’s constructive and coordinated security engagement in the WBS became stronger than ever. To effectively respond the security challenges stemming from the region, the EU needs to become a regional player in the WBS willing and capable to engage on an equal footing with Turkey, Russia and the US. To that end, Europe should significantly raise its regional political and strategic profile, and it might need to adjust the scope and modalities for undertaking such a role against the regional interests and strategies of the “old powers re-emerging”. Effective dialogue and policy coordination, and, where possible, practical cooperation with the United States and NATO are necessary. However, much will depend on developments within the Eurozone, as well as upon the attitudes of key EU member states, namely France and Germany.

4. How Could a Revised EU Security Engagement Succeed in the WBS?

In terms of security policy, lessons learned over the recent years would suggest that a multilateral strategy for the WBS has become vital to the integrity, peace and security of the area. Moreover, such a strategy should underlie efforts to fully integrate the WBS into the globalization process, and open it up to free trade, the knowledge revolution and to further democratic development. What could be the main guidelines for a revised EU security engagement in the WBS?

4.1. The EU needs to be realistic about Russia and look forwards, not backwards

The EU might have to understand that being challenged by Russia as “the normative power” in the Eastern Neighborhood is not necessarily bad news for Europe’s future. The fact that Russia inspired itself, and tries to replicate the European institutions in line with the actual needs of, and consistent with the different political culture existing in, the republics from the post-Soviet space should be actually hailed by the Europeans as a sort of external validation of the European model for economic integration, which, in the context of the Euro crisis, is being questioned by many in Europe itself. The Russian proposal for building a Common Economic Space with the EU should be treated like a cooperative hand extended to Europe in finding the compromises required by the harmonization of the European and the Eurasian normative systems. On the other hand, current geopolitical realities show that Russia is turning from a “strategic partner” into a
“strategic challenge”\textsuperscript{1} for the EU. This has resulted in EU’s policy towards Russia being guided by five principles\textsuperscript{2}: 1) Full implementation of the Minsk agreements as a key element for any substantial change in bilateral relations; 2) Strengthening relations with the Eastern Partners and other neighbors, in particular in Central Asia; 3) Strengthening European Union’s resilience against potential security risks and threats emanating from Russia, in particular in view of energy security, hybrid threats and strategic communication; 4) The need for “selective engagement” with Russia, both on foreign policy issues, but also in other areas where there is a clear European Union’s interest; 5) Support for the Russian civil society and for people-to-people contacts and exchanges and policies that are related to that, with a particular view to the youth.

4.2. The EU needs to nurture Turkey’s cooperation for sustaining its initiatives in the Eastern Neighborhood

In spite of the well-known disagreements on issues such as the speed of Turkey’s European integration, and the status of Northern Cyprus, the EU and Turkey share common interests and interdependencies which could sustain closer cooperation in the shared neighborhoods. Relevant examples include a common interest to enable free movement of people, goods, services and capital, ultimately leading to economic integration and the opening of all closed borders in EU’s Eastern Neighborhood, and the interdependence stemming from the common vulnerability against the dependence on Russian energy supply, respectively. Positions on how to deal with the geopolitical challenges in the Middle East, and the potential spillover effects on the WBS are also much closer than ever. A friendly European hand extended to Turkey on issues related to such common interests and interdependencies might eventually result in opening up more widely the WBS regional processes towards European integration.

4.3. The EU needs to tackle the evolving challenges in the WBS in strategic coordination with the US, Turkey and Russia

Quadrilateral arrangements supporting the implementation of EU-US-Turkey-Russia strategic coordination should aim at targeting three main baskets: harmonizing values and related governance models; finding ways and means for effective conflict resolution; and maintaining the compatibility of the economic integration models and processes. These arrangements may have an institutional outfit or not. If they had an institutional framework, then they should also have

\textsuperscript{1} According to diplomatic sources that might be the new label on Russia of the EU Global Strategy to be presented by the HR for Foreign and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini, at the European Council of 28-29 June.

mechanisms for consultation and potential engagement of relevant international actors, including NATO, OSCE, the EEU, CSTO and the Council of Europe, so that they would be most inclusive against interested actors. If the choice was made for “on call” frameworks of dialogue and decision making at various levels (summits, ministerial or political directors meetings), then a Charter stipulating the key goals, objectives, principles and working methods should be agreed.

4.4. The EU needs to play a leading role in searching viable solutions to the protracted conflicts

On the one hand, the relevant knowledge of EU institutions about the protracted conflicts in the South Caucasus and in Transnistria should be enhanced, and a more creative thinking on the use of available instruments should be developed. On the other hand, the European External Action Service should be more involved in building up common positions of EU member states against the resolution of protracted conflicts. One may hardly talk of a genuine CFSP in the Eastern Neighborhood in the absence of a more assertive role of the EU in solving protracted conflicts in its neighborhood. Cooperation with other interested actors, such as the US, Russia, and Turkey is critical. The EU can tackle these conflicts more effectively, both in the post-conflict, and in the peace building phases.

4.5. The EU needs to revitalize its involvement in strengthening regionalism in the WBS

The Eastern Partnership was supposed to advance regional cooperation but, so far, it did little, if anything, to do so. According to the lessons learned in the Balkans in the first decade of the 2000’s, this approach should change on a medium to a longer term, as necessary and possible, if the EU was to capitalize on the benefits of regional cooperation through increasing the synergies of its own policies with regional initiatives. A reshaping of existing EU policy instruments with greater concerted emphasis on Black Sea regionalism will be critical, at that stage. Further, the EU may consider a more active dialogue with regional stakeholders, including an upgrading of the current levels of policy harmonization and coordination of their actions in the WBS with relevant regional international organizations, such as the BSEC.

5. The Needed Adaptation of the Eastern Partnership to Current Geopolitical Realities

On 7 May 2009, the EU summit with its Eastern European Partners (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, and Ukraine) in Prague launched the Eastern Partnership with a view to developing a specific Eastern European dimension of the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP). It aimed at creating conditions for accelerating political association and further economic in-
egration of the six former Soviet countries. Concluding new Association Agreements, establishing Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas, developing Comprehensive Institution-Building programs, supporting the mobility of citizens and visa liberalization were deemed as key elements to meeting those ends. The Eastern Partnership has also aimed at further promoting stability and multilateral confidence building, in particular by seeking peaceful settlements to “frozen” conflicts, and by helping partner countries developing closer ties among themselves.

Why did the Eastern Partnership exacerbate Russian pressure on EU’s Eastern partners aimed to push them into unwanted choices between European and Eurasian integration? And why did Moscow perceive the Eastern Partnership as a path to a zero sum game with the EU? That is because what the EU perceived as a purely technical, norms setting process of modernization, it has been seen by others (i.e. Russians, and potentially other regional powers) as a geopolitical process because of its wide-ranging consequences: while standards create legislation, and legislation shapes political and economic interactions, defining common standards eventually becomes an effective means for building geopolitical identities.

One big mistake by the Ukrainians (and not only by them) was that they thought of the conflict on their territory exclusively through a geopolitical lens: go West, or go East. This has been a problem for the Ukrainian identity for many years in the post-Cold War. Unfortunately, the globalist view on Ukraine has utterly receded, particularly after the start of the Ukrainian conflict in 2014. How could Ukraine as one sovereign and independent state respond the challenges posed by the process of economic globalization? Again, in most experts’ views, geopolitics trumped globalism for most viewed Ukraine either in the EU or in the EEU. The true revenge of globalism over geopolitics in Ukraine (and elsewhere in the post-Soviet space) is due to come when Ukrainians will start to see their country as a key strategic partner of both the EU and the EEU. Perhaps, peace in Ukraine might eventually come on that basis. Until then, it will probably be for the military to lead in addressing the conflict enshrined in the post-Cold War Ukrainian identity.

Frankly speaking, the EU can’t be exonerated of geopolitical responsibilities just because it was unable to have them formally assumed. On the contrary, the lack of transparency on its geopolitical intentions in the Eastern neighborhood has been interpreted as a hidden attempt to undermine the interests of rival regional powers. Therefore, Brussels should assume full geopolitical responsibility for its Eastern neighborhood (and not only for Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, as it currently seems inclined to) if it was to succeed in meeting the objectives of the Eastern Partnership. Otherwise, the Union could hardly overcome the “current clash of European norms and geopolitical realities”.

---

1 St. Keil, “At Vilnius, the EU Must Reconcile Norms with Realism”, German Marshall Fund of the United States, “Transatlantic Take” Series, 27 November 2013
A more pragmatic Eastern Partnership focused on key EU regional priorities such as trade, security and energy, may revive EU’s relations with all Eastern Partnership states, and may save this major EU initiative from potential ineffectiveness or even irrelevance. However, those Eastern Partners who strive for democratic development should continue to receive EU support proportional with their needs and proved willingness to reform. Enhanced coordination between the EEAS and the Commission is also indispensable to its further successful implementation.

The geopolitical perspective on the Eastern Partnership could recommend effective ways to compensate for EU’s weakening soft power across the European neighborhood, hence for its decreasing political influence and economic attractiveness, in the aftermath of the Euro crisis. It might provide, for example, that maintaining the Eastern partners onboard of the European integration process, while preserving their independence, national unity and internal stability would require the EU to learn how to work with Turkey and Russia, rather than how to counter or exclude them.

The Eastern Partnership might eventually enable EU-Russia “selective engagement” on harmonizing the European and the Eurasian integration systems in the common neighborhood. In effect, measures to harmonize the European and the Eurasian integration projects might also revitalize regional economic cooperation in the common neighborhood, which would be in the best interest of Turkey and the regional post-Soviet states facing the dilemma of European vs. Eurasian integration. Eventually, the Eastern Partnership might be opening opportunities for further regional integration in highly sensitive areas of the common neighborhood, such as the South Caucasus, where protracted conflicts are still raging.

Finally, as the Armenian decision to shift focus from European to Eurasian integration has proved, the protracted conflicts in the South Caucasus and in Transnistria do undermine efforts to implement the objectives of the Eastern Partnership. The Eastern Partnership might therefore envisage measures for conflict management and resolution, which may help overcoming the chronic deadlock in which they have been muddling through since the end of the Cold War. For example, it might provide for better regional strategic coordination of the existing crisis management mechanisms; strengthen the regional ownership of the peace processes, in particular through the formulation of a joint post-conflict regional vision; and counter the fears of local actors of Russian-imposed solutions.

References:

Emiliano Alessandri and Joshua Walker, “The Missing Transatlantic Link: Trilateral Cooperation in the Post-Ottoman Space”, May 2012, in GMF Analysis on Turkey


St. Keil, “At Vilnius, the EU Must Reconcile Norms with Realism”, German Marshall Fund of the United States, “Transatlantic Take” Series, 27 November 2013

THE ROLE OF ROMANIA IN THE ENP:
EXPECTATIONS FROM UKRAINE

Sergiy Gerasymchuk

Abstract

Usually while starting the articles the authors face a challenge. The first paragraph has to catch the attention of reader, to provide some hints on the content of the article and to express the author’s attitude towards the problem described in the article. The task is getting even more complicated if the author is trying to describe the turbulent dynamic environment and the actors with multiple interests, agendas and toolkits of influence on the situation. However, the complicated tasks are always inspiring for the author – which is also true in the case of this paper.

In this article we will try to talk on the role of Romania in shaping European Neighborhood Policy and in particular it’s Eastern Partnership (EaP) element. Our pre-assumption is that Romania does have an ambition and the tools to become more active player in the region of EaP (in particular when Eastern Partnership countries area coincides with the Black Sea Region). The importance of this role will be only growing if Romania will implement its objectives in compliance with the strategies of the organizations Romania belongs to (the EU, NATO, Black Sea Economic cooperation organization (BSEC) etc. No less important factor is Bucharest’s readiness to take into consideration the interests of the European Neighborhood Policy target countries, there key priorities in the region of EaP and Wider Black Sea region.

Key words: ENP, Romania, Ukraine, Eastern Partnership

Historical Background: defining Romanian key priorities and obtaining the instruments for contributing into shaping of the ENP Eastern agenda

Historically the role of Romania in shaping ENP was not that much visible. This was caused by the different reasons but probably the main one was that initially Romania had to define its own identity and to reshape it in accordance with the transformations caused by Romanian revolution and collapse of Romania’s socialist ally – the USSR. Definitely the main task in this regard was to build up new patterns of foreign policy which had to differ from the elaborated in the

1 Strategic and Security Studies Group Foreign Policy Council “Ukrainian Prism”
nineteenth century concept of “Latin island in the middle of the Slavic sea”\(^1\). That concept had serious drawbacks since it did not envisage cooperation and ties with the neighbors, emphasized the differences with the neighboring nations, caused suspicions towards the foreign policies of the neighboring states.

Reloading the foreign policy concept of Romania was deeply connected with its Westernization at the beginning of the nineteenth of the twentieth century. Both the national consensus and the consensus of elites regarding the necessity to “return to Europe” resulted in the creation of a commission in February 1993 with the mandate to elaborate Romania’s European Integration Strategy\(^2\), which became a significant step towards European and Euro-Atlantic integration of the “Romanian island”.

Without going too much into details we have to admit that both paths to the EU and NATO were not easy for Bucharest. However, notwithstanding the complications and challenges faced by the Romanian elites and nation, finally they resulted in full-fledged membership of Romania in both North Atlantic Treaty Organization (in 2004) and the European Union (in 2007).

The membership in both organization provided Romania with the access to the process of the decision-making in these institutions and to shaping their agenda at the Southern-Eastern frontiers. Moreover, alongside with getting the voice in the multinational structures, Romania’s “national potential” was also growing. In order to meet the EU and NATO standards Romanian governments had to implement the series of the reforms that significantly increased its capacities as the regional power. The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in Romania was worth 177.95 billion US dollars in 2015. That is a significant shift comparing to its lowest point of 25.12 USD Billion in 1992 (it is also noteworthy that the highest point of 208.18 USD Billion in GDP was reached by Romania in 2008 – right after the EU accession).\(^3\) Romania also reached significant progress according to the other indexes of development. There is a positive trend in Human Development indicators\(^4\). According to the US Department of State “the Romanian government has taken steps in recent years to improve tax administration and collection, enhance transparency, and support a legal framework conducive to foreign investment”\(^5\).

Moreover, in the recent years the Romanian government is investing lots of efforts

---


\(^3\) http://www.tradingeconomics.com/romania/gdp


\(^5\) \textit{2015 Investment Climate Statement – Romania} (available at http://www.state.gov/e/eb/rls/othr/ics/2015/241712.htm)
into fighting corruption\textsuperscript{1}. It has already resulted in high indexes of Transparency International (in particular in comparison to Romania’s Eastern neighbors).\textsuperscript{2}

Romania started taking the advantages of its new positions in the Western world as well as its increased national capacities. It appears that all the newly obtained instruments were applied by Romania in order to implement the agenda voiced in 2008 by Mihai-Razvan Ungureanu which can be summarized as being a “European State with the potential to specialize in specific issues and geographical regions of foreign policy... play the part of liason between the West and certain regions located in strategic proximity to the Euro-Atlantic space”\textsuperscript{3}

The geographic area that Romania focused at was the Black Sea region whereas the specific issues were Westernization, Europeanization and Democratization processes in the region (nowadays gradually complemented by the security issues in the region of the Wider Black Sea).

Paradoxically, at the first stages of shaping of the Eastern Partnership the position of Romania was quite cautious. Although the objectives of this initiative coincided with the Romanian vision of the region, Bucharest considered that Polish-Swedish Initiative of Eastern Partnership may undermine the European initiatives and strategies in the Romanian “backyard” and would cause competition with the Romanian-backed Black Sea Synergy. Another argument against EaP was that it did not include a membership perspective for the 6 participant countries – while according to Cristian Ghinea “Romania has positioned itself as a supporter of the integration for the Republic of Moldova, and the EaP was seen as a policy without the proper end for this country”\textsuperscript{4}.

The recent developments in the region caused some updates to Romanian attitude towards the region. It seems that for the Romanian establishment it became clear that, first, the countries of the region, in particular those that signed the Association Agreement with the EU already alongside with Romania expressed their commitment to the Western way of development. They are different from Russian Federation and counterweigh Russian strategy in the region, have common values with the EU and therefore their success would also mean the success of Romanian “Europeanization” approach towards the region.

Besides, Russian invasion in Georgia and Ukraine, Russian military presence in the Republic of Moldova, Russian efforts to militarize the region of the Black Sea directly point at the key trouble-maker in the Romanian neighborhood.

\textsuperscript{1} Basham Patrcick, ‘Romania’s Anti-Corruption Mania’, The International New York Times, March 5, 2015 (available at http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/05/opinion/romanias-anti-corruption-mania.html?_r=0)

\textsuperscript{2} http://www.transparency.org/cpi2015/results

\textsuperscript{3} Angelescu Irina, ‘New Eastern Perspectives: A Critical Analyses of Romania’s Relations with Moldova, Ukraine and the Black Sea Region’, Perspectives, vol. 19, No 2, 2011, p. 128

\textsuperscript{4} See more at http://eu-28watch.org/issues/issue-no-11/romania/
Therefore Romania is taking efforts to neutralize this trouble-maker by using the international instruments that Bucharest possesses.

Finally, accepting the idea of common identity and common values, Bucharest is getting gradually more sensitive towards the objectives of the Eastern Partnership countries – in particular “Association Agreement Club” (Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine). That gives the prospects for the successful implementation of the joint initiatives and projects.

**Promising Directions of Regional Cooperation: Broad Security Initiatives**

Since security issues are gradually becoming vitally important for both the Eastern Partnership countries and the Wider Black Sea region, the most of the expectations towards the West in general and Romania as one of the key promoters of the Western agenda in the region are security-related. Moreover, the region is returning to the point when the hard security challenges are no less important than the soft security risks. Therefore the issue of the joint military drills remains on the top agenda for the Eastern Partnership and Wider Black Sea region countries. The successful experience of the Saber Guardian\(^1\) which is enhancing interoperability between allied and partner nations can be a good example to follow in the coming years. The military exercise rotates between locations in Romania, Bulgaria, and Ukraine and creates preconditions for the closer security cooperation between these littoral states.

No less important is the continuation of the exercises grounded on the experience of Rapid Trident military drills – regional command post exercise and field training exercise focused on peacekeeping and stability operations to ensure a safe and secure environment within the operating environment. The exercises usually are held at the International Peacekeeping and Security Center in Yavoriv, Ukraine with the participation of most of Wider Black Sea region partners\(^2\). Rapid Trident supports interoperability among Ukraine, the US, NATO and Partnership for Peace member nations and comes at the explicit request of the Ukrainian government and military and is highly appreciated by the government of Ukraine\(^3\).

Another important exercise remains Sea Breeze, an air, land and maritime exercise designed to improve maritime safety, security and stability in the Black Sea.\(^4\)

Romanian participation in the mentioned drills alongside with the active involvement of the Wider Black Sea region countries simultaneously corresponds with the Romanian interests in the region and with the growing demand for the se-

---

curity guarantees needed to deter Russian policy of militarization of the Black Sea.

Also, it would be of interest of the EaP nations – in particular for “Association Agreement Club” if Romania will take a proper use of hosting Multinational Division Southeast headquarters in Bucharest. Although neither Ukraine nor Georgia belong to NATO they have reached an extremely high level of cooperation with the Alliance and in this capacity would welcome Romania to serve as a liaison hub for the further regional cooperation in the security field.

Finally, the formula of enhanced cooperation NATO + Ukraine and Georgia as well as involvement of Ukraine and Georgia into Black Sea flotilla initiative suggested by Romania can be another step in the direction of cooperation between Romania and EaP countries. Romania already explicitly declared that it is favoring the participation of Ukraine and Georgia in the activities of the aforementioned flotilla. That was a friendly step since it proved that Romania is not trying to use the moment for monopolizing its role in the Black Sea but seeks for the broad cooperation with the other interested parties (which we believe is an essential precondition for the stability of the region). In this regard, although Georgia does not have the fleet and Ukraine has limited capacities in this field, the potential of the Ukrainian and Georgian coast guard and the ports that Ukraine and Georgia obtain at the Black Sea can be a significant contribution into the activities of the NATO’s Black Sea flotilla.¹ Although the idea was not supported at the NATO Warsaw summit but sooner or later the Alliance will get back to the initiative.

Both Kyiv and Tbilisi would expect Romania to promote the aforementioned joint initiatives, projects and ideas at the level of NATO leadership.

Most of the named exercises and initiatives are operated under the NATO umbrella and at the first glance have nothing to do with the European neighborhood policy, but bearing in mind the growing demand for the security initiatives in the region Romania has to use its potential of NATO member state and moreover has to be persuasive while transferring to the EU the demands of the neighboring countries. By these mean Bucharest would fit into the aforementioned niche described by Mihai-Razvan Ungureanu. Moreover, Romania is in a good position to be actively involved in building the bridges between the American and European strategies in the region and therefore to contribute into Transatlantic solidarity towards the region.

Promising Directions of Regional Cooperation: Narrow Focused Initiatives

Another promising direction of cooperation between Romania and Eastern Partnership countries (in particular Ukraine and Moldova) is Transnistrian settlement. Since the very beginning of the Transnistrian conflict Romania was indirectly involved. Back in the ninetieth as well as nowadays Transnistria is exten-

sively using “destabilization” and the “Romanian threat” discourse to consolidate its society. Simultaneously, the mentioned threats are used by Russian Federation as a precondition for increasing the military capacities of the breakaway region. For example, on 31 March 2016, Russia held the drills for the Operative Group of the Russian military forces in Transnistria, although Moldova is persistently demanding to withdraw Russian troops from the Transnistrian region.

On the other hand, Russia is pushing acceptance of its interests as the founding stone for the continuation of the 5+2 negotiations on the Transnistrian conflict settlement. According to the diplomatic sources, the Kremlin is considering support of a special status for Transnistria within Moldova’s borders. The respective changes in the rhetoric of Russia are believed to be a result of the efforts of the German Chairmanship at the OSCE as well as the desire of Russia to improve its relations with the EU.

In this regard both Romania and Ukraine as the only countries directly bordering the Republic of Moldova have to keep an eye on the developments in the process of negotiations, use their potential in OSCE, NATO and the EU to preserve the existing format of 5+2 talks, notwithstanding Russian attempts to expel Ukrainian and European mediators and to solve the problem on its own terms without considering the security interests of the region.

Ukraine-Romania bilateral trust-building: another key to the Eastern neighborhood security

Apart from multinational initiatives and efforts aimed at building like-minded countries coalitions in the region of EaP and Wider Black Sea region, the necessary precondition for promoting Romania to the status of significant regional leader and policy-shaper at the Southern-Eastern frontiers of the EU is trust-building between the biggest players in the region – in particular Romania and Ukraine. In this regard it is worth to mention that in 2015, there was a considerable intensification of relations between Ukraine and Romania. Romania consistently supported Ukraine on the bilateral level and in international organizations.

In the Analytical Report to the Annual Address of the President of Ukraine to the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine in 2015, the President expressed gratitude to Romania for a powerful support in Ukraine’s stand against Russia, and expressed interest in the indepth bilateral cooperation and also cooperation in multilateral formats (including formats with participation of the Republic of Moldova).

In 2015 and 2016 the president of Romania paid the visit to Ukraine and the president of Ukraine paid the visit to Romania respectively. The exchange of visit at such level was a promising sign of the warming up of the relations between the two countries. Romania is also eager to share its experience in fighting corrup-

---

tion. In 2015 the Head of the National Anti-Corruption Bureau Artem Sytynk officially visited Romania.

A number of bilateral documents was approved and came into force between Ukraine and Romania. The legal framework for bilateral cooperation was updated. In particular, these were the following documents of national level: the Agreement between the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine and the Government of Romania on mutual protection of classified information, the Agreement between the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine and the Government of Romania on measures for improving mutual confidence and security, the Agreement between the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine and the Government of Romania on the local near-border transit, as well as the agreements that are required for development of near-border cooperation: the Agreement between the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine and the Government of Romania about laying the optic fiber cable across the Ukrainian-Romanian state border in the region between settlements of Orlivka (Ukraine) and Isakcha (Romania), the Agreements between the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine and the Government of Romania about opening an international checkpoint across the Ukrainian-Romanian state border for ferries, passenger and cargo transit between settlements of Orlivka (Ukraine) and Isakcha (Romania).

In accordance with the assessment of the Foreign Policy Council “Ukrainian Prism” if the positive dynamics persists, we can expect further rapprochement between the states, up to the level of strategic partnership1. The only obstacle to the growing mutual trust and cooperation can be the internal political changes in both Romania and Ukraine that may bring into power the politicians with the lack of vision of the future of the region of Eastern Partnership and the Wider Black Sea region who would return to the confrontation rhetoric in the relations between the biggest countries of the region.

**Conclusions**

The preliminary assumption of this factor was the following: Romania does have an ambition and the tools to become more active player in the region of EaP (in particular when Eastern Partnership countries area coincides with the Black Sea Region). The enlisted facts prove that such assumption is correct. The emerging threat is the field of hard security and the growing demand for deterrence also provide Romania with the opportunity to fill the niche of the promoter of the regions interests at the level of NATO, to contribute into shaping the Transatlantic agenda towards the region, to advocate the region and its priorities at the level of the EU.

Successful implementation of the NATO’s objectives in the region, continuation of the NATO-led initiatives aimed at interoperability between the NATO states and littoral partner countries will provide Romania with the additional tools

---

for becoming the influential regional power that takes into consideration the interests of the neighbours and takes the responsibility of voicing the interests of the region at the international level.

Also the growing demand for the security related initiatives and the risks coming from the protracted conflicts in the region put on Romania the burden of responsibility for supporting the existing negotiation formats (e.g. 5+2 in the Republic of Moldova). The task for Bucharest is to keep an eye on the developments in the neighbouring Moldova and to prevent deterioration of the situation by all means possessed by Romania as the EU country bordering the Republic of Moldova.

Finally, the success of Romania’s role in the region depends on the further efforts in building trust and developing the relations with Ukraine. In the light of forthcoming elections in Romania the task for the political elites is to ensure the sustainability of trust-building processes launched after the exchange of visits by the presidents of Romania and Ukraine respectively and to avoid deterioration of the bilateral relations in the future.

References:
http://www.tradingeconomics.com/romania/gdp
http://www.transparency.org/cpi2015/results
2015 Investment Climate Statement – Romania (available at http://www.state.gov/e/eb/rls/othr/ics/2015/241712.htm)
http://www.eur.army.mil/SaberGuardian/
http://www.eur.army.mil/RapidTrident/
ROMANIA’S POSITION REGARDING THE ENP IN THE BROADER CONTEXT OF EUROPEAN AND ROMANIAN POLITICS. LATEST EVOLUTIONS (2015 - 2016)¹

Mihai Sebe²

Abstract
The current paper³ envisages presenting to a general audience a glimpse of the internal Romanian debate and official approach of the European Neighbourhood Policy within a definite time framework, meaning the start of the public process of consultation for the revised strategy (2015) up till the present moment (August 2016). It underscores both the academic and the official approach while highlighting some of the policy recommendations that came from Bucharest, mainly the need for a tailor based approach of the ENP and more focus on the Eastern Partnership (EaP).

Keywords: ENP, EaP, Russia, Romania

Anyone coming to or from Bucharest has repeatedly addressed the need to reinforce the ENP and especially its Eastern section, the EaP. It is almost like a mantra that goes across the entire political spectrum that we need a safer neighbourhood and that the EU must do more in order to create an area of stability and prosperity while solving any ongoing conflicts back here.

However on the occasion of the public consultation of 2015, the number of Romanian comments was very limited, which may generate the following question: does the Romanian political and academic elites really comprehend the ENP and the fine tuning of this policy? Or are we just repeating in a mechanical way

¹ The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author alone and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of any organization he is connected to

² Mihai Sebe is currently an expert in European affairs and Romanian Politics, European Institute of Romania. With a Bachelor’s Degree in Political Sciences in French Language and in Law he has obtained a Ph.D. in Political Sciences at the University of Bucharest. His main areas of interest are political sciences, international relations, contemporary history of Europe and Romania, the history of the European idea as well as public law and the area of ethics and corporate social responsibility. E-mail: mihai.sebe@ier.ro and info@europeanpolitics.ro Twitter: @MihaiSebe83 Institutional website: www.ier.ro Academic website: www.europeanpolitics.ro

³ The current paper is an extended version of the presentation given at the international conference “The Eastern Partnership and civil security issues of the member states: past realities and present trends” on 30 June 2016 in Bucharest, organised by SNSPA, Center for East European and Asian Studies.
something that sounds good and correct while not coming up with any plan for reform and solving its shortcomings?

**What is the European Neighbourhood Policy?**

Ever since 2003 the European Union (EU) has developed a new working instrument called the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) in order to have a close working relationship with its southern and eastern neighbours in order “to achieve the closest possible political association and the greatest possible degree of economic integration”. It was and still supposed to be based “on common interests and on values — democracy, the rule of law, respect for human rights, and social cohesion.”

It was designed back then as a *quid pro quo* foreign affairs instrument to generate a win-win situation for all the parties involved. “The EU should aim to develop a zone of prosperity and a friendly neighbourhood – a ‘ring of friends’ - with whom the EU enjoys close, peaceful and co-operative relations” and in return “Russia, the countries of the Western NIS and the Southern Mediterranean should be offered the prospect of a stake in the EU’s Internal Market and further integration and liberalisation to promote the free movement of – persons, goods, services and capital (four freedoms).”

![Figure 1. EU cooperation with its neighbours (2013)](http://enpi-info.eu/medportal/publications//682/ENP-Map)

---


Keeping it short we may say that through the ENP “the EU looked for a coherent approach of relations with Eastern and Southern neighbours, with the objective of building a large area of prosperity, stability and security for all. It is about a privileged relationship, based on mutual commitment to shared values (democracy, human rights, rule of law, market economy principles, and sustainable development). ENP remains distinct from the EU enlargement process, although it does not prejudice, for European neighbours, the way their relations with the EU may develop in the future.”

For Romania, as a frontier country, the ENP was first of all a big promise of stability in an uncertain and unstable region. It was seen as complementary to NATO’s hard power security umbrella, an EU funded soft power umbrella of prosperity and stability.

“Romania has a manifest interest in fostering, in the EU neighbourhood, a common space of stability, security and progress, in deepening relations between the EU and its Eastern and Southern neighbours, based on common interest and values.”

Unfortunately since 2003 a lot of water has passed under the bridge and mostly it was a muddy one, since the continuing deteriorating security perspectives in the East and South and the ongoing flux of migrants have succeeded in turning even the most pessimistic scenarios into positive ones, looking in retrospect.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What we hoped to achieve</th>
<th>What we’ve got on the field</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• local actors took action to initiate reforms to obtain rule of law, social justice, and increased accountability</td>
<td>• conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• rising extremism and terrorism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• human rights violations and other challenges to international law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• economic upheaval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• major refugee flows</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Difference between the intended and actual results of the ENP
Source: Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions Review of the European Neighbourhood Policy (2015)

1 European Neighborhood Policy (ENP), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania, available online at https://www.mae.ro/en/node/2049 Last visited on 1 August 2016.

“When in doubt, one can rarely go wrong by going public” (James E. Rogers)

Given the current stress that the ENP had to endure, a joint consultation paper by the European Commission and the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy was adopted on 4 March 2015, setting out key questions for discussion with partners and stakeholders. After this consultation, a Communication setting out proposals for the future direction of the ENP was adopted in the autumn of 2015. Thus from 04.03.2015 until 30.06.2015 we had the public consultation - Consultation: “Towards a new European Neighbourhood Policy”

In the preface to the review of the new ENP of 18 November 2015, the European Commission and the High Representative for Foreign Affairs explain the reasons for developing this new policy.

There have been radical changes, they argue, and both positive and negative developments in the European neighbourhood. While, on the one hand, “local actors took action to initiate reforms to obtain rule of law, social justice, and increased accountability, as exemplified by the Nobel Peace Prize awarded to the Tunisian quartet,” on the other hand “conflict, rising extremism and terrorism, human rights violations and other challenges to international law, and economic upheaval have resulted in major refugee flows“.

Even from the beginning, it becomes apparent that a sense of danger is driving the EU to reconsider its foreign policies: The continent feels threatened by a neighbourhood in upheaval, a sentiment symbolised by the image of a wave of refugees “flowing” into Europe.

“[…] the neighbourhood is in complete turmoil, and as a consequence both the EU and Europe are suffering. This is hardly surprising; for while external forces could not necessarily have ensured a different outcome, European politicians and EU institutions alike have consistently ignored the tensions, dissensions and corruption in the surrounding regions over many years, other than paying money and lip service to democratic values and the need for reforms. And now, as in a very bad dream, all these regions have erupted, nearly simultaneously, impacting the EU, its states and values in the most physical and violent of manners. From human waves of refugees and migrants to terrorist attacks, the neighbourhood has arrived in Europe, demanding it live up to its values and promise.”

---


As Ilana Bet-El remarks in her introduction to this dossier: “From a political perspective, it is the refugee crisis that currently seems to threaten both the EU as a union and the future of Europe. And it is this threat that has finally led to the understanding, made amply clear in the ministerial statement noted above, that the fortunes of Europe, and especially the EU, as both concept and geography are absolutely intertwined with those of the neighbourhood. Consequently, stabilising the neighbourhood in all its parts – to the east, to the south, and in between, in the Middle East – is now viewed as a real strategic priority and a fundamental interest of the EU.”

Romanian contributions

Given the democratic character of the public consultation and its openness to both private and public institutions across the EU, it is still puzzling for a Romanian citizen to see how little attention was paid to this process in a country, which at least at the declarative level, is in the forefront on any ENP talks and debate.

However we must acknowledge that even though limited in number the interventions were of a high quality, and their ideas proved that at least at the academic level, there is a high level of awareness. What makes them even more valuable is the fact that they came from academic environments, by EU affairs specialists that are in close contact with various social and political environments and thus we can safely assume that their viewpoints also reflect the viewpoints of those they came into contact with.

Toward a more structured and coherent ENP in relation with the EaP Countries

What matters for the University of Oradea academics is the need for differentiation and for clear nuances. For them the ENP has long time suffered from what might be called “one-size-fits-all” approach, which is not recommended in dealing in countries with different historical background and sensibilities. Thus they recommend a dual approach, based on both 1) the need for a multi-actor perspective and 2) the need for a multi-sector perspective.

Having these in mind they envisage a 7-steps Recommendation program:

1. There is the need for a comprehensive and coherent approach that must re-evaluate the role of the EU as a regional actor.

2. The ENP reform should not be considered a political engagement but a gradual process which must be delivered on a long term approach. On this mat-

---


2 Dorin I. DOLGHI & Ioan HORGA, Toward a more structured and coherent ENP in relation with the EaP Countries, “Jean Monnet” European Center of Excellence, University of Oradea, 2015, available online at http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/neighbourhood/consultation/index_en.htm Last visited on 1 August 2016.
ter, the *flexibility* principle must become operational within a *differentiated* approach of each neighbouring country, on bi-lateral basis. Multilateral approaches shall be considered only on specific projects that can deliver positive results on specific issues that represent mutual interest of the participating actors.

3. A functional approach can emphasize the particular role of each actor within a specific sector of cooperation. On short and medium term, the EU must focus upon those projects that can deliver positive experiences of cooperation, which can be perceived as such by the governments and the public opinion. In this perspective, based on the logic of *spill-over* effect, the confidence for deeper cooperation will have the necessary support and full engagement of all actors.

4. To identify specific identity subdivisions to whom to be addressed focussed programmes based on the Cross Border Cooperation Programmes. In the area of the EaP and Black Sea Synergy we can identify the Baltic Region (Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Germany, Poland, Baltic states, Russia and Belarus); Carpathian Region (PL, SK, CZ, HU, RO, BG, UA, MD); Ponto-Danube Region (BG, RO, UA, MD); Ponto-Caucasian Region (BG, RO, TR, UA, MD, RU, GE, AZ, AR). In this area, multiannual projects shall be developed, involving actors from EU, EaP and other partner countries. A special consideration must be addressed to connection corridors between Baltic-Carpathian- Ponto-Caucasian regions, which will increase trade, transportation and mobility.

5. The cross-border cooperation programs between the Eastern partners and Member States requires more attention within the financial package.

6. A specific communication strategy must accompany the new ENP, and *more focussed communication strategies must be delivered for each neighbouring country*.

7. There must be a deep consideration on the approach and engagement of those sectors and actors that can maintain a balance in stabilization and security process in relation with the Russian Federation interest in the “shared neighbourhood”. Trade relations and energy issues can be considered within transnational projects as a factor of stability in the region¹.

---

**Policy proposal for the review of the Eastern Partnership**²

A second more detailed opinion was that of a team of academics from the National University of Political Studies and Public Administration, Department of

---

¹ Dorin I. DOLGHI & Ioan HORGA, *Toward a more structured and coherent ENP in relation with the EaP Countries*, "Jean Monnet" European Center of Excellence, University of Oradea, 2015, available online at http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/neighbourhood/consultation/index_en.htm Last visited on 1 August 2016.

² Ana-Maria COSTEA (GHIMIŞ), Monica OPROIU & Miruna TRONCOTA, *Policy proposal for the review of the Eastern Partnership*, National University of Political Studies and Public Administration, Department of International Relations and European Integration, 2015, available online at http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/neighbourhood/consultation/index_en.htm Last visited on 1 August 2016.
International Relations and European Integration. As expected their proposal focussed more on the political relevance of the Eastern neighbourhood and the Eastern dimension of European security suggesting that the ENP should focus more on the Eastern Partnership (EaP). The ENP must become a custom based policy focussing on three states – Georgia, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine – with the EaP focussed on the political and security aspects, which include: promoting democracy, common values, rule of law, co-operation in the field of foreign and security policy, civil service and local administration.

The proposal was centred on three main research questions, each of them showing the line of the answers provided:

1) How should the ENP address conflicts and crises in the neighbourhood?

One of the suggested answers was an increase role and attention given to social policies in the partner countries as the EaP must do its best to avoid the social inequalities “the EU should involve itself in social policies that will increase the quality of life for the citizens from those countries in order to decrease the fragmentation levels that are present in Ukraine or Moldova since this is one of the main vulnerabilities that generate antagonistic views which are exacerbated by the political will.”

The Republic of Moldova received a special attention given our privileged relationship as the authors propose a “6+1 formula”, where the EU is integrated as a negotiating party, not just an observer”

What stands apart, just like in previous recommendations, is the special attention that must be shown to the interests of the Russian Federation: “EaP generated an antagonistic response from Russia, fact that destabilized the area. Regarding the EaP and the EU’s relations with Russia, we recommend that the EU should not be driven by the desire to stop Russia or to balance it. Rather than that, Moscow should be viewed as a regional power that has a competing interest over the region, but with which it has to cooperate, as a positive and productive relationship is in their mutual interest.”

2) Should CFSP and CSDP activities be better integrated in the ENP framework?

Amidst the recommendations given one stands out and is the one dedicated to the need to increase the importance of political activities: “the EU Special Representatives and EU delegations in EaP countries should be given a stronger political mandate that enhances the possibility of political dialogue which could ultimately alter the parties’ behaviour.”

3) Should it have a greater role in developing confidence-building measures and post-conflict actions as well as related state-and institution-building activities? This final and third research question is in itself an indication of how things should evolve, meaning that any effort of the EU must be dedicated toward these areas where it can have the most useful impact.
Moreover the authors offer some indications to what Romania as a state should do: “Romania should provide direct assistance and trainings for border management and lead the process of creating a regional cluster for expertise transfer in good practices in border management.”

**Post – hoc reactions**

On 18 November 2015, the European Commission and the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy presented the main lines of the review of the ENP spelling out the Union’s new approach to its eastern and southern neighbours.

In the reviewed ENP the EU will focus on areas that matter most. The stabilisation of the region, in political, economic, and security related terms, will be at the heart of the new policy. The EU’s own stability is built on democracy, human rights and the rule of law and we will continue to make the case for these universal values.

Following the adoption of the reviewed ENP we have witnessed a series of reactions of the main Romanian actors as following:

**Chamber of Deputies, Romanian Parliament**

The Chamber of Deputies of the Romanian Parliament took a very active role in providing a written and well-documented Opinion (36/13.04.2016) of the Communication on the Review of the ENP, by initiating a Chamber wide consultation process that lasted for more than 4 months (December 2015 – April 2016). In my opinion this consultation is of outmost relevance due to its bi-partisan character. The Parliament Commission reunite all the political parties and it is safe to assume that no matter what political government shall come at the end of the year, it shall respect the things mention in this Opinion.

This document is also an intention manifesto as it shows what we as Romanians expect from the ENP that:

– States the need for a synchronization with the EU Global Security Strategy;
– Recommends a **crisis leadership** on behalf of the EU able of fast reactions;

---

1 Ana-Maria COSTEA (GHIMIŞ), Monica OPROIU & Miruna TRONCOTA, *Policy proposal for the review of the Eastern Partnership*, National University of Political Studies and Public Administration, Department of International Relations and European Integration, 2015, available online at http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/neighbourhood/consultation/index_en.htm Last visited on 1 August 2016.


– Wants a better communication;
– The core principle – the right to life (all else must be derived from it) must prevail;
– Eastern European States – must be granted the membership option to the EU;
– ENP must also integrate – the cross-border cooperation and the Black Sea Synergy and the Danube Strategy;
– Russia destabilizing actions must receive an equal reaction on behalf of the EU;
– Asks for visa liberalization for Georgia and Ukraine;
– Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine must have an European perspective;
– Romania can and must provide them expertise in areas such as: energy, administration, good governance, justice, banking and economic system;
– Increase of the security dimension – EU must consolidate the speed and the capacity of military intervention;
– Balance between South and East;
– EU must maintain a variable geometry;
– Rejects the option that financial allocations are to be done through the algorithm “two thirds for South, one third for East”;
– Reflects the concern that the ENP goes toward the traditional foreign policy model instead of promoting the European model;
– Acknoledges the fact that Russia has obtained a de facto veto right on EU policies.

Official Governing programme (in force since November 2015)

The 2015 regime change has not affected, from a declarative point of view, any of the Romanian priorities in regards to its Eastern neighbours. The active support and promotion of the European aspirations of the Republic of Moldova on the basis of continuation of the Reform process. The Key objective: to transform Romania’s neighbourhood (Western Balkans and Eastern Neighbourhood) into a democratic area, of stability, prosperity, security and predictability:
– “Active continued efforts to promote and support, through effective and comprehensive action, the European integration aspirations of the Republic of Moldova, on the basis of consistent and responsible continuation by Chisinau authorities, of the process of profound reform in the European spirit;
– Actively promoting the objective of transforming Romania’s neighbourhood both in the Western Balkans, and especially in the eastern neighbourhood, into a democratic area, area of stability, prosperity, security and predictability”.¹

Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

One method to better understand the fine lines of the Romanian governmental position is to review the main ideas that come out from the Romanian Foreign Affairs Ministry as they are revealed through various statements and press interviews that fully reflect the preoccupations and challenges of a definite moment in time while also presenting to the wider audience the fine lines and subtle evolutions (if any) of the Romanian perception on the ENP.

One such relevant moment was the represented by the participation of the Foreign Affairs Minister H.E. Lazar Comănescu to the debate organised by the Chamber of Deputies, European Affairs Commission on 29 March 2016 on the topic of the European Neighbourhood Policy. In his intervention the minister highlighted some key points that were at the moment at the basis of any official approach toward the ENP. Thus in Romania’s view we need to:

– increase coherence and efficiency of the ENP – based upon a better understanding of specific realities of the partner states, an ENP able to calibrate its operating toolbox in accordance with these realities;
– recognize the EaP – key role. Romania has constantly supported the partner countries – especially Moldova;
– correlate the ENP reform with EU Global Strategy – in this context Romania tries to have the Eastern dimension of the ENP and the Black Sea Synergy fully reflected in the future Strategy.

At the official level there is a growing perception that the Eastern neighbourhood has been side-lined by the Southern dimension (due to the refugee crisis) and that Romania needs to remind our partners about the fact the instability causes are not gone, on the contrary. While actively supporting the Republic of Moldova in its European efforts on various levels (energy, infrastructure, etc.), we must not neglect the dialogue with Russia, a dialogue and not “business as usual”.

An important shift that has taken place in the last year is the focus on what I would call the “qualitative” aspect of the Eastern Partnership as it is visible through the analysis of H.E. Comănescu as he speaks about the need to “consolidate the relationship with the States of the Eastern Vicinity”. This ideas is also been endorsed by the Romanian Prime-Minister who at the same diplomatic events speaks about the need to “support the partner that wish to come closed to the EU and have proven the willingness and the capacity to register progress in reforms” while the

---


EaP must be supported as “an instrument of strategic action of the Union in relation with the partner countries”¹

**Presidential administration**

The situation is simpler if we take into account the official narrative coming from the Romanian Presidency as the same red lines are kept throughout all the official interventions. I mention just the 21 January 2016 intervention of H.E. Klaus Iohannis in front of the foreign diplomats in Romania where he mentioned once more that in regards with:

- **Ukraine – Romania**, it supports the political and diplomatic efforts for conflict resolution based upon the principles of territorial integrity, independence and sovereignty

- **Republic of Moldova – it supports its European aspirations** (conditioned by the Moldavian political will) and reiterated the need to maintain and expand the European partners obligations toward Moldova².

Another important milestone in the way the Romanian Presidency perceives the ENP and the EaP took place in late August 2016 at the reunion of the Romanian diplomats where the president highlighted the way the administration sees these topics. He spoke about the need for a “fresh vision” for the EaP that would transform it into a “relevant instrument in order to bring the partner states closer to the European standards”. We, as Europeans, must provide the EaP with new mechanisms that would support the reforms from the partner states.

What came up as a temporal reference is the mention of the EaP 2019 Summit that would be organised by the Romanian presidency. As for the quality elements Romania is once more content of having provided the ENP revision of 2015 with the key concept of “thematic frameworks” (the famous “Security Trusts” launched by the Romanian MFA). The Republic of Moldova remains once more the focus point of any Eastern outlook of Romania, a country that is going to be further supported in the future.

**Romanian MEP’s**

While talking about the ENP one must not forget to mention the activity of Romanian MEP’s due to their crucial role in shaping European policies. Although in regards with the ENP and the EaP Romanian MEP’s had a vital role, in line with the region and national best interests (such as the MEP Ioan Mircea Pașcu, among others) it came up to my attention a more bold and innovative view on how the ENP can be used as a tool for supporting disenfranchised religious minorities in the Middle East.

¹ Prime-Minister Dacian Cioloș, Perspectives on Romania’s Foreign Policy, 29.08.2016, available online at http://mae.ro/node/38196 Last visited on 5 September 2016.

Thus I am compelled to mention Ramona Mănescu proposal of March 2016 on the role of the European Neighbourhood Policy – an instrument in support of Christian communities from Middle East, with the main ideas briefly exposed below:

– European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) can bring clear benefits in terms of security and economic opportunities. First, it can backup European interests and values, such as those concerning the protection of the Christian minority which is under an enormous pressure all over the Southern Neighbourhood.

– It is hard to conceive a Middle East stripped by its ethnical and religious minorities which lived here together for millennia, defining its multi-ethnic and multi-religious character. Europe defines itself through its Christian roots, traditions and values. Its history overlaps the one of Christianity. Going further, Christianity spread itself starting with the holy places of Middle East.

– For the Christians of Middle East, in today’s situation, the words of Martin Luther King have a special meaning: “In the end we will remember not the words of our enemies but the silence of our friends.”

– Considering that the ENP is built in such a way to offer flexibility, both for its financing mechanisms and ways of intervention, maybe is not too late for EEAS to look for those examples of good practices and try to replicate them.

– we must use more those ways which are offering faster results, like helping civil society and supporting local communities.

– The ENP must also be capable to distinguish between local particularities. Minorities and vulnerable groups, even living in the same areas, have different needs.

– The law framework is a key factor. Also, we must look closely to the real institutional practices which can differ a lot from what is written in the law. This is the case of the countries where the secular state lost its power in front of the religious influence. Another element is represented by the help offered to civil society and civic groups\(^1\).

What’s in store for ENP. Main risks

For many Romanian officials the main risk that could affect the ENP and especially the EaP is the risk of oblivion for the Eastern neighbourhood due to the refugee crisis. We had a series of Parliament opinions underlining the Romanian stance on the refugee crisis while reminding the public opinion the Ukrainian crisis\(^2\) - the potential risk of a massive influx of Ukrainian refugees if


the Ukraine’s internal situation deteriorates which would put Romania into the frontline of the refugee flux.

To this already acute problem now we are witnessing the rebirth of the old debate of enlargement vs. consolidation as Brexit has effectively put to an end any discussion on the future of enlargement and of any political will to get more and more entangle in the Eastern frontier politics.1

It is this author’s personal opinion that given the current challenges the EU faces, the debate regarding ENP, and especially the EaP, shall cease to become the dominant one, as the EU leaders are now forced to look inward, toward a long and often unpleased process of soul searching and identity creation. Moreover the recent Turkish imbroglio has brought upon the decision making table the question of refugees that would require our full attention.

References:

Primary sources and websites


Presidential Administration, www.presidency.ro
Chamber of Deputies, www.cdep.ro
Romanian Foreign Affairs Ministry, www.mae.ro

Other references


COSTEIA (GHIMIȘ), Ana-Maria, Monica OPROIU & Miruna TRONCOTA, Policy proposal for the review of the Eastern Partnership, National University of Political Studies and Public Administration, Department of International Relations and European Integration, 2015, available online at http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/ neighbourhood/consultation/index_en.htm

DOLGHI, Dorin I. & Ioan HORGA, Toward a more structured and coherent ENP in relation with the EaP Countries, ”Jean Monnet” European Center

---


Where we are after two days of debates on EaP, its resources and opportunities in a year of greatest challenges?

Firstly, we have to agree together that it was a very interesting conference, a ring of expressing fresh ideas and generous distribution of important data concerning the evolution of EaP in the partners’ countries. It was a clear display that EaP is alive in spite of the skepticism showed up in different circles and huge challenges which the neighborhood policy of the EU has to tackle with in the last year (not only continuous assertiveness of Russia, but also several days ago Brexit and in April 2016 Dutch referendum). And it is not only about to be alive that a demonstration that EaP has a future, not being doomed to wane. Our conference proved the existence of solid teams of experts in each of the partner countries of EaP able to assess the achievements and flaws of the process of reaching the standards voluntarily adopted by the partner countries and, more than that, to conceive strategies and plans for going ahead.

Among the issues debated during our proceedings has been what we call “resilience index” within the “civil security matrix” which are two outstanding results of our project. They are not new instruments developed to assess where are each partner country on the way to the required standards in the EaP, but they have been originally built within our project to have a measure of progress regress in the field of “civil security” using the data collected by our team. New data have appeared with the occasion of our conference and they will be introduced in the final results of our project.

Secondly, the conference has shown that EaP is alive, and our conclusion is that to consolidate itself in the future it is a an essential duty of the partner countries to restructure themselves in accordance with policies developed in accordance with their will and together with the EU. As Her Excellency Ambassador of Sweden, Madam Anneli Lindahl Kenny said in her introductory remarks at the beginning of our meeting: “for those partner countries who want to become as close as possible to the EU – it is important now to implement reforms and it is also very important that the countries show political will to do so. We believe that further efforts are needed in order to deliver on the full potential of the East-
ern Partnership in all policy areas. Reforms with a direct and tangible impact on peoples’ lives are needed.” Recently has been put under the public scrutiny a new global strategy of the European Union in which is clearly stated that the organization is committed to build “vibrant societies” in its neighborhoods to the East and South. The new “global strategy” for a “stronger Europe“ is based on the principle that “resilience – the ability of states and societies to reform, thus withstanding and recovering from internal and external crises – benefits us and countries in our surrounding regions, sowing the seeds for sustainable growth and vibrant societies” and that “Together with its partners, the EU will therefore promote resilience in its surrounding regions. A resilient state is a secure state, and security is key for prosperity and democracy.” But the same document includes the warning that absence of that resilience will open large gates to insecurity, which will block “prosperity and democracy”. That is why we have discussed a lot during our panels about the “resilience index “one of the main findings of our project.

Thirdly, our debates highlighted a reality which has to be taken into account in the future and which is a result of the events development in the last almost three years. Namely that there is a core group of partners within the EaP formed by Georgia, Ukraine and Republic of Moldova. The representative of Romanian Foreign Ministry at the conference- Mr. Razvan Rusu- had shared that idea, which recently had known an extensive circulation. This “core group” has selected itself in a process of resistance to the hostile environment characterized by Russian assertiveness, especially after March 2014 when Crimea has been annexed, and Ukraine changed its government and speeded up its efforts of getting closer to EU. The future will show if the “core group” will extend itself including other partners- here we share the conviction of our Belarusian colleague who said the developments in Eastern Europe have strengthen the European tendencies in his country (independence has became the supreme value within the Belarusian society, said Mr. Tarik) -or, on the contrary, would be weaken by the lack of dynamism in promoting reforms or even in the case in which one of the three will abandon EaP for the alternative of EAEU promoted by Russia. But everything will depend on the will of the political elite in these partners of the “core group” to promote the European way of development and large support of the societies. A short parenthesis here. Of course, the relationship between the great powers- and specifically between Russia and the Western powers of the EU plus USA in the future will have a great impact on the future of EaP. Already, after Brexit the chorus of those who envision a failure of the EU has enlarged. But two things are very clear today. Firstly, it is the will of the European Union to develop a secure and prosperous neighbourhood in Eastern Europe, to bring closer to its standards of democracy and prosperity the partners of EaP and this target is expressed in its new security strategy. And secondly, that as rational actors of the international scene both parts will restrict themselves to resort to force for reaching their objectives.
In an international system which is on the way to transform itself from one characterized by a special kind of unipolarism to another form of poles distribution, to think about a possibility of a war between great powers means to voluntarily apply the doomsday scenario. Or, recent evolution, the capability of the great powers to maintain their objectives in a kind of variable geometry of relationship – for example cooperation in Syria and competition in Ukraine at the same time or to prevent cooperatively through negotiations the nuclear proliferation as it was the case of Iran “nuclear deal” - makes visible the shared interests to manage together peacefully the international system.

Fourthly, a considerable attention has been devoted during the debate to the “hybrid warfare”, a phrase recently becoming a favourite in the military studies and defining a new type of warfare specific to the digital era. Some participants expressed vividly their concern to that new type of hidden or soft military invasion having in mind what happened in Crimea in March 2014 and also elaborated options for their response. As, for example, Mfr. Cibotariu has demonstrated that in an environment in which outside pressures are becoming overwhelming to change the political course (European way, as in the case of Ukraine) it is legitimate to think to a way to shelter militarily the identity and own values, including changing the international posture and opting for the military alliances able to provide support. But this is beyond our field of “civilian security”. At the same time this concern should be taken into account in various policies developed under the aegis of EaP because the lack of support for the partners to resist blackmail or sabotage and economic sanctions or manipulation of information and other procedures of “hybrid warfare”. What should be the response in the worst case scenario in the presence of “hybrid warfare” instrumented by outside forces? – a question which was looming in the debates, because it was added that a successful development of the aggressive warfare will threaten the reform processes and wipe out the political will of the target-partner.

Fifthly, it was a short debate on the issue on including cyber security within “civilian security”. The project team has considered cyber security – not like different procedures of the “hybrid warfare “ which could be included – as a clear military way of producing losses – human and physical- to the target (imagine an attack on the network of monitoring the railway traffic). But, of course, the frontier between “civilian security” and “military security” is obscured more and more in the digital era and the question raised is legitimate. There were also expressed during the debates some ideas regarding applying the “resilience index” to foreign policy of the EaP partners, but that will means forming another data base, although the way to assess could remain in principle the same as in the case of “civilian security”. Also we have heard ideas concerning the extension of the work on the “resilience index” as a project of EaP Forum to be used for conceiving new policy or to refine the old ones according to its findings. These ideas reflect
the powerful impression which the “resilience index), one of the main outcomes of our project- has exerted on the experts during the conference. Sixthly, it was expressed during the debate doubts that after Crimea annexation by Russia had occurred a strategic change in the development of EaP. More that that, it was said, after that moment, the main policy feature developed by EU concerning EaP should be to assure that the policy initiative is kept, sending a signal of no change in the general policy of the organization. Consequently, a general debate for a strategic shift in its general policy did not take place. As a conclusion has been expressed the hope that this kind of strategic assessment after an event with heavy impact on the evolution will be held as soon as possible. At the same time, such a strategic change should take into account what has been clear up to now: that to implement DCFTA is crucially important once it has been signed and the plan of its implementation has to take into account how to respond to the hostility of Russia, what kind of bumps could appear on the domestic scene and how they could be overcame (phenomenon of corruption remaining the main enemy of the democratic development in the partner countries).

Furthermore, it was highlighted during our debates a very sensitive issue. There were expressed here doubts about the possibility of partner countries to join ever to EU. It was a case of our Belarusan friend- he said as a matter of fact that “there is no viable perspective” for joining EU -, but he also brought a very interesting point which has to be taken into account seriously. An acute remark regarding the reality in his own country- “civil society is sympathetic to Russia”- needs a continuous worry not to describe Russia as an enemy because this could have an unexpected effect. Of course, the interference of leadership of Russia in the internal affairs of the former Soviet republics is against the international rule, but it is necessary not to confuse the policy of today Kremlin with the long tradition of the relationship between the Slavic peoples or even between the different Slavic states. It is a fine line between the perception of the today Kremlin’s policy and the inherited sensitivity regarding the common fate with the Russian people. Again, EaP should not define its own objectives in such a way so to be interpreted by the wrong wishers as being directed toward Russia. Here what has to be taken into account is another reality. Almost one generation after the crash of the Soviet Union, the pattern of the elites in the former Soviet republics is almost similar regarding the way of preparing the elites – in terms of education, social extraction, replacement, and, generally speaking, reflexes of political behaviour.

Eighthly, there were harsh critics concerning the way of how EaP has promoted its own objectives. Firstly, it is about false premises for reaching tangible results- as insufficient funding of its policies or continuous confidence in the same contingents of the elites which did not answer to stimuli and behave inertial and self-righteously. Secondly, to minimize the Russian decision to counter any move which is not corresponding to its own plans means to play in accordance to the
Moscow intention to undermine any positive result of EaP. Also, should be mentioned the fact that there is a neglect of what is happening in the EaP partner countries, as Ukrainian migrants due to the Russian military actions in the East or human rights protection in the separatist regions of Ukraine or the bad treatment of the Ukrainian prisoners. Of course such complaints could be multiplied and in each partner country could be identified such issues which should be corrected. Ninthly, it was said that stability is a value highly appreciated also by Russia which is creating confusion in the public opinion within the partner countries where promoting reforms is equated sometimes as a way of creating sufferings, disorder or social tensions. At the same time, important segments of population in different partner countries – as Armenia or Moldova but not only- are benefiting from the fact that the work market of Russia is open for them and a source of the important remittances sent home. There are also in all the partner countries political forces promoting the status quo as key to stability, meaning the slow pace of reforms or not reforms at all and this line is a clear challenge to the proponents of the European path. That challenge should received a firm and visionary answers during the process of implementing DCFTA in the case of the states which already signed it or, for the second group of partners, during the negotiations of these types of agreements with the EU. Finally, should be mentioned that one of the important opinion being expressed during the debates has been that EaP could adopt the strategic line of a collective engagement with Russia. Such a strategic shift it was said as having foreseeable important results as increasing the EU involvement in the conflict resolution in the case of the "frozen conflicts", thus enhancing the multilateral dialogue with Russia. It was clearly stated that the partner countries should not be placed in the position of choosing between Russia and EU, but to cooperate with both. Leaving aside the fact that such a strategic shift could not be adopted without incredible difficulties in an environment in which Russia is part of a secessionist struggle which threaten the very existence of an independent state (Ukraine), should be mentioned that EU has tried even that road when in the summer of 2014-2015 began the negotiations with Russia concerning the implementation of the DCFTA agreement with Kiev, which finally failed.

To have time to prepare the publishing of the monograph including the contributions of the experts present at our conference, they are kindly invited to send the texts in about four weeks in accordance with the rules already communicated. With that I declare close our fruitful scientific meeting. Million thanks to the contributors and also to the invitees.¹

¹ The papers included in this volume are those sent by the authors up to the moment when it was submitted to the publishing house.
The methodology employed in the preparation of the newsletters can be summarized as follows: First, the targets were set: the EaP member states; EU and Russia; their strategy towards the EaP; Within the EaP member states, there were followed the news/analyses/syntheses on the four multilateral platforms; Finally, the references concerning the “flagship initiative”, as part of the multilateral dialogue EU/EaP, were selected.
1. Member states of Eastern Partnership:

a. Armenia:

*Armenia-EU start visa facilitation talks*

*February 28, 2012*

Comments are welcomed and encouraged. However, comments not pertaining to the topic or containing slander or offensive language will be deleted. You have to be registered to be able leave your comment. Sign in or Register now for free. Negotiations on concluding agreements on visa regime facilitation and readmission between Armenian and the European Union opened in Yerevan on Monday. Armenia’s Deputy Foreign Minister Zohrab Mnatsakanyan described the start of negotiations as an event of considerable political significance. According to the official, who is the chief negotiator from the Armenian side at the talks, the two agreements stemming from the EU’s Eastern Partnership program will make Armenia’s relationship with the 27-nation union “truly comprehensive.” “We are part of the same value system. Our state and society is committed to building a democratic state and elections are one of the pillars of that system,” Mnatsakanian said at a joint news conference with EU official’s held after the opening session of the talks. He stressed that the Armenian side is “ready to finish the negotiation process properly”. Answering a question whether the upcoming parliamentary elections in Armenia may affect the process, head of the EU Delegation Traian Hristea said that “the EU has always stated the importance of fair and free elections but it’s not correct to link these two processes.”


*EU ready to launch talks with Armenia on DEEP and comprehensive free trade area: BARROSO*

*March 7, 2012*

The EU is ready to begin negotiations with Armenia on free trade zone agreement, which will allow Armenian goods to enter the European market on favorable
terms. According to Barroso, the launch of the trade negotiations was conditioned upon Armenia fulfilling a set of “key recommendations”. These were issued in June 2009 and covered necessary reforms in key regulatory areas related to trade, in order to prepare Armenia for the upcoming negotiations. According to EU, Armenia made substantial reforms notably in the fields of technical regulations, sanitary and phytosanitary measures and the protection of intellectual property. The EU supported Armenia in this process, providing technical assistance in the framework of the European Neighborhood Partnership Instrument and the Comprehensive Institution Building program, as well as with the EU Member States’ support. According to the European Commission’s assessment, Armenia has achieved sufficient progress in these preparations and recommended to the Member States the launch of negotiations. The Council’s Trade Policy Committee gave the Commission the green light in this regard on 17 February. The EU has been negotiating an Association Agreement with Armenia since July 2010 in the framework of the Eastern Partnership and the European Neighborhood Policy. The future Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area will be part of this Agreement, which aims at closely associating this country to the EU both in economic and political terms, in line with the Eastern Partnership objectives. The future trade relations will therefore expand significantly beyond the scope of current cooperation, set out in the Partnership and Cooperation Agreements, in force since July 1999. The EU is Armenia’s first trading partner. Bilateral trade in goods amounted to 960 million in 2011. The country already benefits from preferential access to the EU market through the EU Generalized EAP System of Preferences with additional incentives for sustainable development and good governance (“GSP+”). This means that existing import duties are already very low, so the benefits of the future deep and comprehensive free trade area lie predominantly behind the border, in the regulatory area.

Source: ARKA - News,
http://www.arka.am/en/news/economy/eu_ready_to_launch_talks_with_armenia_on_deep_ and_comprehensive_free_trade_area_barroso/

Armenian parliamentarian: Armenian delegation to attend Euronest session in Baku
March 24, 2012

The Armenian delegation will participate in the second plenary session of the Parliamentary Assembly (PA) Euronest - the Eastern Partnership of the EU on April 1 - 4. Artak Zakaryan, parliamentarian from the Republican Party of Armenia, Head of the Permanent Commission of Euronest PA for Social Affairs, Education, Culture and Civil Society, told ArmInfo. He said that delegation comprises 10 people: Vahan Hovhannisyan, Artak Zakaryanm Ara Nranyan, Lilit Galstyan, Hovhanness Sahakyan, Aram Safaryan, Naira Zohrabyan, Stepab Safaryan, Khachit Haroutiunyan, and Manvel Badeyan. He said Euronest and not official
Baku guarantees security of the Armenian delegation. Zakaryan will make a report on development of civil society in the Eastern Partnership countries. To note, Euronest Parliamentary Assembly was established as part of the EU EPP, and comprises representatives of the European Parliament and the legislative authorities of the EPP member-states.

**Source:** ARMINFO News, http://www.arminfo.am/english/politics/article/2-03-2012/12-44-00

---

**Armenian PM: Eastern Partnership does not oppose Russia**  
**April 04, 2012**

Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan disagrees that the EU Eastern Partnership program Armenia is member of, aims to reduce Russia’s influence in post-Soviet countries. “I don’t think that the program is aimed at weakening Russia’s positions. We cooperate both with NATO and EU, and these processes do not oppose a third party. Similarly, our strategic relations with Russia do not oppose the EU,” Sargsyan emphasized in an interview with Russian Kommersant paper. Sargsyan further noted that Armenia’s strategic partner Russia is aware of all cooperation programs Armenia joins, be it EU, NATO, U.S., Iran, China or Georgia. “Russia understands this. We have few options to develop our partner ties due to our geopolitical situation and problems with neighbors,” Sargsyan mentioned.

**Source:** PanArmenian, http://www.panarmenian.net/eng/news/101620/

---

**Armenia willing to participate in the Eurasian economic community**  
**April 10, 2012**

The Armenian Prime Minister, Tigran Sargsyan declared in an interview with Gazeta.ru Russian online edition that Armenia is interested in enhancing integration processes within the Eurasian Economic Community (Eurasec). He said: “We are interested in enhancing integration processes within Eurasec. The question is how this process should move on and what form it should acquire. These countries have to enforce necessary reforms, to prepare legislation framework, to create infrastructure that would ensure the unity of the customs area. Asked if Armenia may become a member of the trade organization, whose other members include Russia, Kazakhstan and Belarus the Prime Minister declared that Armenia has no common border with any of these countries and that the aim of a customs union is to have commercial exchanges without customs control. But for Armenia this cannot be the case because it has to pass through the territory of a neighboring state and twice undergo customs administration. He also said that “We proposed that together with Russian colleagues we should develop a new platform of relations between Armenia and the Customs Union (...) we are engaged in direct dialogue with our Russian counterparts with our working group considering this issue. We
are looking into the international experience and suggest our own approaches. There is an absolutely clear idea, because the experience gained by Russia, Kazakhstan and Belarus in creating the Customs Union shows the benefits of this process” The Prime Minister also mentioned that Armenia’s integration with the European Union does not hinder its integration with former Soviet Union republics because Armenia is interested in expanding its markets. In October last year, Armenia signed a multilateral free trade agreement with Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova and Tajikistan and is seeking to obtain a free trade deal with the European Union within the framework of the Eastern Partnership.

Source: Arka News Agency

The European Commission’s report regarding Armenia: persistent corruption
May 15, 2012
The European Commission has issued a progress report on the European Neighborhood Policy and its implementation and stressed the new challenges regarding its most immediate neighbors. Armenia has been praised for its progress on democracy and human rights, but the report mentions that Yerevan still must deal with shortcomings in areas such as corruption and media freedom. In the same time, the report says that the negotiations toward an EU-Armenia association agreement have ‘progressed in good pace.’ The European Commission is also pleased by the recent changes to Armenia’s electoral code but notes that parliamentary elections earlier this month still fell short of international standards. Another low point in the report is the media freedom, and the Commission mentions the limitations on television broadcasting and lawsuits against journalists for alleged insults and defamation. Also the report says that ‘public trust in the judiciary continues to be low, and perception of corruption high.’

Source: Radio Free Europe,
http://www.rferl.org/content/european_commission_report_european_neighborhood_policy/24581938.html

Armenia-EU relations marked by intense political dialogue in 2012 – Armenian MFA
January 24, 2013
The Armenia-EU relations were marked in 2012 by an intense political dialogue and high-level mutual visits, the Armenian MFA 2012 Report states. In March, Armenia’s president visited Brussels. In June, and again in Brussels, he met with the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. European Council President Herman Van Rompuy, European Commission President José Manuel Barroso, and Štefan Füle, the European Commissioner for
Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy, paid trips to Armenia. In March, Armenian FM Edward Nalbandian attended the Visegrád Four meeting in Prague. In July, he took part in the Brussels talk between EU and the FMs of Eastern Partnership countries. Thirteenth session of the Armenia-EU Cooperation Council was convened in December.

The Armenia-EU Association Agreement talks were conducted with success. A progress was recorded in the negotiations with respect to establishing an Armenia-EU Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Zone.

Armenia continued to take an active part in the Eastern Partnership cooperation, the domain-oriented cooperation with EU continued, and parliamentary collaboration carried on with vigor in 2012.


Armenians Protest Election Results
February 24, 2013

As many as 4,000 supporters of former Foreign Minister Raffi Hovannisian, who finished second in Armenia’s February 18 presidential election, demonstrated in the capital, Yerevan, on February 24. The protest was not sanctioned by the authorities. Some 8,000 Hovannisian supporters protested on February 22 in Yerevan, and smaller protests were held in other cities on February 23. Hovannisian’s Heritage party is calling for additional demonstrations in 21 cities between February 26 and 28, as well as another protest in Yerevan on February 28. According to official results, incumbent President Serzh Sarkisian was reelected with 58.6 percent of the vote, while Hovannisian came in second with nearly 37 percent.


Armenia has no prospects for joining Customs Union – analyst
July 08, 2013

Armenia inadequately assesses the current situation concerning the talks on the Armenia-EU Association Agreement and the Customs Union. Caucasus Institute Director, political scientist Alexander Iskandaryan noted the aforesaid during a press conference on Monday. In the analyst’s view, the Association Agreement negotiations are progressing quite well and there is a more-than-50-percent chance that the document will be initialed during the EU Eastern Partnership summit to be held in Vilnius, Lithuania, in November.

“But this is solely one of the steps [in the process],” the political scientist recalled. Iskandaryan added that the initialing of the document will be followed by
the implementation of the terms that are stated in the document, and this may take several years. As for the prospects for Armenia joining the Customs Union, the analyst believes there are no such prospects because no one is proposing the country to become a member in this organization. That is why, as per Iskandaryan, Armenia is developing forms for solely collaboration with the Customs Union.


Armenia’s ex-presidential candidate speaks on non-disclosure of EU Association Agreement
August 08, 2013

The non-publicizing of the Armenia-EU Association Agreement is a lot like the step taken by opposition Heritage Party Chairman, ex-presidential candidate and former FM Raffi Hovannisian. Hovannisian was to go to a meeting with President Serzh Sargsyan, and Hovannisian was as if was elected President, but he was not disclosing what he would be talking about. Opposition National Self-Determination Union Chairman, ex-presidential candidate Paruyr Hayrikyan stated the abovementioned during a press conference on Thursday. He also recalled that when Hovannisian had returned from the meeting; he would not disclose details yet again. “I hope this [i.e., the Association Agreement] will not be like that. The signing of any agreement with the European Union cannot contain anything sensational for us because Europe is guided by a system of values,” Hayrikyan said. He added that, in general, no agreement with the EU can contain negative things. As per Paruyr Hayrikyan, the alternative would be the destruction of Armenia.


Armenian Government Adopts Road Map for Joining Customs Union
September 19, 2013

The Armenian government has adopted a preliminary road map toward joining a Moscow-led Customs Union of Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Russia. The road map --presented at a cabinet session by the Economics Ministry --stipulates that a coordination commission and working groups will be established within a few days. All related documents must be ready by October 10. The Justice Ministry has been assigned to translate pertinent documents into Armenian so that the parliament can start discussions on their ratification. On September 18, a coalition of Armenian civic organizations promoting European integration condemned Presi-
dent Serzh Sarkisian’s September 3 decision to join the Customs Union as a “national humiliation” and pledged to fight for its reversal.


**EU parliament approves visa facilitation, readmission deals with Armenia**  
**October 10, 2013**

The European Parliament on Wednesday voted in favor of the visa facilitation and readmission agreements with Armenia. Under the agreements that still need to be debated and voted on in several other formats before becoming effective early next year, the European Union undertakes to issue Schengen visas to certain groups of citizens of Armenia on more favorable terms, while Armenia commits itself to “readmitting” its citizens that stay in EU-member states illegally. Negotiations on both deals were launched in 2011 in the context of the EU’s Eastern Partnership program concerning six former Soviet nations, including Armenia. Among the beneficiaries of the facilitated visa regime will be members of official delegations, scholars, students, journalists, artists and athletes, people who have close relatives lawfully residing in EU-member states, others. In addition, the Schengen visa fee is to be reduced to 35 Euros (about $47), while visas to certain categories of citizens, including children and pensioners, will be issued free of charge.

Source: Armenia Now,  

**Armenia: disaster risk reduction workshop brings together specialists from four countries**  
**November 25, 2013**

A workshop on disaster risk reduction was held in the Armenian capital Yerevan, bringing together experts in the field from Italy, Belarus, Moldova, and Georgia, as well as several international organizations. The event was organized by the EU Eastern Neighborhood Support initiative within the framework of the EU-funded programme on “Prevention, Preparedness and Response to man-made and natural disasters” (PPRD East). The participants exchanged experiences on different aspects of disasters, with a big accent on prevention and preparedness. Other topics were tackled in various reports including disasters as a development challenge, climate change and disaster risk reduction, Geographic
Informative systems (GIS), global and local risks, and the role of the media. The Eastern Partnership flagship initiative for the Prevention, Preparedness & Response to natural and man-made Disasters (PPRD East) aims at protecting the environment, the population, cultural heritage, resources and infrastructures by strengthening the countries’ resilience, preparedness and response to man-made and natural disasters.


Armenian fish products likely to be sold in Europe from autumn
January 22, 2014
Armenia’s State Food Safety Service is finishing development of a program to check whether locally-produced fishery products meet food safety requirements of the European Union, head of the agency, Abraham Bakhchagulyan, said Wednesday. Speaking at a ceremony closing an EU-supported project for strengthening control of food safety and animal feed of Twinning Program he said the program is to be submitted to the relevant commission of the EU until March 30. He expressed hope that European experts will visit Armenia in summer and beginning from September Armenian fish products could be exported to Europe. Bakhchagulyan said thanks to this program Armenian honey is being sold in Europe since 2013 September. He added that Armenian fruits and vegetables have a big chance to be sold in Europe. “Armenian fruits and vegetables are excellent in quality, and we would be happy to see them in our market,” said Gerard Roesink, head of the program on strengthening control of food safety and animal feed from the Netherlands.


Armenia Ready to Join Russia’s Customs Union by Mid-April
March 01, 2014
Armenia says it will be ready to join a Russia-led customs union within weeks. Armenian Deputy Foreign Minister Shavarsh Kocharian said in Yerevan on March 1 that his country will accomplish all necessary tasks by mid-April in order to join the CIS Customs Union, which also includes Belarus and Kazakhstan. Kocharian said the Armenian parliament will debate the customs-union agreement after the document is approved by Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan. The leader of the opposition Armenian National Congress coalition, former President Levon Ter-Petrossian, although he described Armenia’s upcoming membership in the
Russia-led customs union as “irreversible,” criticized the government’s handling of the decision. He asked why the authorities had spent three years negotiating with the European Union on an Association Agreement, only to back out at the last moment. Ter-Petrossian was speaking on March 1 to thousands of people who gathered in central Yerevan to commemorate the deaths of 10 people in 2008 during deadly postelection clashes between Armenian security forces and protesters. Ter-Petrossian said Armenia needed to lean toward Russia because joining the European Union does not appear to feasible for the country at the current time. Ter-Petrossian said Armenia was a small country that “cannot afford a civil war.” Armenia announced its intention to join the union in September and chose, in late November, not to initial an Association Agreement with the European Union.


**Armenia, EU committed to deepening cooperation**

*May 16, 2014*

Prime Minister Hovik Abrahamyan received today the Head of the EU Delegation to Armenia, Ambassador Traian Hristea. PM Abrahamyan underlined that the newly formed government will maintain the active cooperation with the EU and will take practical steps for its further deepening. Mr. Hristea, in turn, reiterated EU’s willingness to continue to provide support to Armenia in the implementation of reforms in a number of spheres and raise the bilateral cooperation to a higher level. The interlocutors discussed the perspectives of deepening of Armenia-EU relations, stressing that the development of cooperation should stem from the joint statement adopted at the Vilnius Summit in November. It reconfirms the commitment of the parties to continue the active cooperation and stress the need to modernize the EU-Armenia Action Plan.


**EU representatives visit the Ministry of Emergency Situations**

*June 04, 2014*

Recently, the Ministry of Emergency Situations of Armenia received a proposal from the EU delegation in Armenia to organize a study visit for representatives of the embassies of the EU member states. On June 4, the responsible officials on security issues of EU member states (France, Germany, Sweden, Greece, Romania, Bulgaria, Lithuania, and Poland) Embassies and the members of EU delegation to Armenia visited the Ministry of Emergency Situations of the RA.
Welcoming the guests, Deputy Minister of Emergency Situations D. Karapetyan briefly introduced the structure of the Ministry, its main functions, achievements and development programs to the guests. Great improvements have been done in the system of the Ministry of Emergency Situations in recent years due to which our Ministry currently has got the confidence of our people. We have created the national platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, developed DRR national strategy, and today we can also fix, that the processes of disaster risk reduction are also being developed at the regional level. We have a crisis management center and “911” service, which has become the first help of each citizen. More than 1 million calls are got there annually, and none of them is left unanswered. But our achievements would not have been so effective, if there wouldn’t be our international partners’ support. The Deputy Minister also spoke about the current projects: the restart of the observatory in Garni, modernization of seismic observatory network, renovation of the unified anti-hail management system and Stepanavan airport. D. Karapetyan stressed about the newly formed working culture, established in the Ministry of Emergency Situations, noting that the Ministry of Emergency Situations is the only state institution, where work people on wheelchairs. During the visit, the guests also visited the crisis management center, got acquainted with its staff, working principles and technical equipment.


Armenia simplifies procedures of animal-origin food export to EU countries
August 21, 2014

Armenia has simplified the procedures of exporting foods of animal origin to the EU countries, Agriculture Minister Sergo Karapetyan said Thursday at a regular Cabinet session. At this session, Armenia’s government voided one of its previous decisions related to requirements to maximal volumes of residuals of veterinary medicines in animal-origin products. Abrahamyan said the government did that to bring the requirements in conformity with EU standards.


EU to provide €170 million to Armenia for developing private sector and implementing reforms
September 08, 2014

The European Union will provide €140 to 170 million to Armenia over a period between 2014 and 2017 for development of the private sector and implementation of public administration and justice reforms, panorama.am reports. On
Monday, the European Commission announced a decision to provide EU funding to the partners in the EU Neighbourhood in the coming years. This package includes programs for Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia. The total amount of these programs is over €5.5 billion. The priorities of the financing have been decided in a close cooperation with authorities, civil society representatives and concerned parties in each of the partner countries.


**Armenia’s accession to EEU will not hinder relations with EU – official**

**October 07, 2014**

Discussions are underway between Armenia and the European Union to clarify the agenda of further cooperation, Armenia’s First Deputy Economy Minister GareginMelkonyan told reporters on Tuesday. His comment came in response to a question about whether Armenia’s entry into the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) will hinder relations with the European Union. “I see no problems in continuing our cooperation with the European Union,” MrMelkonyan said. The official noted that Armenia continues to implement joint projects with the European Union. In particular, he mentioned the project implemented with the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development which is aimed at boosting exports in agribusiness and construction.


**Donald Tusk: EU aims at reaching free visa regime with Armenia**

**July 20, 2015**

The European Union intends deepening the relations with Armenia, advancing, opening markets, fostering the development of democracy and improving the business investments, President of the European Council Donald Tusk told a press conference held jointly with Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan, Armenpress reports. “We have successfully completed the first stage of the discussions on the new comprehensive agreement of the bilateral relations and outlined the sectors of the further cooperation. The states of the European Union are already discussing mandate provision”, - said Tusk, strictly highlighting the progress between the two sides in mobility, adding that the final objective is the free visa regime. “Quite an important part of our cooperation is the facilitation of travelling. I welcome Armenia’s progress in the issues of mobility facilitation. The efficient
implementation of the readmission and visa facilitation agreement is a decisive condition to start the visa liberalization dialogue. The free visa regime is a final objective. I hope that the next step will be made during the further months”, stressed the President of the European Council Donald Tusk.


Second program to support organic agriculture in Armenia officially launched December 15, 2015

The second program designed to support organic agriculture in Armenia was officially launched on Tuesday. The cost of the 37 month-long program is 3.3 million euros, of which 2.8 million Euros will come from the European Union and another 0.5 million from the Austrian Development Agency.”The purpose of this program is to support Armenian farmers and ensure the transition to organic agriculture. It is also expected to help increase agricultural production, win new international markets and provide local consumers with organic products,’ deputy minister of agriculture Armen Harutyunyan said. According to him, the program consists of four components: reform of the legal framework, provision of financial assistance to farmers (grants), securing access to markets and raising awareness about the benefits of organic agriculture.”The development of organic farming is a priority of the ministry of agriculture, reflected in its strategy for sustainable development”, said Harutyunyan.

Head of the EU Delegation to Armenia, Ambassador Peter Switalski, said in turn that agricultural programs in Armenia are aimed at narrowing the gap in living standards between the capital city and the provinces. According to him, Armenia has everything to succeed in developing organic agriculture. The first similar program was launched in January this year. Its duration is 3 years; the budget is 25 million euros.

Source: Arka

Armenia and EU Set to Establish New Model of Relations
February 09, 2016

Armenia and European Union are entering a phase of constructive relations, according to the Head of EU Delegation to Armenia and Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Piotr Switalski.
“Together we are trying to form a new model of relations. I am very pleased that Armenia-EU relations are developing quite well. Negotiations on a new framework agreement started in last December. The two sides stated they want to complete the negotiations soon. Of course, complex issues and challenges exist but I am hopeful that the negotiations will be smooth and we will reach a mutually acceptable solution at the end of the road,” the ambassador said. According to Switalski, they are now in the stage of implementation of the revised Neighborhood Policy. That means the negotiations on framework agreement must consider the new Neighborhood Policy.

“We aim to show that it is possible to be a member of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), CSTO and at the same time to be at good neighborly relations with the European Union. As you know the European Union is Armenia’s largest foreign donor. Every year we spend 50 million euros for the benefit of the citizens of Armenia. We are the largest foreign trade partner of Armenia,” Switalski added.

Switalski noted that the framework agreement is important because it will contribute to a solid legal basis for relations. However, the starting point for the initiative is unclear. This is the text of the Association Agreement, which was negotiated between Armenia and the EU. According to the ambassador, the part which refers to the values, the rule of law and cooperation in security sector will be adopted without amendments. Other provisions of the agreement are necessary to be fixed, especially the section on trade.


Armenia-EU trade and investments negotiations start
February 16, 2016

Within forming a new legal basis for relations between the European Union and Armenia, EU-Armenia Trade and Investment Framework Agreement’s first phase was launched in Brussels. According to the Ministry of Economy of Armenia, negotiations are underway around previously defined fields and directions with the EU: particularly, goods and services trade, trade protection measures, technical barriers to trade, sanitary and phytosanitary measures, intellectual property rights, competition, public procurement, sustainable development, transparency, current payments and movement of capital, investment cooperation, etc. In addition to plenary sessions, more than 12 meetings of negotiation subgroups are expected.

Armenia wants to complete negotiations with EU as soon as possible
March 17, 2016

Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan stated that being a member of Eurasian Economic Union, Armenia continues to consecutively broaden long-term partnership agenda with European Union. “This partnership is the most important guarantee of intensification of reforms, reinforcement of democratic institutions in Armenia. Negotiations on a new Armenia-European Union framework agreement were launched on December 7 in 2015 in Brussels, which we anticipate to complete as soon as possible,” said the President during his speech in University of Cyprus on March 16. Serzh Sargsyan noted that being a founding member of Collective Security Treaty Organization, “we continue to efficiently implement projects with NATO”. Armenia brings its contribution to strengthening international peace and safety by participating in international peacekeeping missions, the President stated.

Source: Mediamax,

Armenia: EUR 30 million from EU to support private sector development
April 25, 2016

The private sector of Armenia will get a chance to benefit from EU advice and funding, through a Small and Medium-Sized Enterprise (SME) Finance and Advice Facility, to be launched in the framework of the EU-funded ‘EU4Business’ initiative, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) said in press release on 25 April. The facility will deploy over EUR 30 million of EU funds over a four-year period to stimulate private sector development in the country. The EBRD and other investors will also add additional funding to support the access of Armenian SMEs to financing.

The support to Armenian firms will contribute to a number of positive outcomes such as increased employment, increased foreign and domestic investment, higher levels of transparency, capital market development and diversification of economic activity, said the EBRD. In addition to access to finances, Armenian SMEs will also be able to use business advisory services on a cost-sharing basis through the EBRD’s Advice for Small Businesses (ASB) team, consisting of local consultants as well as international business and industry advisers. “The EU is delighted by this opportunity to team up with the EBRD to create investment opportunities for Armenia; business development is at the core of EU development cooperation with its partner countries,” said Hoa-Binh Adjemian, the Head of Cooperation at the EU Delegation in the country.

EU supports disaster risk reduction in Armenia

June, 28, 2016

The Programme Supporting Disaster Risk Reduction Amongst Vulnerable Communities and Institutions in South Caucasus were launched today in Armenian Ministry of Emergency Situations. According to the press release of the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) Armenia, the programme will be held until the end of 2017. It aims to reduce vulnerability of communities and intensify their resilience to natural disasters and man-made hazards. The programme will be held in Shirak, Lori, Aragatsotn, Gégharkunik, Tavush, Armavir and Syunik marzes and Yerevan, targeting primarily children, women and disabled persons. It also aims to improve capacities of school and pre-school institutions, which will reduce disaster risk. The programme is financed by the European Commission’s Humanitarian aid and Civil Protection department (ECHO) in the framework of Disaster Preparedness programme (DIPECHO). In Armenia, the programme is implemented by Armenian Red Cross Society and Oxfam Armenia in cooperation with OxYGen Foundation, UNICEF Armenia, the UN Development Programme and Save the Children.


EU-Armenia cooperation deal moving forward, envoy says

July, 06, 2016

Progress is being made in negotiations over the document on Armenia-EU cooperation, Lithuanian ambassador to Armenia Erika Petrikas was quoted as saying Wednesday, July 6. “We are currently engaged in productive talks with Armenia over the new document,” Petrikas said, according to Tert.am.

“We have been registering pretty quick progress in our discussions. We have received positive assessments from the EU delegation and special representatives, so we expect to sign the agreement as soon as possible.” Earlier, Deputy Foreign Minister Karen Nazaryan said that negotiations are being conducted in three directions, while most of the talks are completed.

b. Azerbaijan

*EU keen on active participation in resolving Nagorno-Karabakh conflict*

**March 7, 2012**

Special attention was not paid to the Nagorno-Karabakh issue at a meeting between the Foreign Ministers of the Visegrad Four (Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary) and the member-countries of the EU program in Prague. However, the issue of unresolved conflicts was discussed, European Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy Stefan Fule said in an interview with radio station Azatutyun. He said the EU must take steps to strengthen the confidence. “We have clearly stated that we are ready to become part of a comprehensive and full solution, whatever it was, of course, on the basis of the parties’ consent,” Fule said.

**Source:** Today.az, http://www.today.az/news/politics/103770.html

*Eastern Partnership goal achieved’*

**April 03, 2012**

“We welcome talks to ease visa regime between the EU and Azerbaijan.” The statement came from member of the Polish Seym Jacek Saryusz-Wolski speaking at the second session of the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly in Baku. “The Eastern Partnership goal has been achieved. Ukraine recently signed an association agreement on free trade. It includes Moldova, Georgia and Romania. We welcome talks on easing visa regime with Azerbaijan and Armenia”, he said. He noted that Euronest PA is an important element in implementation of the Eastern Partnership program.

**Source:** News.az, http://news.az/articles/politics/57467

*European Parliament discusses Azerbaijan-EU talks on associative agreement*

**April 18, 2012**

The progress of the Azerbaijan-EU talks on associative agreement was on agenda during the European Parliament session in Strasbourg. European parliamentarians discussed a draft resolution submitted by Finnish parliamentarian Anneli Jäätteenmäki on March 27, 2012 on behalf of the parliament’s Foreign Affairs Committee, APA reports. The draft resolution will be put to vote in the plenary meeting on Wednesday. The European Parliament also discussed the Armenia-EU associative agreement talks. The parliament intends to show its active involvement in the solution to Nagorno Karabakh conflict. The last round of the negotiations on the associative agreement between Azerbaijan and European Union, which started on July 15, 2010, was held in Baku in October, 2011.

**Source:** News.az, http://news.az/articles/politics/58452
Azerbaijan not to join Eurasian Customs Community  
January 30, 2013

Azerbaijan won’t join Eurasian Customs Community, said Chairman of Azerbaijan Customs Committee Aydin Aliyev. Aliyev says last year during meeting of the World Customs Organization, customs cooperation minister of Eurasian Customs Community invited Azerbaijan to join the organization, APA reports. But Azerbaijani side refused to join at that meeting. ‘Today, position of Azerbaijani government and customs service is far away from the joining to Eurasian Customs Community. Azerbaijan is an independent country and it will last’, noted Aliyev.


Azerbaijani Parliament ignores call from Civil Society on new NGO law  
February 15, 2013

The Azerbaijan Parliament has ignored a call by 62 civil society organizations to reject amendments to legislation governing non-governmental organizations on the grounds that it threatens the freedom of activity of NGO’s. The changes were passed by the Parliament on 15 February 2013. The amendments which now have to be accepted by the President within 45 days introduce big fines on NGO’s which fail to register grants with the authorities within a certain period. NGO officers would have to pay between 1,500 AZN (1,428 Euros) and 2,500 AZN and the NGOs themselves between 5,000 AZN and 7,000 AZN. The fines are to be greater if NGOs accept donations without grant agreements. The signatories of the letter point out that at the moment NGOs in Azerbaijan have to submit as many as 19 reports a year to the authorities and argue that the argument that the amendments which add reporting obligations to raise the level of transparency is spurious. They charge that the aim of the change in legislation is to limit NGO activity in Azerbaijan. At the moment around 1,000 NGOs remain unregistered in Azerbaijan and thus cannot open bank accounts. Without registration and bank accounts they will be unable to fulfill the reporting requirements introduced by the new amendments.


Azerbaijan raises chemical production  
April 25, 2013

Production at Azerbaijan’s chemical plants made AZN 66.8m in January-March 2013. Volume of production in chemical industry rose by 0.6%. 1news.az reports with reference to the sources in the State Statistical Committee that iodine
production rose by 39% and made 61.3 tonnes, aluminium sulfate-18,900 tonnes (65.6% growth), isopropylene alcohol-5,400 tonnes (4.9% growth).

All the same, decline is recorded in polypropylene production by 26.5%, at the level of 6,600 tonnes. Polyethylene production has dropped by 12.2% to 22,400 tonnes. Paints production has dropped by 13.6% to 732.3 tonnes.


4.1 magnitude earthquake in Azerbaijan
April 30, 2013

4.1 magnitude earthquakes occurred in the Gabala region of Azerbaijan; no destruction or injuries were reported. This was announced by the Republican Seismological Service Center, the Trend reports. Tremors were recorded at 2:30 pm local time, 17 kilometers south of the Gabala. The earthquake occurred at a depth of six kilometers. Power of the earthquake in the epicentre was four points; tremors were felt in Gabala, Ismayilla and other settlements. As recalled by the VZGLYAD, on the eve a 5.6 magnitude earthquake occurred in Afghanistan; seven people have died, dozens have been injured. The earthquake occurred on April 24, near the Pakistani border at 1:25 Moscow time. According to the U.S. Geological Service, the epicentre was located at a depth of 62 kilometers, 25 kilometers from the Afghan city of Jalalabad. Western news agencies reported that the magnitude of the earthquake was 6.2; tremors were felt in India and Pakistan.

In the eastern Afghan province of Nangarhar, at least four people have died, injuring 60 people.


Füle and Asadov: EU and Azerbaijan share ambition for successful Eastern Partnership summit
June 6, 2013

The EU and Azerbaijan should reinforce the parliamentary dimension of their relations, EU Commissioner for Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policy, Štefan Füle, and Chairman of the Milli Majlis, the parliament of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Oktay Sabir Asadov, emphasized during their meeting in Brussels today. They both stressed the need to develop a long-term partnership based on political association, a press release said. Füle and Asadov talked about the shared ambition of Azerbaijan and the EU to turn the Eastern Partnership summit in Vilnius in November into a success for the bilateral relations, “making sure there is a chance to move it forward in a number of sectors, together with the progress in the area of the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms.” In this
context Commissioner Füle expressed concerns about the final adoption of the amendments to the Criminal Code establishing punitive measures against slander and insult on the internet, stressing that freedom of expression including over the internet must be enhanced and not limited. Füle and Asadov reviewed recent developments in Azerbaijan, covering such issues as human rights, democracy and fundamental freedoms. They also discussed energy policy, initiatives and policies under the Eastern Partnership and ways of enhancing the capacity of the Milli Majlis, building on support already provided by the EU. The Commissioner underlined that the October Presidential election in Azerbaijan would be an important test for the country’s democratic development and that “safeguarding the space for a pluralistic exchange of opinions was essential.”


Azerbaijani FM attends EU Eastern Partnership Foreign Ministers
September 28, 2013
Azerbaijan’s Minister of Foreign Affairs Elmar Mammadyarov has attended the EU Eastern Partnership Foreign Ministers meeting on the sidelines of the 68th Regular Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, Azertac reports. According to the press service of the Ministry, the ministers discussed the agenda of the upcoming Vilnius Summit, and exchanged views on the documents to be signed.

Mammadyarov stressed the necessity of applying the concept of strategic cooperation established between the EU and Azerbaijan in the energy field to other areas, underlining the importance of deepening cooperation on this front.


Azerbaijani TV broadcaster wins first European Endowment for Democracy grant in time for presidential elections
October 03, 2013
An independent television broadcaster from Azerbaijan, Meydan, is the first initiative to receive support under the EU-funded European Endowment for Democracy, in time to be fully operational in the run-up to the presidential elections. Meydan was selected out of more than 100 requests for democracy support submitted over one month in an online call for proposals. The EED’s Executive Director, Jerzy Pomianowski, said: “EED is proud that we were able to rapidly react and support Meydan TV’s request for support on the eve of the Azerbaijan elections. We hope that our assistance will better balance the range of informa-
tion and thus help foster a constructive debate at his crucial time for the citizens of Azerbaijan.” ‘Meydan’ means ‘town square’ in Azeri, symbolic of the collective struggle for freedom of speech in the region, the press release said, pointing out that it is “inspired by the idea that access to information and free thought could be a catalyst for positive change.” Meydan TV is an initiative led by some of the most influential Azerbaijani writers, bloggers and musicians. Based on the values of inclusivity and equality, Meydan TV works with Azerbaijanis from Baku and beyond.

The television’s director, Emin Milli, said Meydan TV was one example of an inspiring struggle for freedom of speech. “I believe that independent media is the key to peaceful and democratic transition and I hope that our initiative will be a bridge to a more pluralistic, free society in Azerbaijan and our region,” he said.


Azerbaijan invites Bavarian investors to Sumgait Chemical Industrial park by Abbas Akhundov

November 28, 2013

Azerbaijan is inviting Bavarian companies to invest in Sumgait Chemical Industrial Park, Deputy Head of Entrepreneurship Development Department at the country’s Ministry of Economy and Industry Huseyn Pashayev said on Nov.28 at the third Azerbaijani-Bavarian business forum in Baku.

According to Pashayev, representatives of around 22 Bavarian companies who arrived in Baku consider the following sectors as important ones for Azerbaijan: construction, energy and the chemical industry, as well as food industry.”

A solid legal base has been created - around 29 intergovernmental documents have been signed - for cooperation between Azerbaijan and Germany,” Pashayev said.

Head of Foreign Economy and Marketing at Bavarian State Ministry of Economic Affairs and Media, Energy and Technology Ulrike Wolf said that Bavaria plays an important role in Azerbaijani-German relations. According to Wolf, around 36 percent of German companies operating in Azerbaijan represent Bavaria and nearly one third of Azerbaijani companies in Germany operate in Bavaria.

The business forum is being held with the arrangement of Bayern International Gmbh, German-Azerbaijani Chamber of Commerce and Azerbaijan Export and Investment Promotion Foundation (AZPROMO).

Baku hosting international environmental forum of CIS countries’ youth
December 17, 2013

An international environmental forum of CIS countries’ youth titled “Learn from each other” was opened in Baku on Dec.17.

The official partners of the event are the Ministry of Youth and Sport of Azerbaijan, İDEA Public Association (International Dialogue for Environmental Protection) and the “Friends of Nature” Public Youth Association.

Over 40 young ecologists from CIS countries are participating in the event. The forum is aimed at strengthening of environmental thinking in Azerbaijan and in the world, increasing the responsibility of the youth in the sphere of ecology and the environment, as well as speeding up the implementation of environmental projects in Azerbaijan.

2013 has been declared the “Year of Ecology” in CIS countries, according to Deputy Minister of Youth and Sport of Azerbaijan Intigam Babayev. “Within the declared “Year of Ecology”, various events are held in Azerbaijan. We organized an environmental camp in summer of 2013 with the participation of representatives from the CIS countries and today as a continuation of these activities we are holding a forum,” the deputy minister said.

“I believe that within the forum the youth will hold interesting discussions and exchange of views. I believe that the participants will have interesting joint initiatives and ideas in the sphere of environmental education and environmental protection. In the future, it will be possible to implement these projects in the CIS space too,” he added.


Azerbaijan, EU replaces Association Agreement with new strategic partnership
January 29, 2014

The EU and Azerbaijan are currently discussing the possibility of signing an agreement on Strategic Modernisation Partnership, head of the EU delegation in Azerbaijan Malena Mard has told reporters. “This is a volumetric agreement covering cooperation in various spheres of the economy and the rule of law,” she said. According to Mard, the Association Agreement and the Strategic Modernisation Partnership complement each other.

Economic cooperation between the EU and Azerbaijan has always been on the agenda,” said the representative of the European Union.”

Statistics are pleasing – there was an increase in trade and investment last year. We will strive to continue this trend,” she said. Mard also noted that at the Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius in November last year, the EU and Azerbaijan signed an agreement on visa facilitation, which will open a great opportunity for people on both sides to travel easily between Azerbaijan and all the countries of
the Schengen agreement. For entry into force of this agreement the parties must wait for harmonization of the readmission agreement, which regulates migration issues. Thereafter, both agreements will enter into force simultaneously.

According to her, it will be possible during six months.


Azerbaijani MP’s document discussed at Euronest committee meeting
February 19, 2014

In February, Brussels hosted a meeting of the Social Committee of Euronest Parliament Assembly. The meeting held important discussions on the current activity of Euronest. At the same time, a document titled Intercultural Dialogue in Eastern Partnership Countries, authors of which are Azerbaijani MP Jeyhun Osmanli and European MP Tatyana Jdanok, was brought to discussion as an official document of the European Parliament.

The document deals with the intercultural dialogue, combating racism, fascism and similar issues. It also reflects important provisions on protection of cultural facilities in the regions. The document of a perfect character can be used not only in the European zone, but also in any places of the world. During the meeting, MPs of the Armenian Parliament, following Osmanli’s report, as always made aggressive and provocative statements against the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. But Osmanli gave a grounded response to the groundless statements. In the end, the finalized document of the Social Committee was adopted and recommended to the plenary session.

Addressing the event, MP Osmanli said it was wrong that some partner countries view the EU as a source of financial means. Noting that the Union is an integration of values, the MP underlined the priority of the exchange of progressive values. Representatives of the commission supported the MP’s approach.


Statement of Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum on the arrest of Hasan Huseynli, Head of “Intelligent Citizen” Enlightenment Center Public Union, Azerbaijan
April 02, 2014

The Steering Committee of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum protests strongly against the arrest of Hasan Huseynli, head of “Intelligent Citizen” Enlightenment Center Public Union based in Ganja city in Azerbaijan. He was arrested on 31 March 2014 on trumped up charges of hooliganism for allegedly stabbing someone with whom he had never come in contact. The police in Ganja
have confirmed the charges. The investigation that is being carried out against Hasan Huseynli is completely unlawful and absurd, and does not warrant his detention. Hasan Huseynli is an education promoter, social activist, and community leader, who has had a huge positive impact on hundreds of young Azerbaijanis, encouraging them to study abroad and contribute to Azerbaijan’s development with their knowledge and skills. He is a highly respected civil rights activist, and his organisation is highly regarded in Azerbaijan and abroad. We consider Hasan Huseynli’s detention to be part of a larger clampdown on civil society. This clampdown was started in November 2013 when legal proceedings were launched against Anar Mammadli, head of the Azerbaijani election watchdog, the Elections Monitoring and Democracy Studies Center, and Working Group 1 co-ordinator of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum in 2013.

We urge the government of Azerbaijan to immediately free Hasan Huseynli, and to drop all charges against him. The authorities must understand that every additional political prisoner in Azerbaijan undermines the country’s image abroad and its position in the Council of Europe and in the Organization of Security and Co-operation in Europe as well as its relations with the European Union.

We urge the European Commission, the EU Delegation in Baku, and the European Parliament to condemn his arrest in the strongest terms, and to support the Civil Society Forum in putting pressure on Azerbaijan authorities for the immediate release of all political prisoners in Azerbaijan.


**GRETA welcomes Azerbaijan’s steps taken to combat trafficking in human beings**

May 23, 2014

The Council of Europe’s Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) has published today its first evaluation report on Azerbaijan. In its report, GRETA welcomed the steps taken by Azerbaijan to prevent and combat trafficking in human beings, including the adoption of anti-trafficking legislation and national action plans, as well as the appointment of a national coordinator and a working group on combating trafficking, according to the website of the Council of Europe. The report highlights the initiatives taken to raise public awareness of human trafficking.

GRETA stresses that the role and input of NGOs and other relevant stakeholders, such as labor inspectors and medical staff, in identifying victims of trafficking should be reinforced by formalizing their involvement in the national referral mechanism. The authorities need to ensure that safe accommodation and other assistance measures are provided to victims regardless of whether they co-operate with the investigation, according to the report.
GRETA also stresses that victims should be systematically informed about the possibility of obtaining compensation and their access to it should be ensured. Finally, GRETA calls on the Azerbaijani authorities to strengthen their efforts to ensure that crimes related to trafficking are proactively investigated and prosecuted promptly and effectively. The report highlights the need for further training and specialization of judges, prosecutors and police investigators. It should be noted that prior to drawing up its evaluation report, GRETA held consultations with the relevant authorities and non-governmental and international organizations active in the field of combating trafficking in human beings in Azerbaijan.

The recommendations addressed to the Azerbaijani government will be considered on the basis of GRETA’s report.


**EU welcomes Azerbaijan’s accession to the WTO - Malena Mard**

*June 02, 2014*

Azerbaijan is holding meetings on a regular basis in order to be a member of the World Trade Organization. I’m pleased that these meetings are held more frequently nowadays”, said EU Ambassador to Azerbaijan Malena Mard, APA reports.

“The European Union welcomes Azerbaijan’s accession to the WTO. Because this way will pave the way for further deepening of trade and economic cooperation. As you know, the European Union is the biggest trade partner of Azerbaijan. The steps that Azerbaijan is taking in order to be a member of the WTO are quite positive. We know that it’s a complex and time-consuming process. Luckily, the next meeting will be held in late June. At the same time, we’re observing that the dialogue is intensifying”.


**Elmar Mammadyarov: Certain forces in the EU apply double standards towards Azerbaijan**

*September 12, 2014*

Rufat Ahmadzadeh. “Certain forces in the EU apply double standards towards Azerbaijan”, Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov said at a press conference after a meeting with Austrian counterpart Sebastian Kurtz, APA reports.

The Minister noted that some officials, MPs and journalists from countries recognizing the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, periodically expressed views and steps are being taken to support the separatist regime: “It is not made any
warnings against them; it is not taken any action against them. Despite the fact that, in accordance with generally recognized principles of international law should respect the sovereignty of States, respect their laws on entry into their territory. Unfortunately, in some issues we see double standards towards Azerbaijan. These double standards are also an obstacle to a just resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.”

The Minister noted that in order to prevent illegal visit to the occupied territories, Azerbaijan includes these people to the “black list” who have committed such a move: “However, this is not enough to prevent this problem. I can not say what specific measures should be taken for this, but I can say that if you arrive without a visa in one of the EU countries, or you will be arrested immediately, or you will turn out outside the EU, also you can be lifetime banned on the visit of to EU. “

Elmar Mammadyarov said Azerbaijan attaches great importance to economic cooperation with the EU, “Our economic relations have developed significantly in recent years. Azerbaijan’s attitude to the Association Agreement is known. Azerbaijan not only intends to develop economic and political relations with the EU, but also to become a strategic partner. We have only warm relations for the EU. I wish that these relations were mutual.”


Azerbaijani FM receives EU special representative
October 21, 2014

Azerbaijan’s Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov has received a delegation led by the EU Special Representative for South Caucasus Herbert Salber, Azerbaijan’s Foreign Ministry said on Oct.21.

During the meeting, the sides exchanged views on the EU-Azerbaijani relations, the cooperation under the Eastern Partnership program, as well as the current processes related to the settlement of the Armenian-Azerbaijani Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.


Reassessing the European Neighbourhood Policy in Azerbaijan
July 02, 2015

Soon after independence, Azerbaijan demonstrated its interest in cooperating not only with the EU but also with Russia in order to develop the country. Azerbaijani-EU relations can be divided into three main periods: (1) from 1992 to
2006 Azerbaijan was eager to cooperate more closely with the EU; (2) from 2007 to 2014 Azerbaijan was very self-confident; (3) since early 2014, relations between the EU and Azerbaijan have worsened due to the Ukraine crises and increased regional conflict...

**Read full article on:** CESD, http://cesd.az/new/?p=9509

*Expert: Lower oil prices on the world market will naturally cause the decline in Azerbaijan’s state revenues*

*November 24, 2015*

Interview with Dr. Vugar Bayramov, Chairman of Center for Economic and Social Development (CESD)

- Which nonoil sectors can be developed in Azerbaijan considering the current decline in world oil prices below $50?

- Lower oil prices on the world market will naturally cause the decline in Azerbaijan’s state revenues. All the same, the low oil price has a positive side for Azerbaijan. First, the current situation signalizes the need to develop nonoil economic sectors and start developing most promising fields. I would say that if tomorrow the oil price on the world markets gets up, the price may drop any time. The decline in prices depends rather on political than economic factors...

**Full interview is available at:** www.cesd.az

*Fire extinguished at another gas well on Azerbaijani faulty platform*

*January 15, 2016*

Azerbaijan’s Ministry of Emergency Situations is continuing measures to eliminate the consequences of the accident that occurred on the platform #10 of the country’s Guneshli offshore field on Dec.4.

Fire has been extinguished at another gas well on the Guneshli field, the ministry told APA.

Firefighting is underway at other wells, said the ministry.

**Source:** News.az, http://news.az/articles/society/104383

*EU wants to be part of Azerbaijan’s modernization*

*January 27, 2016*

The EU has been a long-term partner for Azerbaijan in many areas, it has a long-term cooperation with the country, and it wants to be part of the modernization of Azerbaijan for the future, the EU Ambassador to the country Malena Mard said.
She made the remarks Jan. 27 speaking in Baku at the event dedicated to implementation of the project to improve the national statistics system. She said that statistics will remain a very important area for the EU cooperation with Azerbaijan.

Mard said that in a lot of areas Europe has been, for a long-term, the largest trade partner for Azerbaijan.

“We are also the main investor, we want to develop cooperation, see more tourists from Azerbaijan in Europe and vice versa,” she said. “We hope to be the strongest investment partner in the future as well.”


**The Road Map of an Anti-Crisis Strategy in Azerbaijan, written by Dr. Vugar Bayramov**

*February 05, 2016*

The current economic policy, including the monetary policy needs to be compatible with post-oil or crisis period. Presently there are two major priorities in economic policy of government and the Central Bank: to constrain inflation and prevent or delay potential variations in the exchange rate of national currency. These priorities are important; however they are not and should not be the key targets in times of economic hardship and crisis. Limiting money base via administrative measures may serve the short-term purpose of adjustment, but in medium and long-term may have negative outcomes.

The full article: CESD, http://cesd.az/new/?p=9981

**CESD Research Paper: Why Azerbaijan needs a Strategic Reform of its foreign policy towards the European Union?**

*April 06, 2016*

During the course of 2015 Azerbaijan suffered the impact of two devaluations of the national currency, Azerbaijani Manat (AZN), due to the decrease of the world oil prices. Given that oil and natural gas accounts for more than 90% of Azerbaijani exports, continued low world oil prices had a critical negative impact on the Azerbaijani economy. The current situation has led Azerbaijan to establish new priorities that could help restructure the financial system at this critical moment. The drastic change in the economic outlook of the country has created the need to open a wider window to the European Union (EU) in order to overcome the current economic downturn. The bilateral relations between Azerbaijan towards the EU have not reached fully its potential, if we compare it with other countries that have the same profile. A possible geopolitical change of Azerbaijan
towards the European Union could be the first step to a transformation in the structure of the country and an improvement in the sectors of energy, trade, migration, tourism and agriculture.

The full paper is available at: www.cesd.az
c. Belarus:

Georgian FM urges for EU-Belarus “direct contacts” to avoid escalation
March 24, 2012

It is with deep concern that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia watches the tendency of further deterioration of existing tense relations between European Union and Belarus. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia believes that maximum efforts must be urgently carried out aiming at intensification of bilateral diplomatic dialogue and direct contacts for avoiding further escalation of tension and for finding ways of tackling existing issues. Georgia attaches great importance to prospects of deepening cooperation between Eastern European Partners with the European Union within the framework of “Eastern Partnership” and to further continuation of relations with each partner State within format of the mentioned initiative both in bilateral and multilateral dimensions alike.


EU to continue calling for release of political prisoners
April 18, 2012

The European Union will continue urging Minsk to free and exonerate the political prisoners, Maja Kocijancic, spokesperson for Catherine Ashton, the EU’s high representative for foreign affairs and security policy, told BelaPAN on Tuesday. She was commenting on remarks made earlier in the day by Uladzimir Makey, head of the Presidential Administration, who warned that the Belarusian authorities would not release or exonerate the political prisoners “under pressure” from the 27-nation bloc. Ms. Kocijancic said that the EU was “open to policy of critical engagements” with Belarus, “including through dialogue and the Eastern Partnership.” The EU insists that the “development of bilateral relations is conditional on progress towards respect by Belarus for the principles of democracy, the rule of law and human rights,” and “remains willing to assist Belarus to meet its obligations in this regard,” the spokesperson said. She also said that the situation in Belarus was “very likely” to be discussed at a meeting of the EU foreign ministers in Luxembourg on April 23.

Source: Belarus News
http://naviny.by/rubrics/english/2012/04/18/ic_news_259_391559

Belarus warns of ‘opening’ its border with the EU
April 18, 2012

Belarusian State Border Committee is considering a change in its approach to controlling its border with the EU in response to EU sanctions against the coun-
Center for East-European and Asian Studies

try – an anonymous source at the Committee told Belapan news agency on 18 April. Under the new approach, Belarusian border guards would focus mainly on inspecting inbound traffic, rather than on stopping smugglers or illegal migrants from entering EU member states.


Polish and EU ambassadors to be first to return to Belarus
April 20, 2012

The Polish and EU ambassadors to Belarus are to return to Minsk early next week, while remaining EU envoys will “trickle” back later, the Brussels-based online newspaper EUobserver reported on Friday with reference to a “senior EU source.” The EU envoys left Belarus in February in an act of solidarity with Maira Mora, head of the European Union’s Delegation to Belarus, and the Polish ambassador to Belarus, Leszek Szerepka, who were told by the Belarusian authorities “to leave for their capitals to inform their chiefs of the Belarusian side’s firm stance that pressure and sanctions are unacceptable.” Belarus did not kick out the EU ambassadors, but now it will reat the issue of their return on a case-by-case basis, Alyaksandr Lukashenka said in early April, BelaPAN said. According to the Belarusian leader, the fact that European states sent their ambassadors to Minsk indicated that they recognized and respected Belarus. On April 18, Slovak Foreign Minister Miroslav Lajcak said that the EU ambassadors should return to Belarus in “a matter of days.” Speaking to a group of Polish reporters in Brussels, the minister said that the EU needed the ambassadors to do their work in Minsk, and that the diplomats must not be involved in political disputes between the 27-nation bloc and Belarus.


Belarusian court punishes oppositionist for recommending EU sanctions against Minsk
May 22, 2012

On 22 May, a court in Minsk ordered opposition activist Viktar Ivashkevich to pay 500,000 Belarusian roubles (around 60 USD) in compensation to Marina Tsyblienko, an employee of the Mozyr oil refinery, for the damage he caused by urging the European Union to increase sanctions against Belarus, including the introduction of an embargo on products from Belarusian oil refineries. The court also ordered the defendant to publish a written apology. (On 14 May Ivashkevich
called on governments across the EU to stop buying Belarusian petroleum products and suspend their transit through EU territory until local opposition activist Siarhei Kavalenka has been released from prison. Kavalenka remains on hunger strike against his politically-motivated detention).


Belarus: first meetings in European Dialogue on Modernisation
May 24, 2012

Start up meetings of the four working groups of ‘The European Dialogue on Modernisation’ were held this week by the Delegation of the European Union to Belarus, according to a Delegation press release. These technical start-up meetings for the working groups focused on (a) political dialogue and reform; (b) justice and home affairs (including mobility and people-to-people contacts); c) economic, social reform and sector policy issues (including privatisation); and d) trade, market and regulatory reforms. The meetings were co-chaired by Member States’ Heads of Missions. The European Dialogue on Modernisation is a multi-stakeholder exchange of views, officially welcomed by the Foreign Affairs Council in March this year and launched at an event in Brussels by Štefan Füle, Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy. The Dialogue stresses the following objectives: (i) to develop a clearer understanding by the EU and by Belarusian stakeholders on the vision of a modern and democratic Belarus, and on the necessary reforms; (ii) to clarify the related potential development of relations with the EU, based on the European Neighbourhood Policy and the Eastern Partnership, as well as possible EU support in this regard; (iii) for Belarusian stakeholders to gain practical knowledge and insight from EU Member States’ experiences as regards transition processes. (EU Neighbourhood Info Centre)


Martynov to attend EaP ministerial meeting in Brussels
July 20, 2012

The annual ministerial meeting of the Eastern Partnership partner countries, the EU member states, the European External Action Service and the European Commission will take place in Brussels on 23 July. The event will be attended by the Belarusian delegation headed by Foreign Minister of Belarus Sergei Martynov, BelTA was told in the press service of the Foreign Ministry.
The meeting will discuss the interim results of the Eastern Partnership initiative, prospects for the coming year, the EaP roadmap for 2012-2013 adopted by the EU in May 2012. The head of the Belarusian delegation will deliver a report on Belarus’ position on the relations with the EU and on the ways to enhance the efficiency of the Eastern Partnership, and will hold bilateral meetings with senior officials of the EU and the heads of delegations of the countries participating in the meeting.


Statement by the IV Forum of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum «On repressions against civil society in Belarus»
November 29, 2012

November 24, 2012 marks the first anniversary of the day of the imprisonment of Ales Bialaitski, chairman of the «Viasna» human rights centre in Belarus. He was convicted to 4,5 years in jail with confiscation of property. Ales was accused of tax evasion but in reality he was imprisoned for receiving funding for activities of his organisation. We view this decision by the Belarus government as an attempt to eliminate the most known human rights defender and to stop activities of the organisation he leads. Confiscation of premises where «Viasna» was located for the past 12 years that took place on November 26, 2012 is another way of repressing the work of human rights defenders. Belarusian civil society organisations – those working in the human rights sphere especially – continuously face repressive actions by the government of Belarus. Equally unacceptable is the persecution of journalists. We find appaling the recent cases of attack against journalist Andrzej Paczobut as well as the ban on the ARCHE journal to be printed and disseminated in Belarus. On behalf of the Forum, we express our support to the civil society in Belarus, and demand immediate release and full rehabilitation of all political prisoners.

There is no place in Europe for a state where human rights violations are massive and widespread, journalists are persecuted and political prisoners remain behind bars.


The Belarusian National Platform calls for more coordination between the Eastern Partnership and the European Dialogue on Modernisation
June 1, 2013

The Belarusian National Platform adopted a resolution during its annual national Conference on 1 June 2013 in Minsk inviting the EU to better coordinate
the initiatives of Eastern Partnership and European Dialogue on Modernisation. The NP furthermore stated the lack of progress concerning human rights in Belarus and welcomed the efforts by the EU to start a new stage of dialogue with Belarus if all political prisoners are released and if considerable improvements concerning human rights are visible. Furthermore the Platform expressed its deep concern with the risk accompanying the possible establishment of a separate format of relations between the EU and the Belarusian authorities without participation of civil society.


Belarus-Germany cooperation, Belarus-EU dialogue discussed in Berlin
August 14, 2013

Berlin hosted the consultations between the heads of the analytical units of the Foreign Ministries of Belarus and Germany, BelTA learned from the press service of the Belarusian Foreign Ministry. The Belarusian side was represented by the head of the foreign political analysis department of the Foreign Ministry Vladimir Skvortsov. The German delegation was led by Thomas Bagger, head of policy planning at the German Federal Foreign Office. During the talks, the parties discussed the current state and ways of intensifying the Belarusian-German cooperation, the prospects of developing the Belarus-EU dialogue, and a number of other issues of mutual interest. The parties have agreed to continue working cooperation. Vladimir Skvortsov also had meetings with Ms Antje Leendertse, the Director for Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, and Mr Ewald Bohlke, head of the Berthold Beitz Center at the DGAP, and also representatives of the political and expert communities of Germany.


Belarus’ trade with EU reported down 28.9 percent in first seven months of 2013
September 25, 2013

Belarus’ trade with the European Union decreased by 28.9 percent year-on-year in the first seven months of 2013 to total $12,672.6 million, compared with a 33.1-percent increase in the same period the previous year, reported the National Statistical Committee (Belstat).

According to Belstat, Belarus had a surplus of $774.6 million, with exports decreasing by 48.1 percent year-on-year to total $6,723.6 million and imports increasing by 22.3 percent. Belarus’ exports to Russia totaled $9,605.7 million, or 5.7 percent more than in January-July 2012, with imports totaling $13,252.6 million, down 22.8 percent.
In January-July 2013, Belarus’ exports to Ukraine totaled $2,611.1 million, 19.6 percent less than in the same period last year; exports to the Netherlands totaled $2,720.4 million, down 53.8 percent; exports to Poland totaled $463.6 million, down 20.6 percent; and exports to Lithuania totaled $607.9 million, down 22.8 percent.

Belarus’ exports to Latvia dropped by 88.2 percent to total $348.8 million. Exports to China totaled $362.8 million, or 5.6-percent year-on-year increase; exports to Italy totaled $567.8 million, up 46.1 percent; exports to the United States totaled $47.8 million, up 9.3 percent; exports to Britain totaled $399.7 million, up 34 percent; exports to France totaled $49.2 million, up 37.9 percent; and exports to Germany totaled $1,014.1 million, up 0.1 percent.

Imports from Ukraine totaled $1,212.2 million, up 0.3 percent; imports from the Netherlands totaled $248.3 million, up 4.1 percent; imports from Germany totaled $1,803.2 million, up 34.1 percent; imports from China totaled $1,620.5 million, up 46.7 percent; imports from Poland totaled $863 million, up 19.4 percent; imports from Italy totaled $594.1 million, up 15.2 percent; imports from Britain totaled $216.2 million, up 8.9 percent; imports from Lithuania totaled $245.6 million, up 36.1 percent; imports from Latvia totaled $88.1 million, up 17 percent; imports from the United States totaled $337.3 million, up 17.5 percent; and imports from France amounted to $293.9 million, up 24.5 percent.


**Makei: EaP should provide for all-level cooperation with EU**

**November 21, 2013**

The Eastern Partnership (EaP) should offer an opportunity to cooperate with the European Union (EU) at various levels, Foreign Minister of Belarus Vladimir Makei said in an interview to the Polish newspaper Dziennik Gazeta Prawna, BelTA has learnt.

“If the Association Agreement with the EU means a ban to sign similar agreements with anybody else, then we will build nothing but a new wall between us. The Eastern Partnership should offer an opportunity to cooperate with the EU at all levels and a possibility of changing that level in the future,” the minister said.

When asked if there are any concerns regarding the different potentials of Belarus and Russia in integration associations, Vladimir Makei stressed: “The institutional framework of the Customs Union does not allow for adopting any important decision without our consent. I would like to stress that the Customs Union addresses purely foreign economic issues. We are not afraid of losing control over the economy. It is important to use this opportunity to develop cooperation between the Customs Union and the European Union, the integration of
integrations which was pointed out by the President. It would be great to have a common free trade area from Lisbon to Vladivostok.”

As for the question about Belarus’ chances to join the EU in some 40-50-year span, Vladimir Makei said: “It is possible. We quietly follow the ongoing processes instead of forcing states to make a choice between the European Union and the Customs Union. We have a long experience of living in the shadow of big nations. We lived in a joint state with Poland, Russia. We lived in the USSR. Over the past two decades we have not formed our identity to the full. Give us time to decide which path to choose.”


**Belarus’ Foreign Ministry: EaP success conditioned on observation of EaP principles**

**January 29, 2014**

The successful implementation of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) initiative is only possible provided that the fundamental principles of the initiative laid down in the 2009 Prague Declaration are observed. The statement was made by Oleg Shloma, Head of the EU Desk of the European Cooperation Department at the Foreign Ministry of Belarus, at an expert roundtable session to discuss Belarus-EU relations after the Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius, BelTA has learnt. “Belarus believes that the further successful implementation of the Eastern Partnership initiative depends on the observation of the EaP fundamental principles, like equality, non-discrimination and mutual respect. Apart from that, the EaP format should remain flexible enough to accommodate the interests of all the participating countries. These interests include commitment to closer European integration and interest in building mutually beneficial partner relations with the European Union,” Oleg Shloma said. He welcomed the equal, non-discriminatory invitation to the Vilnius Summit, which allowed Belarus to take an active part in the forum (the Belarusian delegation was led by Foreign Minister Vladimir Makei).

Oleg Shloma pointed to Belarus’ willingness to embark on negotiations with the European Commission to discuss readmission and simplification of visa formalities. “We hope for the successful start of the talks and their smooth progress with a view to easing mutual travels of nationals of Belarus and the European Union. We proceed from the fact that the EU will be willing to help Belarus resolve technical and financial issues that might arise during the negotiations and implementation of the agreements,” Oleg Shloma said. In his words, the talks on readmission and streamlining visa procedures might become an important step towards formalizing Belarus-EU relations, which is essential for the promotion of the bilateral relations in the future.
“We hope that the EU will appreciate Belarus’ readiness to look for compromises and mutually acceptable solutions. Thus, we can count on strengthening of the mutual trust and understanding, which is crucial for normalizing the relations,” Oleg Shloma said.


Lukashenko: There will be no Maidan in Belarus
February 24, 2014

There will be no Maidan in Belarus; Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko said as he met with senior officers of the Armed Forces and law enforcement bodies to mark the Fatherland Defenders Day on 23 February, BelTA has learned.

The President stressed: “We live in a rapidly changing world. Hotbeds of tension spark here and there on an incredibly regular basis. In this respect we should not drop guard. We must learn on others’ mistakes and do not allow even smallest manifestations of instability in our country.” “There are enough examples of it, including continuous “revolutions” in the Muslim world and occasionally emerging unrests in the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States,” the head of state noted. In his words, the situation in the neighboring Ukraine, which became an arena of clashes between powerful external and domestic forces, is quite illustrative.

“Even our society, as I noticed, has been showing some tension. There are some fears of insecurity and instability in our state,” the President said.

He stated: “The Maidan is unacceptable for us. There will be no Maidan in Belarus. It is our and yours, men’s in uniform, sacred duty and primary task: to preserve peace and stability on our land.”

According to Alexander Lukashenko, no matter how such events may differ in various countries, one cannot fail to notice common lines. “Weakening of power in the state, corruption, impunity and complacency, irresponsibility of the power entail unrests and anarchy. The society is split, the economy is in stagnation, and people suffer and are used as a blind weapon by the destructive forces. Foreign “well-wishers” appear fast, like vultures gathering for spoils, further inflaming the tensions and throwing the firewood into the fire,” Alexander Lukashenko said.

According to the President, due to its geographical position and economic openness, Belarus cannot avoid the influence of the majority of geopolitical processes in the international arena. “That is why a well-developed systemic foreign and domestic policy is of high importance for us. The policy which can protect Belarus from negative phenomena, safeguard the integrity in the society and keep us from anarchy, prevent any hostile impulses,” Alexander Lukashenko said.

**Political parties not active enough at Belarus local elections**  
March 17, 2014

The involvement of political parties in the current local election campaign is low and inadequate, Director of the Institute of Sociology of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus Professor Igor Kotlyarov said during an online conference on the BelTA website on 17 March, BelTA has learnt.

“Only 3% of candidates were put forward by political parties,” the sociologist said. He noted that in order to switch from the majority election to proportional representation, 100% of candidates should be members of political parties. “Where are we going to take the remaining 97% if we decide to switch to the proportional representation or the party-list proportional representation?” Igor Kotlyarov noted.

In his view, Belarusian political parties are very weak. “Their total number is 15, while the rating of the most successful of them is as small as a statistical error, or about 1%,” the scientist said. Igor Kotlyarov believes that political parties have such a low ranking because they are indistinguishable and have no clear-cut political messages and interesting ideas.

“Their leaders are uncharismatic. When we ask people about leaders of Belarusian political parties, no one can name the leaders of all the 15 political parties. People can name two or three party leaders at the most,” Igor Kotlyarov said.

Source: Belarusian Telegraph Agency,  

---

**Political analysts in Minsk discuss prevention of color revolutions**  
April 10, 2014

A roundtable session was held in Minsk on 10 April to discuss prevention of foreign interference and color revolutions. The session took place at the Academy of Public Administration under the Aegis of the Belarus President, BelTA has learnt. Secretary General of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) Nikolai Bordyuzha presented a report. After the discussion he told journalists that he is satisfied with the results of the roundtable session. “Political experts from Belarus and Russia communicated their views on how to confront attempts to destabilize the situation and to arrange color revolutions. We agreed that there are two ways to respond to these attempts. One of them is collective response using the CSTO. The other way is to confront them on the national level using cooperation between the government and the public,” Nikolai Bordyuzha said.

The CSTO Secretary General added that there are scientists in Belarus and Russia who professionally study this matter and can consult the government on how to confront attempts to destabilize the situation and bring about a chaos in a country. The participants of the roundtable session discussed the security of the CSTO
member states, the evolution of the doctrine of color revolutions, mechanisms of external interference into domestic affairs of a state, methodology of destabilizing the society (technologies of color revolutions) and ways to respond to provocations. The participants of the meeting agreed that sustainable political, economic and social development is an important factor contributing to stability, sustainable economic growth and security of the entire Eurasian space.

The experts also analyzed the role of mass media and Internet, including social networks, in destabilizing the social and political situation in a country during color revolutions in Eurasia. They also discussed information war technologies and strategies. The participants of the session noted that the CSTO is an important factor of stability and security on the Eurasian space. A special focus was made on confronting provocations and countering the negative impact of external interference by means of social and cultural values. The political experts emphasized the need to work out legal instruments to protect the information space of the CSTO and a reliable system of preventing the spread of ideas calling for external interference and color revolutions. They noted that the CSTO plays an increasingly important role in maintaining security in Eurasia. They believe that the potential of the organization should be used efficiently to maintain security in the information space and other fields. The experts deem it necessary to increase coordination of information and humanitarian activities of the CSTO member states. The roundtable session was arranged by the CSTO Secretariat together with the CSTO analytical association with assistance of the State Secretariat of the Security Council of Belarus and the Academy of Public Administration under the Aegis of the Belarus President.


Belarus PM: The CIS is an important platform of integration and cooperation
May 30, 2014

The Commonwealth of Independent States is one of the biggest integration organizations today, an important platform for integration cooperation in the post-Soviet area, Belarusian Premier Mikhail Myasnikovich said at the CIS Heads-of Government Council in Minsk on 30 May, BelTA has learned. In this respect, the Premier stressed that the CIS member states should take the maximum use of this structure.

According to Mikhail Myasnikovich, the CIS uniqueness is in its main trend which envisages sovereignty (as much as it is necessary) and integration (as much as it is possible). “The CIS member states are strategically close partners,” the Belarusian head of government noted.

The Premier also noted the importance of such summits as this one in Minsk. “Such meetings help us take up decision on the issues included into the agenda, hold bilateral and multilateral negotiations,” the Prime Minister said.
Mikhail Myasnikovich noted that the agenda of the session is diverse. The CIS Heads of Government Council considers 20 issues and plans to sign six international agreements.


Belarus’ Foreign Ministry: No need to comment on EU sanctions against Belarus July 10, 2014

The Foreign Ministry of Belarus does not think it necessary to comment on the decision of the European Union regarding the sanctions against Belarusian nationals, Spokesman for the Belarusian Foreign Ministry Dmitry Mironchik told reporters on 10 July, BelTA has learnt. “We do not think it necessary to comment on this decision of the Council of the European Union. Our position is well known and it has not changed. We insist on the abolition of all the sanctions,” Dmitry Mironchik said. When asked if this matter was discussed during the visit of Deputy Foreign Minister of Belarus Yelena Kupchina to Brussels, the Foreign Ministry Spokesman emphasized that Belarus openly communicates its principled position on all kinds of issues, including the sanctions. When asked by reporters to comment on the expansion of the EU sanctions against Russian and Ukrainian citizens, Dmitry Mironchik noted: “Belarus’ attitude to sanctions, to unilateral coercive measures, is well-known. We believe that sanctions are counterproductive and unacceptable in international politics”.

Read more at: Belarusian News, http://eng.belta.by/all_news/politics/Belarus-Foreign-Ministry-No-need-to-comment-on-EU-sanctions-against-Belarus_i_74296.html

Belarus, EU agree to ramp up dialogue September 15, 2014

The cooperation between Minsk and Brussels was on the agenda of Belarus-Austria ministerial consultations held in the Belarusian capital on 15 September, BelTA learned from the press service of the Belarusian Foreign Ministry.

The sides discussed a wide range of issues of bilateral relations, including the Eastern Partnership initiative, regional and international affairs.

The Belarusian and Austrian delegations agreed to implement a number of measures to ramp up bilateral cooperation and the Belarus-EU dialogue.

The Belarusian delegation at the negotiations was led by Deputy Foreign Minister Yelena Kupchina. The Austrian delegation was led by Jan Kickert, Political Director from the Austrian Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs.

Apart from that, the sides signed an intergovernmental agreement on cooperation and mutual assistance in customs affairs. On Belarus’ behalf, the document
was signed by chairman of the State Customs Committee Alexander Shpilevsky, on Austria’s behalf – by Jan Kickert.


Belarus’ meat and dairy producers to toughen food safety control
October 28, 2014
Belarusian producers of meat and dairy products have been tasked to toughen control over the quality of raw materials and finished products, the head of the main department of foreign trade at the Ministry of Agriculture and Food of Belarus, Alexei Bogdanov, told reporters, BelTA has learned.

“Today the ministry held a videoconference with participation of Deputy Minister Igor Brylo. Company directors were also invited. A task was set to maximize the control over incoming raw materials (both meat and milk) and finished products,” Alexei Bogdanov said.

The Belarusian Agriculture and Food Ministry noted that domestic companies should use the methods developed by the National Research Institute for Veterinary Virology and Microbiology of Russia. This method allows detecting the African swine fever virus genome.

In October Russia reported three incidents of ASF virus genome in Belarusian meat products. The virus genome was found in the products of the meat-packing plants from Orsha, Minsk and Mogilev.


Boris Batura: Interregional relations help improve understanding between Belarus and Poland
December 18, 2015
Interregional relations help improve the understanding between Belarus and Poland, the Chairman of the Belarusian public association “Twin Towns”, member of the Council of the Republic of the National Assembly Boris Batura said as he attended the third meeting of sister cities of Belarus and Poland in Grodno, BelTA has learned. “We suggested the idea of this forum with a firm belief that we need to strengthen and expand our partnership as the backbone form of the interregional cooperation system,” said Boris Batura. In his view, the diplomacy of cities should work towards maximum preservation of the ethnic, historical and cultural bonds because the very idea of twinning implies not only pragmatic benefits. “The emotional side of the relations is very important for us, for our peoples,” said Boris Batura. “It is the relations between cities that, in our opinion,
may help confront the alienation, misunderstanding, discord, and keep people’s hope for stable good-neighborly and promising cooperation,” the Senator said. He expressed the hope that the overall effort to strengthen cooperation between Belarusian and Polish cities will become more coherent and productive. Boris Batura thanked the Belarusian and Polish diplomats for their support and assistance in the organization of this meeting.


Minsk hopes for Italy’s support in improving Belarus’ country risk ratings
January 27, 2016

Minsk counts on Italy’s support in improving Belarus’ ratings in the country risk classification. The matter was discussed in a meeting between Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Belarus to Italy Evgeny Shestakov who concludes his diplomatic mission and President of Cassa depositi e prestiti SpA Claudio Costamagna on 26 January, BelTA learnt from the press service of the Belarusian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The meeting took place ahead of the next meeting of the group of country risk experts of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The parties discussed Belarus-Italy promising cooperation areas in the credit and financing field. Cassa depositi e prestiti SpA is an establishment managing the state assets of the Italian Republic and conducting investment activities with a view to supporting and promoting the Italian economy. 80.1% of the share capital is owned by the Italian Ministry of Economy and Finance. Cassa depositi e prestiti SpA is a sole owner of Italy’s Export Credit Agency SACE SpA that represents Italy in the OECD group of country risk experts.


Belarus caught in the middle between EU and Russia
February 18, 2016

Belarus’ future is torn between the potentially positive implications of the lifting of EU sanctions and the current major losses suffered by the national currency due to Russia’s economic crisis.

On Monday, February 15th, the EU decided to put an end to a set of sanctions, in place for five years, against Belarus. Travel restrictions, the freezing of personal assets, and sanctions on state-owned firms were in place since the repression of political opposition following the 2010 presidential elections.

Minsk seeks closer ties with EU. Monday’s decision concerns 170 government officials, including President Alexander Lukashenko, as well as three national
firms: BelTechExport, Beltech Holding, and Spetspriborservice. Only four individuals directly implicated in earlier repressions against members of the opposition are still under the sanctions. The EU had temporarily suspended sanctions following the presidential elections held in October 2016 that saw Lukashenko secure a new term with more than 83 percent of the total vote.

The scrapping of EU sanctions is a testament to President Lukashenko’s recent policies. Indeed, Belarus’ head-of-state has been trying, since the beginning of 2015, to develop closer relations with the EU by releasing political prisoners, a gesture widely appreciated by Brussels. In addition, Minsk has also tried to assert itself as a key regional player throughout the mediations between European partners, Russia and Ukraine.


Belarus MFA stresses importance of EEU-EU dialogue
July 12, 2016

Belarusian Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Alena Kupchyna stressed the importance of dialogue between the Eurasian Economic Union and the European Union as she attended a meeting of the heads of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries on 11 July, BelTA learned from the press service of the Belarusian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The meeting was held in Kiev within the 7th round of the EaP informal ministerial dialogues. Its participants discussed topical issues on the international agenda, including prospects of the development of the initiative and interaction in the EaP multilateral format. The meeting also focused on regional security challenges. “In the course of the plenary discussion, the head of the Belarusian delegation outlined Belarus’ approaches to the cooperation within the Eastern Partnership. Alena Kupchyna specifically highlighted the need for greater differentiation and effectiveness of the initiative through implementation of concrete projects. The importance of dialogue and cooperation between the Eurasian Economic Union and the European Union was also emphasized,” the press service said. Alena Kupchyna held a number of working meetings with the heads of the delegations of the EaP partner countries, Commissioner for European Neighborhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, Johannes Hahn, and Deputy Secretary General for the External Action Service, Helga Schmid. The parties discussed a wide range of issues of bilateral and multilateral cooperation, including the development of relations between the Republic of Belarus and the European Union.

d. Georgia

**Euro crisis not to force Georgia to give up EU integration**  
**March 23, 2012**

Georgia aspires to the EU and the euro crisis will not change its decision, Deputy Foreign Minister of Georgia Tornike Gordadze told journalists at the EU Eastern Partnership forum. Gordadze noted that the Baltic States became members of the European Union, and it was an achievement for EU citizens. “Some believe that the enlargement of the EU weakens the euro, six or seven countries make decisions more easily than 27-28. However, integration between the countries deepens each time when extending, which is very important. I am confident that enlargement will strengthen both the euro and the EU” Gordadze said. He also discussed the issue of Russian-Georgian relations, noting that Georgia has recently suffered a war which purpose was to wrest the country from its European roots. “There was an attempt to stop the process of Georgia’s integration into the European Union. We recognize that democracy is a guarantee of stability, and these two concepts don’t exist without each other. We declared a policy of integration into the EU,” Gordadze said.


**Georgian Foreign Ministry has welcomed a decision by Minsk to release two jailed opposition figures and expressed hope the move would help in “normalization” of EU-Belarus relations.**  
**April 17, 2012**

In a statement on April 17 the Georgian Foreign Ministry expressed hope that the release of two “opposition leaders... will facilitate the renewal of direct dialogue between Belarus and the EU and thecountry’s full-fledged participation in the Eastern Partnership initiative, as well as normalization and further development of Belarus-EU relations, which, on its part, will promote strengthening of democracy in the country.” Authorities in Belarus released Andrei Sannikov, who ran against President Alexander Lukashenko in the 2010 presidential election and his campaign aide Dmitry Bondarenko on April 15. The European Union welcomed the early release of Sannikov and Bondarenko, but called on Minsk “to release unconditionally now also all other remaining political prisoners.” The U.S. Department of State has also called on Belarus “to immediately and unconditionally free all remaining political prisoners.” The release came after the EU stepped up pressure on Belarus in late March by adding another 12 persons and 29 companies to a blacklist of around 200 who are already banned from travelling or accessing assets in the EU.

*Source: Civil.ge, http://civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=24670*
Georgian vice Premier Minister attends Eastern Partnership Ministerial in Moldova

June 06, 2012

Georgian vice Prime Minister Giorgi Baramidze is attending the ministerial of the Eastern Partnership Program, which is underway in Chisinau, Moldova. The participants of the meeting are discussing the reforms carried out in the countries involved in the Eastern Partnership Program. In his speech, Georgian Vice PM spoke about the role of the European Union in the peaceful regulation of Georgia-Russia conflict. Within the ministerial, Giorgi Baramidze held meetings with the Commissioner responsible for enlargement and European neighborhood policy, Stefan Fule and the senior advisor on relations between the EU and countries on the eastern borders of EU, Helga Schmid. They discussed the meaning of the negotiations on free-trade relations between Georgia and the European Union.


GEORGIA: Additional €22 million for reform of legal system

July 14, 2012

During a visit to Georgia, the commissioner for enlargement and neighbourhood policy, Stefan Füle, announced, on Wednesday 11 July, that additional financial aid of €22 million would be paid to Georgia as part of the new programme called EaPIC (Eastern Partnership Integration and Cooperation). Aid will support the criminal justice sector with special focus on human rights, the commissioner said. It will also cover border and migration management “so as to help Georgia fulfil its obligations within the visa dialogue”, he added. Stefan Füle said that, in its last progress report on Georgia, the European Commission placed emphasis on reform of the justice system, in particular regarding the judiciary’s independence and effectiveness.


Tbilisi to host informal ministerial council within Eastern Partnership summit

December 27, 2012

An informal ministerial council will be held at the summit of the EU Eastern Partnership program member states between February 12 and 13 in Tbilisi. This was stated at a press conference summing up the year by Georgian State Minister for Integration into European and Euro-Atlantic Structures Alexi Petriashvili. According to the state minister, the event will be attended by the foreign ministers of the countries participating in Eastern Partnership and the EU delegation led
by EU Commissioner Stefan Fule. The Eastern Partnership Program is aimed at improving EU relations with six former Soviet countries, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Belarus, Ukraine and Armenia. The founding summit of Eastern Partnership was held on May 7th, 2009 in Prague.


Protests demand that Georgia president step down
January 20, 2013

More than thousand protesters gathered outside the Georgian president’s residence in Tbilisi on Sunday calling for his resignation. Monday will mark five years since Mikhail Saakashvili was sworn in for a second term. Despite a constitutional two term limit, a 2006 amendment ensures presidential elections are only held in October.


EU Commissioner: Georgia is example of reforms and actions coordinated with EU
February 12, 2013

Georgia is an example of reforms and actions coordinated with the EU, European Commissioner for Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policy Stefan Fule said at a press conference in Tbilisi on Tuesday. He thanked the Georgian authorities in Tbilisi for holding informal Ministerial Council under the “Eastern Partnership”. “We’re not in Georgia by coincidence today. The country is a perfect example of holding reforms coordinated with the EU. We hope that this position will be continued, despite the challenges that exist in cohabitation process,” he said. Fule stressed that the EU is committed to cooperation program and the principle of greater expansion, in order to meet the European aspirations of partner countries.


Eastern Partnership Ministerial Conference on Culture, 28 June 2013, Tbilisi, Georgia
June 11, 2013

The very first Eastern Partnership Ministerial Conference on Culture will take place on 28 June 2013 in Tbilisi, Georgia. This high level event will represent an important milestone in the cultural dimension of the Eastern Partnership, should
be able to give guidance for future work and should provide an occasion for a mid-term assessment of the Eastern Partnership Culture Programme.


**EU may form the association agreement with Georgia**

*September 21, 2013*

EU may form the association agreement with Georgia and Moldova in November, during a year from the summit of Vilnius.

Stefan Fule, the Eurocommissar stated this on the press-conference held in the framework of European strategy.

As Fule stated, they are preparing for signing on the agreement with Georgia and Moldova.

The Eastern Partnership Summit will be held in Vilnius, in November, 2013.

The EU General Matters Council confirmed the guidelines for starting negotiations between Georgia and EU about the association, on the basis of which Euro Commission officially started negotiations on July 15, 2010.

The agreement will replace PCA and deepen cooperation in respect of priorities.

The agreement will allow Georgia to integrate economically in EU. The most significant part of the agreement is the agreement about deep and comprehensive free trade.

The aim of the agreement is to take Georgian-EU relations on the new level. The agreement implies to deepen cooperation in the spheres such as political dialogue and reform, cooperation in the foreign and security sphere, economic cooperation, trade and trade issues, justice, freedom and security, field cooperation (culture, sport, educations, agriculture, energy, environment protection, etc.).

Source: Georgia Times, http://www.geotimes.ge/index.php?m=home&newsid=29108%E2%8C%A9=eng

**Panjikidze: Events of Ukraine will not weaken our decision**

*December 18, 2013*

As the Minister of Foreign Affairs Maia Panjikidze stated, the problems imposed artificially are always solved by people, having a desire to live in a free and democratic world.

She delivered a speech about it in the Royal Research Center of Spain, „Real Instituto Elcano”, where the discussion on the theme, „The Challenges and Possibilities of Post-Vilnius Period”.

In her speech she talked on Georgia’s foreign policy priorities, EU and NATO integration perspectives and the main challengesand recent achievements of the Georgian government.
The minister stated that Georgia will sign the association agreement with the EU next year.

"The events developed recently in Ukraine includes clear warning that the democratic development of our country, European and Euro-Atlantic integration and sovereignty may be under threat of our northern neighbour, but I will not weaken our decision. The history of Europe teaches us that the problems created artificially are always solved by people wishing to live in a free and democratic society," - Panjikidze said. She said the assistance and solidarity of European community is significant.

The minister reckons that Georgia still aspires to Europe being devoted to the values shared by all European countries.

"We may hope for the assistance of our European partners," - Said Maia Panjikidze. Experts, analytical centers representatives and diplomats attended the meeting in the royal research center of Spain.


Parliament Adopts Bipartisan Statement on Ukraine
January 23, 2014

Parliament adopted unanimously with 118 votes a statement expressing “extreme concern” over developments in Ukraine and saying that Russia will not be able to force either Georgia or Ukraine to reject their European choice.

This is the second statement adopted by the Parliament on developments in Ukraine in past six weeks. The first one was passed on December 11, but unlike now, at the time the previous statement was not supported by the UNM parliamentary minority group, citing that its wording was not strong enough in respect of Russia. Text of the recent statement was draft jointly by GD and UNM lawmakers and passed unanimously.

“I wish to have such unanimity at least sometimes, not often, over internal affairs too,” parliament speaker Davit Usupashvili said after the vote on January 23.

Text of the statement reads: “The Parliament of Georgia expresses extreme concern over developments of recent days in Ukraine and use of force against peaceful citizens that resulted in human deaths and severe health injuries. We express sorrow and offer our condolences to the Ukrainian people.”

“The Parliament of Georgia condemns any form of violence and escalation of situation, which may lead the country to a large-scale civil confrontation.”

“The Parliament of Georgia shares the spirit of the statements made by the European Union and the United States and believes that use of force and escalation of tension will not bring the country out of the political crisis.”

Source: Civil Georgia, http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=26883
Ex-PM Merabishvili Sentenced to Five Years in Prison
February 17, 2014
City Court in Kutaisi found ex-PM Vano Merabishvili guilty of several criminal charges into two separate cases and sentenced him to five years in jail.

The court also said on February 17 that time spent in pre-trial detention by Merabishvili since May, 2013 will form part of the punishment; as a result, his remaining prison term will be 4 years, 3 months and 4 days.

The judge ruled that actions committed by ex-healthcare minister Zurab Tchiaberashvili, who was a co-defendant with Merabishvili in one of the cases, should be qualified as neglect of official duty not as exceeding official powers and should be fined with GEL 50,000. Tchiaberashvili was acquitted of misspending and bribing of voters charges.

Defense lawyers said that they will appeal the verdict, which was condemned by UNM opposition party as politically motivated.

More info at Civil Georgia, http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=26949

Margvelashvili on Ukraine Violence: ‘No Govt Can Get Away with Use of Arms Against Own People’
February 20, 2014
Commenting on recent deadly clashes in Kiev, Georgian President Giorgi Margvelashvili said on February 20 that “use of arms against own people does not speak well of any government and not a single government has managed to get away with it.”

“We hope that there still is a chance to resume a dialogue in Ukraine if there is a very clear political –not violent –but political, bold step on the part of President Yanukovych and if he shows political will to stop bloodshed; I stress – political will and not any kind of violent action,” Margvelashvili told journalists late on Thursday evening; he also said he’s “shocked” by violent clashes in Kiev.

“I hope that in the wake of calls from the world leaders the Ukrainian leader will take a political step and help his country to avoid a very painful confrontation,” he added.

Source: Civil Georgia, http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=26966

Special Statement of the President of Georgia on current developments in Ukraine
March 01, 2014
Current processes in Ukraine, namely in Crimea, have taken a very alarming development today. The decision taken by the Russian Federation to issue Russian passports on the territory of different country, to reinforce military in-
eastern partnership: a civilian security perspective

Infrastructure and contingent, also announcing about protecting the “interests of their compatriots” residing on the territory of Ukraine by means of military forces, is a rough intervention in domestic affairs of a sovereign state, which contradicts fundamental documents of UN and OSCE, ignores the basic principles of international law and threatens the territorial integrity of Ukraine. It is unacceptable that the fate of states, their future and territorial integrity is solved by the pressure of another country and by violent interference. We call on the international community not to let new conflict in Europe and to use all existing means to evade possible aggression and protect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Ukraine.


A large Scale Discussion on Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement with the EU has started
April 14, 2014

On 13 of April, the representatives of Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia, business and private sectors and scientific circles discussed the certain issues regarding the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement at the National Parliamentary Library of Georgia, namely, what does the agreement imply, the obligation and the benefits for Georgian entrepreneurs.

Mikheil Janelidze, Deputy Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia held a comprehensive presentation and discussed the further details of the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement. According to him, the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia has launched a special web portal, in order to provide the information about the obligations and the conditions for the goods for preferential treatment. The representatives from the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Agriculture were also invited at the meeting. They discussed the issues regarding the goods trade and customs regulations and pointed out the certain procedures that will be required for the exporters interested in EU market.

The Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia will continue the thematic meetings in the regions and provide the representatives of local government, business and private circles with further detailed information regarding the planned and conducted reforms within the framework of the Free Trade Agreement.

Georgia Ratifies EU Association Agreement

July 18, 2014

The Georgian Parliament ratified the Association Agreement with the EU, also including deep and comprehensive free trade area, at an extraordinary session on July 18. The agreement, signed in Brussels on June 27, was endorsed by the Parliament unanimously with 123 votes.

President Giorgi Margvelashvili, PM Irakli Garibashvili and government members, as well as foreign ministers of Bulgaria and Latvia, Kristian Vigenin and Edgars Rinkēvičs, respectively, the second speaker of the Austrian parliament Karlheinz Kopf and EU Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy Štefan Füle were in the chamber in Kutaisi as the Parliament voted for the ratification of the Association Agreement.

Foreign Minister Maia Panjikidze told lawmakers that provisional application of “80 per cent of the agreement” will start from September 1.

EU Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy Štefan Füle said in his address to the Georgian Parliament that the ratification was opening the way for “a swift provisional application” of the treaty, including its deep and comprehensive free trade agreement. “Immediately upon entry into force, the European Union will remove all import duties on imports from Georgia,” he said. “Historic” was probably the most frequently used term by lawmakers from both GD ruling coalition and UNM parliamentary minority group during the hearing while they were describing significance of the ratification of this agreement.

“I am glad that I am here in the Parliament where such unanimity reins today – the government, parliamentary majority and minority groups, we are all united over a common idea,” President Margvelashvili said. The hearing itself, preceding the vote, was used by the UNM parliamentary minority group to hit out at GD ruling coalition and also personally ex-PM Bidzina Ivanishvili, accusing them of “political persecutions” against UNM leaders, saying that “political retributions” will divert Georgia from the European path.

Read more at: Civil.ge, http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=27503

Russia Eases Visa Rules for Georgia

December 22, 2015

The Russian Foreign Ministry announced on Tuesday about easing visa requirements for the Georgian citizens starting from December 23.

The Russian Foreign Ministry also said that as a next step it does “not rule out” possibility of lifting visa requirements for Georgia.

“In the context of ongoing process of normalization of Russian - Georgian relations and in the view of stimulating positive trends between our countries,
starting from December 23, 2015 business, work, study and humanitarian visas of any multiplicity, as well as private visas regardless of whether there is kinship or not between host and invited person... will be issued to the citizens of Georgia,” the Russian Foreign Ministry said.

For further details see: http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=28872
Moldova: referendum on Customs Union membership given green light
April 13, 2012

At the request of the extra-parliamentary Social Democratic Party, Moldova’s Central Electoral Commission registered on 13 April an initiative group for a referendum on Moldova’s accession to the Customs Union (of Russia, Kazakhstan and Belarus) and the Eurasian Economic Community (of Russia, Kazakhstan, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan). The group – headed by Social Democrats leader Victor Şelin – now has three months to collect at least 200,000 signatures of support for the referendum. (According to the latest Barometer of Public Opinion poll, almost 46 percent of Moldovans are in favour of joining the Customs Union, while only 34 percent support the country’s membership of the European Union. The poll also suggests that 12 percent of those questioned would not support either option, and 8 percent oppose membership of any integration body).


Moldova – Euroscepticism on the rise?
May 14, 2012

57 percent of Moldovans are in favour of joining the Customs Union of Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan (with 20 percent strongly opposing the move). Meanwhile, 52 percent would like to see Moldova become a member of the European Union (with 30 percent opposing the idea). The figures come from a representative Public Opinion Barometer survey conducted between 10 April and 10 May, and whose results were presented on 15 May in Chisinau. The poll also suggests that if Moldova held a referendum in which voters had to choose between the Customs Union and the EU, 38 percent would favour the former, with 35 percent supporting EU membership. The figures show that over the last two years the number of people opposing EU membership increased from 18 to 30 percent. Those in favour of integration with the EU are predominantly young, well-educated and relatively affluent; those who would like to see Moldova join the Customs Union are mostly members of the country’s ethnic minorities.


Moldova given as example for states within Eastern Partnership of EU
June 06, 2012

The countries of EU’s Eastern Partnership, including Moldova have launched their first Informal Dialogue in Chisinau yesterday. The meeting was chaired by
the Moldovan Foreign Minister Iurie Leanca. Among the EU officials were Commissioner Stefan Fule and High Commissioner Catherine Ashton.

“Today marks a new phase of the Eastern Partnership. The Road Maps covering both bilateral and multilateral cooperation have been presented recently by HRVP Ashton and me and we will use this Informal Dialogue to guide the implementation of the Eastern Partnership objectives to help us define our priorities until the next summit which will take place in 2013,” Commissioner Fule said in an opening statement. Eastern Partnership is an alliance between Moldova, Ukraine, Belarus, Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia. It aims on strengthening the relations between these countries and the European Union by providing assistance and signing joint documents and projects. Mr. Fule said that it is not by chance that the first informal dialogue takes place in Chisinau. “Moldova is a very good example of how the determination in the implementation of the agreed reforms and increased EU assistance can move the country ever closer to the EU to the benefit of its citizens,” Mr. Fule added. The active exchange of opinions between the Eastern partners and the EU has emphasized the potential of the dialogue to identify and apply the new co-operation opportunities, shows a statement of the press service of the Moldovan Foreign Ministry. A Cooperation Council between the European Union and the Republic of Moldova is due to take place on June 26, when an agreement on the establishment of the common airspace will be signed. Such a project will ease the possibility to attract foreign airlines to fly from Moldova, including low-cost carriers. Recently Air Moldova carrier and Romania’s Blue Air low-cost airline have established a contract to provide low-cost fares for the Moldovan travelers to over 50 European destinations. Another airline (Moldavian Airlines) launches during these days three direct flights from Chisinau to Italy for 85 Euro per segment.


Moldova gets ready to join CIS Humanitarian Cooperation Agreement
January 31, 2013

Moldova has prepared a draft document on joining the CIS Humanitarian Cooperation Agreement that was signed in Kazan on 26 August 2005, Chairman of the Parliament of Moldova Marian Lupu said as he met with Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Russia to Moldova Farit Mukhametshin, BELTA has learnt.

According to the Speaker, the CIS Interstate Humanitarian Cooperation Fund has recently implemented over 40 projects with the participation of Moldova, took part in the organization of the 4th CIS Forum of Intellectuals in Chisinau in 2009, and provided considerable financial assistance in the organization
of the International Music Festival Merzishor, the Youth Delphic Games, a series of seminars for museographers, archeologists, restorers, seminars in art education and book publishing in 2011-2012. Marian Lupu noted that these examples prove as appropriate Moldova’s intention to join the CIS Humanitarian Cooperation Agreement.

The Government of Moldova has already made an important step to reach the goal by approving a draft law on partial abolition of the Moldavian reservations to the CIS Humanitarian Cooperation Agreement.

According to Culture Minister Boris Foksha, Moldova’s reservation to the CIS Humanitarian Cooperation Agreement limited the country’s participation in the cooperation instruments envisaged by the agreement. That is why Moldova did not sign the Agreement of the CIS Interstate Humanitarian Cooperation Fund which was inked by the CIS Heads of State Council in Minsk on 28 November 2006.

The CIS Interstate Humanitarian Cooperation Fund supports projects aimed at the CIS cooperation development in education, science, culture, mass information and communication, sports, tourism and work with the youth.


**EU and Moldova conclude Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area**

*June 12, 2013*

The EU and the Republic of Moldova have concluded negotiations on a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA), as part of the Association Agreement between the EU and the Republic of Moldova. A press release said the DCFTA would “improve the trade opportunities between EU and Moldova and enhance prosperity of both economies.” Both sides voiced “satisfaction with the successful outcome of the negotiations,” stressing that the DCFTA “will bring Moldova’s economy closer to that of the EU.” The DCFTA, which consists of 14 chapters, will provide for a significantly improved mutual access for European and Moldovan goods and services. “It will also ensure an open, stable and predictable legal environment for the benefit of Moldovan businesses and consumers,” the press release concluded.

Source: EU Neighbourhood Info Centre, http://www.enpi-info.eu/main EAST. php?id=33477&id_type=1&lang_id=450#sthash.KXkqPN1b.dpuf

**Romania-Moldova joint pipeline to cost 7 mil. Euro**

*August 08, 2013*

Romania-Moldova joint pipeline will cost seven million Euro. The project will be financed by the European Union, the Management Authority for Joint Pro-
grams Romania-Moldova-Ukraine 2007-2013 and the National Agency for Mineral Resources in Romania. The Republic of Moldova will receive three million Euro for the establishment of the new natural gas network. The pipeline construction will begin on August 27 when Moldovan and Romanian Premiers will launch the project. The task is expected to be finalized by the end of 2013. Romanian President Traian Basescu promised that Moldova will receive natural gas via the new pipeline starting from the winter of 2014. The new pipeline is important for Moldova given that it will help diversify the country’s energy sources and not rely anymore only on Russian natural gas. Moldova imports 100% of gas from Russia. Experts forecast that the Romanian-Moldovan pipeline will supply with 1.5 billion cubic meters per year. “It will also deprive Moscow of valuable leverage it has sought to use both in the conflict-resolution process and in the broader effort to dissuade Chișinău from choosing a Euro-Atlantic foreign policy orientation rather than the so-called “Eurasian vector” that would bring the country closer to Russia,” said Emmet Tuohy, expert in energy policy at International Centre for Defense Studies based in Tallinn, Estonia.


Cross-border Cooperation Romania - Ukraine – Republic of Moldova – a common area of interest for the Governments of these three countries

September 20, 2013

On September 20, the State Chancellery of the Republic of Moldova hosted the Annual Conference of the Joint Operational Programme Romania-Ukraine-Republic of Moldova, financed by the European Union. The officials from these countries attended this Conference, which was organized on the date of marking the European Cooperation Day. The discussions focused on implementation stage of the Joint Operational Programme Romania - Ukraine - Republic of Moldova 2007-2013, and on future cooperation programmes: planning period 2014-2020.

Eugen Furculita, Programme coordinator for Moldova welcomed the organization of the annual Conference in Chisinau and reviewed the main achievements attained since July 2009, when the first bid of projects was announced. He noted that taking into account the three priorities of the Programme - Towards a more competitive border economy, Environmental challenges and People to people cooperation - 442 project proposals were received, 112 of them were from Moldova. Further, 82 projects were selected for these three partner countries, 13 of them in the amount of 13 million euro were or are being implemented by our country’s beneficiaries. According to Eugen Furculita, the progress of Programme was confirmed by the second bid of projects, which was announced in November 2011 and within which 1060 project proposals were received, including 272 project
proposals from the Republic of Moldova. At present, the selected projects are at
the stage of contracting.

See more: Cancelaria de Stat,

Commission proposes visa-free regime to Moldova
November 27, 2013

The Commission proposed today to allow visa-free travel to the Schengen area for Moldovan citizens holding a biometric passport. This proposal builds on the successful implementation by the Republic of Moldova of all the benchmarks set in its Visa Liberalisation Action Plan.

“I am very pleased to propose to abolish visa requirements for Moldovan citizens holding a biometric passport. I wish to congratulate the Moldovan authorities for their efforts to implement key reforms and the important achievements they have made. The possibility to travel to the EU without a visa will further facilitate people-to-people contacts and strengthen business, social and cultural ties between the European Union and Moldova. It is my sincere hope that other Eastern partners seeking visa-free travel to the EU will continue to work towards achieving this important goal”, said Cecilia Malmström, EU Commissioner for Home Affairs.

Commissioner Štefan Füle responsible for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy expressed his appreciation for the Moldovan partners for the successful implementation of the reforms that preceded today’s proposal and stated: “I am delighted we are able to make this proposal on the eve of the Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius where we also plan to initial the Association Agreement, including Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area with Moldova. These are significant milestones on Moldova’s way to a closer political association and economic integration with Europe – and ones that will bring tangible benefits for Moldovan citizens.”

The proposal to abolish visa requirements for Moldovan citizens holding a biometric passport will now be discussed by the European Parliament and the Council. The Commission would very much welcome an agreement by the co-legislators before the end of the current legislature of the European Parliament. The number of short-stay Schengen visa applications from Moldovan citizens has remained stable over the past three years (oscillating between 50,000 and 55,000). At the same time, the refusal rate for visa applications has decreased sharply from 11.4% in 2010 to 6.5% in 2012.

**Moldova, EU launch discussions on association agenda**  
*December 19, 2013*

The European Union and Moldova, at a today’s video conference, launched discussions on the Association Agenda - an instrument that will prepare and ensure the implementation of the Association Agreement, including the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA), the Foreign and European Integration Ministry’s information and media communication service has reported.

The Moldovan delegation was led by Deputy Foreign and European Integration Minister Iulian Groza and the EU delegation was represented by the head of the Unit for the Eastern Partnership at the European External Action Service, Dirk Schuebel.

The sides exchanged opinions on the Association Agenda draft, set the calendar of consultations and agreed on its completion by the next spring. The agenda will include the objectives and priorities of implementation of the Association Agreement, especially on the political dialogue, reforms, justice and domestic affairs, economic and social development, inter-human contacts and trade aspects related to the DCFTA.

The agenda will provide the necessary platform through which the major goals of political association and economic integration are to be achieved. Once the content of the Association Agreement approved a national programme of implementation, with concrete actions and terms of implementation of the goals set in the Association Agenda for 2014-2016, will be adopted. The new document will replace the present Moldova-EU bilateral planning documents, in particular the Moldova-EU Action Plan.

The next round of consultations on the Moldova-EU Association Agenda will take place in Chisinau on 16 January 2014.


**313 Investment Projects Realized within PARE 1+1 Program in Moldova**  
*January 31, 2014*

The PARE 1+1 investment program, being realized in Moldova last 3 years, has let open a few thousand well-paid jobs across the country, the Moldovan Deputy Premier, Minister of Economy Valeriu Lazar stated on Friday.

Summing up the program results at a news conference here, Lazar said that as many as 313 projects were implemented in Moldova within the program’s framework. More than 600 citizens, who previously worked abroad, availed themselves of various training courses, and began running various activities in their home localities.

He said that the aim of this investment program (when the Government adds 1 leu to each leu invested in a project by a private entrepreneur, though up to an
amount of 200,000 lei only) is to create conditions for running such projects in all Moldovan populated areas.

“Our citizens need to see and hear ‘success stories’ around them, big and little successes that would indicate that changes for the better are possible in the republic. With the help of this and similar projects, we will be able to diminish labor migration and bring Moldovans back home, where they could have things to do with a decent income”, said the deputy prime minister.

The presentation of PARE 1+1 results was attended also by Prime Minister Iurie Leanca, Ambassador Pirkka Täipiö – Head of the European Union Delegation to the Republic of Moldova, and local entrepreneurs who have successfully implemented their own investment projects, within the framework of this program.


A boost for climate change resilience in Moldova, February 2014. IFAD loan and grant of USD 16.6 million to strengthen investments in rural economy

February 20, 2014

The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) will provide a loan of USD 16.1 million and a grant of USD 500,000 to the Republic of Moldova to finance the Inclusive Rural Economic and Climate Resilience Programme. The Danish International Development Association (DANIDA), the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) and the government of Moldova will co-finance the USD 46.3 million the project. Vasile Bumacov, Minister of Agriculture of the Republic of Moldova and Kanayo F. Nwanze, President of IFAD, signed the loan agreement today.

The aim of the programme is for poor rural people to raise their incomes by increasing investments in the rural economy, and to strengthen the resilience of the agricultural sector to frequent climatic and economic shocks. It will target more than 24,000 poor rural households in the most deprived rural areas of Moldova. Climate resilience activities will be carried out in the central and southern districts of the country.

Smallholder farmers will be introduced to climate-resilient agriculture practices and technologies, through the strengthening of inclusive value chains. Young entrepreneurs, small and medium-sized businesses will have access to financial services for rural microenterprises. The programme will help to increase rural economic growth through infrastructure development such as improving rural roads, rural market places and water supply. Agriculture is one of the largest sectors of the Moldovan economy and the main source of employment and livelihood for its rural population. With this new programme, IFAD will have financed six programmes and projects in Moldova since 1999 for a total investment of USD 87 million, benefiting about 70,000 households.

Romanian Mobile Rescue Service SMURD to reach Moldova

February 22, 2014

Moldova will benefit from the services provided by the Romanian emergency rescue service SMURD (Mobile Emergency Service for Resuscitation and Extraction). Moldovan Premier Iurie Leanca and his Romanian counterpart Victor Ponta signed an agreement on Friday that will allow medical rescue helicopters to fly from Iasi and Galati to any location in Moldova.

The first SMURD centre in Moldova will be opened in the northern city of Balti.

“Helicopters from Iasi and Galati will intervene in any emergency situation beyond the border to rescue human lives,” Premier Victor Ponta said. “SMURD is a system which we are proud of, saving lives and Moldova needs a similar mechanism.”

SMURD Romania is reachable at the European emergency number 112. It is a mixture of medical rescuers and firefighters and intervenes in the most tragic accidents which involve well prepared doctors and rescuers.


Communist MPs files censure motion against Government

March 28, 2014

The head of the Communist faction Maria Postoico said that Iurie Leanca exceeded his authority and seriously violated the Constitution. Such a decision should have been taken only as a result of public debates in Parliament. “Moldova aligned itself with these sanctions in secret and this fact will affect the relations between our peoples,” she stated. Iurie Leanca is also accused of hindering the people’s access to information of public interest as the Moldovan citizens found out about these sanctions from a foreign official. “We consider that Iurie Leanca’s actions are an evident example of usurpation of power as he exceeded his legal and constitutional powers. By submitting this motion, we withdraw the vote of confidence given to the Government,” stated Maria Postoico.

The motion will be debated on April 3. Earlier, the Communist faction also put forward censure motions, but they were rejected by the parliamentary majority.


Poland will sponsor rural development projects in Moldova

April 01, 2014

Moldova will receive financial support from Poland for rural development in the following years. According to Moldovan Premier Iurie Leanca; two million euro will be delivered in 2014. Over 8 million euro will be paid in 2015. During
2016-2020 Moldova will receive at least 12 million euro both from Poland and other donors.

As Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk said during a visit to Chisinau last week, Poland seeks to open a rural development center in Moldova. He wants to bring the know-how to Moldova and help the country develop a better agriculture.

“Poland is one of the largest countries to export agricultural products and food, this being possible due to a civilization revolution in the countryside,” Premier Tusk said.

Poland has commenced several other development projects in Moldova. According to Premier Leanca, over 95% of people in Braviceni village are now employed due to some sustainable projects implemented there.


Demand for biometric passports increased by 60% in Moldova as EU lifts visas
April 26, 2014

As the European Union lifted visa requirements for Moldovan citizens holding biometric passports, Moldovans rush for such travel documents. Authorities reported an increase by 60% in requests of biometric passports. The Centre for State Information Resources “Registru,” which is the body in charge with issuing travel documents, is able to issue up to 4,000 documents daily.

Upon receiving the passport, the holder will also get a booklet with information about the visa-free travel in EU. “Moldovan travel documents meet all European demands and have a higher degree of safety,” said Vitalie Tarlev, Deputy Minister of Information Technology and Communication. In order to avoid queues, the documentation offices based in Chisinau, Balti and Comrat will provide services on a special program, including on weekends. Furthermore, applicants can see online whether any queues are reported at these bureaus. People will also be able to apply for a passport at any office, regardless of their residence.

According to the information presented, up to date roughly 900,000 citizens of Moldova hold biometric passports. Over 50,000 residents of the Transnistrian region hold such travel documents.


Moldova exports first agricultural products to EU
May 25, 2014

The economic association between Moldova and European Union has its first tangible results. Moldova’s first exports of agricultural products have been deliv-
ered to Germany, the state TV channel reported. Farmers from Bardar village have exported cucumbers and cabbage to a factory based in Stuttgart, located in the land of Baden - Württemberg.

The vegetables have been previously tested by experts from Berlin. The sides agreed to export 20 tons of vegetables to Germany every week.

Moldova and the EU are expected to sign on June 27 the Association Agreement, which includes the Free Trade Agreement. The accord will help Moldova to export products duty-free to the European market.


Moldova sets record in ratifying EU association agreement
July 02, 2014

Moldova has ratified today its EU association agreement today (2 July), which was signed last Friday on the occasion of the last EU summit. However, the largest force in parliament, the pro-Russia Communists, boycotted the vote.

The European Commission welcomed the news from Chisinau that Moldova had swiftly ratified its association agreement (AA) signed five days ago. The AA is coupled with a so-called “Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement” (DCFTA).

“This decision [...] clearly shows the determination of Moldova to break from the past and create new opportunities and bring tangible benefits for its citizens”, said Commission spokesperson Jonathan Todd.

The Commission is looking forward to the provisional application of this agreement by autumn, pending the full application of the agreement pending its full ratification, when EU countries and the European parliament will ratify it as well, Todd said. Situated between Romania and Ukraine, Moldova has no border with Russia, and fears Moscow might impose visa requirements on Moldovan citizens working in Russia, or extend a ban on imports of Moldovan wines to include fruit and vegetables. It is also heavily dependent on Russia for energy supplies.


Moldova asked Russia to suspend economic sanctions
August 22, 2014

Moldovan Economy Minister Andrian Candu told Russian Deputy Premier Dmitry Rogozin on Thursday that Russia’s restrictions on goods are excessive and unjustified. According to him, they conflict with the provisions of the bilateral and multilateral judicial framework, which regulate the trade with Russia.
He emphasized that the decision to ban Moldovan goods in Russia is “a political rather than an economic one.”

The Moldovan side asked the Russian official to continue the bilateral talks at expert level and remove any sanction and ban imposed during the negotiations. Mr. Rogozin agreed to organize such talks, which are likely to take place in September this year. He strengthened the need to consider also the interests of the businesses activating in Transnistria.

Russia has imposed a ban on many fruits and vegetables originating from Moldova following the country’s political and economic association with the European Union this summer.


EU offers Moldova 13.2 million euros for justice reform
September 15, 2014

The European Union transferred Moldova the second tranche of 13.2 million euros, out of the total of 60 million euros, offered within the Support for reforms in the justice sector programme.

Head of the EU Delegation in Moldova Pirkka Tapiola made statements to this effect during a joint press conference with Justice Minister Oleg Efrim today. According to Tapiola, these instalments are awarded following the assessment of the implemented legal reforms.

“We encourage Moldova to intensify the fight against corruption in the justice sector and implement the reform of the prosecution, these being priority areas under the EU - Moldova Association agenda”, said the head of the EU Delegation to Moldova.

For his part, Justice Minister Oleg Efrim listed the achievements made in the justice sector lately. “The adoption of the anti-corruption package of laws at the end of last year is already delivering results. We have more magistrates prosecuted for corruption, of which two have even already been convicted. Since 2010, more than 140 out of the total of 420 judges left the system, and were replaced by the young and well-trained judges”, said the justice minister.

The European Union transferred the first tranche of the budget support worth 15 million euros in November 2013. The remaining two instalments will be offered by 2016.

The financing agreement worth 60 million euros was signed by the Moldovan government and the EU in Brussels on 14 June 2013.

Over 50 per cent of goods produced in Gagauz autonomy exported to EU
October 23, 2014

More than half of the production from the Autonomous Territorial Unit of Gagauzia (Gagauz Yeri) is exported to European Union member states, according to a report on the social and economic development of the autonomy in the first half of 2014.

According to the document, in the first half of this year, the volume of goods shipped to Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries decreased by 27.1 per cent, while the amount of goods exported to the EU increased by 22.8 per cent against the same period of 2013. Thus, only 24.3 per cent of the total exports, worth 158.4 million lei, went to CIS countries. This is due to 85.1 per cent drop in deliveries to Russia, 36.7 per cent decrease of exports to Ukraine and 13.4 per cent in Kyrgyzstan. At the same time, the sales of goods from Gagauz Yeri to Belarus, Kazakhstan and Georgia significantly increased.

On the other hand, the volume of goods supplied to the EU amounted to 358.2 million lei, accounting for 55.1 per cent of the autonomy’s exports. In the analysed period, a rise in exports to eight of the 18 European countries importing goods from the region was recorded. Thus, the sales of Gagauz products to Belgium, Estonia, Latvia, the Netherlands, Bulgaria, Romania and Italy grew, according to the Gagauzinfo.md portal.

As much as 57.3 per cent of all the Gagauz exports goes to Turkey (113.1 million lei), Bulgaria (86 million lei), Romania (64 million lei), Russia (55.5 million lei) and Poland (54.5 million lei).


Half of year of visa-free regime for Moldova: 300 000 Moldovans traveled to EU!
October 28, 2014

In 6 months, since 28 of April 2014, since Moldova benefits from visa-free regime with the European Union, 297 178 of Moldovans, owners of bio-metrical passports, traveled to EU through the natural border and through the International Airport from Chişinău. The numbers have been provided by the Border Police of Moldova.

Most of the travelers used the Leușeni checkpoint (75 793), Cahul checkpoint (66519) and the Airport from Chişinău (42692).

Around 160 000 of Moldovans traveled for touristic purposes, while 164 of them were prohibited to pass the border because they did not meet the requirements or they were prohibited to pass the border due to legal purposes.

Moldovan parliament gives vote of confidence to new government

July 30, 2015

The MPs gave the vote of confidence to the new government today. The new cabinet was backed by 52 lawmakers, whereas the Socialists and Communists voted against.

The new government will be led by Prime Minister Valeriu Strelet and will have the following composition: Natalia Gherman will hold the post of foreign and European integration minister. Anatol Arapu will serve as finance minister, Ion Sula - as agriculture minister and Oleg Balan - as interior minister. Stephane Bride, Monica Babuc, Pavel Filip and Vasile Bitca will keep their offices.

At the same time, the Labour, Social Protection and Family Ministry will be headed by Liberal Democrat Mircea Buga, the Youth and Sports Ministry will be led by Loretta Handrabura. Acting Labour Minister Ruxanda Glavan will head the Health Ministry and Vladimir Cebotari will lead the Justice Ministry.

Liberal MP Valeriu Munteanu was delegated to the Environment Ministry and lawmaker Iurie Chirinciuc to the Transport and Road Infrastructure Ministry. The Education Ministry will be headed by Corina Fusu and the Defence Ministry - by Anatol Şalaru.

The new government will have four deputy prime ministers: Victor Osipov, Stephane Bride, Natalia Gherman and Gheorghe Brega.


Moldova makes border control stricter after Paris attacks

November 18, 2015

After the terrorist attacks in Paris on November 13th, the Border Police of Moldova has decided to take urgent measures of ensuring the security of the citizens at the state border. The following actions will be taken:

– Establishing a more rigorous schedule of activity at the most used checkpoints (International Airport of Chisinau, some points on the border with Romania and Ukraine);
– Supplying the number of employers at the most used checkpoints;
– Enforcing better control, especially on persons coming from countries in war or from their neighborhood;
– Involving the canine teams (dogs) in the control of luggage, in order to detect explosive substances;
– Involving special devices for the detailed control of the means of transportation;
– Improving the collaboration with the national and international law-enforcement organisations;
– Practicing the emergency status in the border Police, through anti-terrorist exercises;
– Instead of 15% of detailed control, now 80% will be examined.

Moreover, new rules for entering Moldova from the separatist Transnistria have been introduced.

**Source:** Moldova.org, http://www.moldova.org/moldova-makes-border-control-stricter-after-paris-attacks

---

**Moldovan’s in government protest for third time**

*January 25, 2015*

Supporters and opponents of Moldova’s new government have taken to the streets of the capital Chisinau for the third time.

The opposition, which includes both pro-Russian and pro-EU groups, want the prime minister removed and new parliamentary elections to be held.

David Stern went to one of the demonstrations.

**For video please visit:** BBC, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-33398433

---

**Moldova to take over Romania’s experience in implementing European standard system in construction**

*February 20, 2016*

Moldova will take over Romania’s experience in implementing the European standard system in works and constructions (Eurocodes), Regional Development and Construction Minister Vasile Bitca announced on 19 February.

According to the Regional Development and Construction Ministry’s press service, such a decision was taken during a meeting between Moldovan Regional Development and Construction Minister Vasile Bitca and Romanian Deputy Prime Minister, Regional Development and Public Administration Minister Vasile Dincu in Bucharest on 19 February.

“During the official meeting in Bucharest, we discussed the initiatives due to be backed from the non-refundable financial aid worth 100 million euros provided by Romania, taking over the Romanian experience in implementing Eurocodes, as well as possibility to finance concrete projects in the Moldovan settlements. Also, we approached signing new cooperation agreements between the Regional Development Agencies from Moldova and Romania”, he said.

For his part, Dincu said “the two ministries are the best governmental actors to set cooperation between the two countries, which should have a great value for the people of the two states”.

“We also discussed a project meant to develop a pilot programme in about 20 Moldovan settlements, several projects related to rural infrastructure development. These projects will try to set the way we might manage in future several programmes according to the European standards, as regards planning of these
projects, public action in the area, funds absorption and measuring the effect that they can have”, he said.

At the same time, the Romanian official noted that the two ministries would initiate cooperation, consultations and exchange of experience between experts in construction, urbanism, including building social dwellings.

Bitca paid an official visit to Bucharest on 19 February, following an invitation of his Romanian counterpart, Vasile Dincu.


Moldovan premier to present report of activity in Parliament
July 21, 2016

Prime Minister Pavel Filip will present the activity report in parliament after the parliamentarians of Party of Socialists (PSRM), Liberal Democratic Party (PLDM) and three Party of Communists (PCRM) MPs today signed a motion of censure against the Filip government.

Thirty four MPs put their signatures on the censure motion in all.

“Given that nobody took into account our request on hearings of Prime Minister Pavel Filip, we faced the situation to sign the motion of censure against the Filip government,” said Liberal Democrat lawmaker Tudor Deliu.

PSRM leader Igor Dodon said that “the censure motion has been signed and presented to the parliament speaker. We expect Mr. Filip to present the report in parliament’s plenum next week,” added Dodon.

The Socialists have earlier filed eight simple motions against ministers of the Filip cabinet, of which six were rejected by the parliamentary majority, and another two are to be discussed in parliament.

(Reporter A. Plitoc, Editor M. Jantovan)

f. Ukraine

European Union and Ukrainian Negotiators initial Association Agreement, including Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area.
March 30, 2012

At the 15th EU-Ukraine Summit in December 2011, the leaders of the European Union and Ukraine announced that they had finalized negotiations on an Association Agreement aimed at establishing political association and economic integration between the European Union and Ukraine. This Agreement will replace the Partnership and Co-operation Agreement, in force since 1998, as the contractual basis of their relations. At the Summit, the leaders also instructed their Chief Negotiators to initial the Agreement as soon as possible. Today the Chief Negotiators of the European Union and Ukraine initialled the text of the Association Agreement, which will include provisions on the establishment of a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area as an integral part. In this context, Chief Trade Negotiators from both sides confirmed their agreement, reached on 22 December 2011, on the substance of the DCFTA, undertaking to complete the legal verification of the text, including technical annexes and protocols. Both sides expressed their common commitment to undertake further technical steps, required to prepare conclusion of the Association Agreement.


EU representative in Kiev comments on opposition’s participation in elections
April 04, 2012

The European Union never officially demanded that former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko and former interior minister Yuri Lutsenko be allowed to take part in the upcoming parliamentary elections – head of the European Union’s Delegation to Ukraine Jose Manuel Pinto Teixeira said at a press conference in Kiev on 4 April. He admitted that EU authorities and individual EU member states have been concerned over the issue, as they strongly believe that top opposition leaders ought to be allowed to take part in parliamentary elections, but no official demands on the matter had ever been made.


Workshop on SME Policy Assessment
April 25, 2012

A regional Eastern Partnership workshop for all the economies participating in the OECD Eastern Europe and South Caucasus Initiative will take place on 25 April in Kyiv, Ukraine, with the participation of SBA co-ordinators and SME
policy stakeholders from the region. The workshop will address the findings of an in-depth policy assessment, as well as initial recommendations. Furthermore, a draft of the final report Eastern Partnership SME Policy Index 2012: Report on the implementation of the Small Business Act (forthcoming September 2012) will be discussed with SBA coordinators. The seminar is organised in the framework of the project “Enterprise Policy Performance Assessment in the Eastern Partnership Countries” implemented by the OECD Eurasia Competitiveness Programme, the European Commission, EBRD and the European Training Foundation.

Source: OECD,
http://www.oecd.org/document/25/0,3746,en_2649_33725_50104025_1_1_1_1,00.html

EU - Ukraine relations
May 15, 2012

On 15 May, the European Commission published a report on the implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy in Ukraine. The report talks about further deterioration of democracy and human rights in the country, exemplified by selective justice and a lack of transparency in trials against local opposition figures, including former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko. The EC also noted a slowdown in the implementation of economic reforms, anti-corruption measures and a worsening investment climate. The report stressed that Kiev’s approach to the rule of law and democratic values would have a direct impact on the pace of political and economic integration between Ukraine and the EU, including the future of the association agreement. Also on Tuesday, Brussels hosted a meeting of the EU-Ukraine Cooperation Council. At a press conference following the talks, the head of the Ukrainian delegation, Prime Minister Mykola Azarov, rejected accusations of political harassment of local opposition activists, including Yulia Tymoshenko, by the Ukrainian authorities. He added that the current difficulties in EU-Ukraine relations were temporary; stressing that Kiev sees the EU as its strategic partner. EU commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy Stefan Fuele said that Brussels had no plans to abandon its association agreement with Ukraine as this would amount to the betrayal of the Ukrainian people and the Eastern Partnership initiative, but added that the EU would not compromise on key issues like democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. Fuele stressed the need for reforms in Ukraine, an end to selective justice, and free and fair parliamentary elections.


Ukraine: European Parliament envoys to monitor Tymoshenko trial
June 07, 2012

The European Parliament (EP) has nominated two envoys to monitor court proceedings involving imprisoned former Ukrainian Prime Minister Yulia Ty-
moshenko on its behalf. Pat Cox, former European Parliament President, and Aleksander Kwasniewski, former President of Poland, will have full access to all documents relevant to the case as well as lawyers, prosecutors and other officials, EP President Martin Schulz said yesterday. He voiced hope that their mission would be “a breakthrough that would help Ukraine to address problems concerning the rule of law and the independence of judiciary,” adding: “I hope it will contribute to restoring mutual confidence in EU-Ukraine relations.” Martin Schulz described both envoys as “personalities of high international repute,” commanding respect “for their excellent record in foreign and domestic politics” and enjoying “wide support across all political forces in the European Parliament.” The EP’s envoys will meet Prime Minister Azarov on 11 June in Kyiv. They are also expected to meet Yulia Tymoshenko’s family and lawyers.

**Source:** EU Neighbourhood Info Centre, http://www.enpi-info.eu/main/east.php?id=29256&id_type=1&lang_id=450

---

**Yanukovych says European integration remains fundamental in Ukraine’s foreign policy**

**July 12, 2012**

A strategy of European integration remains at the heart of Ukraine’s foreign policy, President Viktor Yanukovych said at an informal meeting with the Club of Editors-in-Chief of the CIS Countries, Baltic States and Georgia in Crimea on Wednesday. At the same time, the head of state stressed that in this matter “for us not the formal perspectives are more important, but particular results in the transition of society to the European model of development. Today, he noted, we see that the Europeans are not ready to take concrete steps and prefer statements. “We understand the reasons for this situation - I’ve already talked about this many times - we are ready to wait,” Yanukovych noted. However, he said, it does not mean a pause in the European transformation of Ukraine. On the contrary, he said, “we are focusing on the homework,” in particular the improvement of national legislation and bringing it closer to European standards.

**Source:** UkrInform, http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/news/yanukovych_says_european_integration_remains_fundamental_in_ukraines_foreign_policy_285453

---

**Poll: Ukrainians prefer Customs Union accession rather than association with EU**

**December 20, 2012**

Almost a half of Ukrainians (46%) support the country’s accession to the Customs Union, and 62% think that a national referendum should be called to decide on the issue. According to a poll conducted by the Social Monitoring Center, 46%
of the country’s population thinks that Ukraine should become a full member of the Customs Union and the Common Economic Space of Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan. At the same time, 35% of respondents think that Ukraine should sign agreements on a free trade area and political association with the European Union with further accession to the EU, while 19% have not decided on their opinion on the issue. The majority of the respondents that have formed their opinion on the issue (57%) support joining to the Customs Union, and 43% said that Ukraine should sign the Association Agreement and create a free trade area with the EU. The majority of respondents (62%) support the idea of calling a referendum to decide on Ukraine’s accession to the Customs Union, and only 24% of Ukrainians are ready to commit this task to the Verkhovna Rada, Ukraine’s parliament. Some 15% of respondents could not answer the question. The poll was conducted on December 5-15, 2012 in 24 regions of Ukraine, Crimea, and Kyiv. A total of 2003 people were polled.


Ukraine, Slovakia will set up Joint Stock Company to supply equipment for nuclear industry
February 11, 2013

Ukraine and Slovakia came to an agreement on setting up a joint stock company to supply equipment for the nuclear industry. This decision was taken by results of a meeting of Energy and Coal Industry Minister Eduard Stavytsky and Slovak Ambassador to Ukraine Pavol Hamzik, the ministry’s press service informs. The parties also discussed the issues of natural gas transportation in the reverse regime on the Ukraine-Slovakia border. To remind, Ukraine is planning to construct own plant to produce fuel assemblies for Ukrainian NPPs according to Russian technologies. The project realization is carried out by joint stock Russian-Ukrainian enterprise, set up by the fuel company TVEL (Russia) and the state concern Nuclear Fuel (Ukraine). The plant construction started in October 2012.

Source: Ukrinform, http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/news/ukraine_slovakia_will_set_up_joint_stock_company_to_supply_equipment_for_nuclear_industry_298452

Tombinski: Ukraine’s association with EU poses no threat to other partners
April 19, 2013

The signing of the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the European Union will have no adverse effects on other Ukrainian partners, including Russia.
Head of the EU Delegation to Ukraine Jan Tombinski said this during the 6th Kyiv Security Forum on Friday, a UKRINFORM correspondent reported. “Association as such is a positive proposal. It has no negative effects on other partners of Ukraine,” the EU’s representative said. He noted that the Association Agreement would provide greater opportunities “for all partners of Ukraine.” “If Ukraine’s economy develops and functions better, it will be a more stable country. This will open up new opportunities for all partners of Ukraine - no matter whether we’re talking about Russian or any other country,” Tombinski said.

Source: UkrInform,
http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/news/tombinski_ukraines_association_with_eu_poses_no_threat_to_other_partners_302183

Ukraine will increase sanitary safety regulations according to EU norms
September 27, 2013

The Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine considered the draft law, harmonized with European standards, which will strengthen state control over the circulation of products of animal origin not intended for human consumption.

The Cabinet’s press service informs.

“The draft law belongs to priority spheres, where adaptation of the Ukrainian legislation is made to the European Union laws,” a statement reads.

The document determines main requirements to reduction of risks for the health of people and animals, which may emerge due to animal side-products at different stages of their processing. In particular, it will ensure non-admission of the spread of many infectious diseases of humans and animals.

In addition, the document determines duties and rights of operators in the sphere of the conduct with animal by-products.

To remind, the EU has included Ukraine in the list of countries that have confirmed plans for state monitoring of residues of veterinary drugs and contaminants for a variety of animal products. At that today Ukraine has the ability to export products to the EU Member States, such as marine fish, honey, eggs and poultry.

Source: UkrInform,
http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/news/ukraine_will_increase_sanitary_safety_regulations_according_to_eu_norms_310118

EU summit shows no sign of reviving Ukraine deal
November 29, 2013

European leaders appear to have made no progress on reviving a far-reaching association agreement with Ukraine at an EU summit in Vilnius. Ukrainian
President Viktor Yanukovych abruptly froze plans to sign the trade and reform deal last week, under pressure from Russia.

The Ukraine agreement, the summit’s centrepiece, would have been a major step towards eventual integration.

But progress was made with two other ex-Soviet states, Georgia and Moldova. Both initialled association agreements on Friday, the closing day of the summit, with diplomats hopeful that these can be signed next year.

Another ex-Soviet state, Azerbaijan, signed an agreement to simplify procedures for certain categories of visa. Pro-EU protests are continuing in Ukrainian cities against the government’s decision to back out of the agreement.

President Yanukovych defended his refusal to sign, by saying the EU was not offering adequate financial aid to upgrade Ukraine’s economy. But he said Ukraine was still committed to signing the association agreement “in the near future”.


EU not to fight with Moscow for Ukraine – Foreign Ministry of Lithuania
December 18, 2013

The European Union will not fight with Russia for Ukraine. Linas Linkevičius, Foreign Minister of Lithuania that chairs in the EU now said this in exclusive interview to UNIAN, commenting arrangements of Ukraine and Russia. “There will be no fight for Ukraine. It is not a boxing and not a fight, and even not an auction, when they compete, who will pay the bigger price. It is necessary to step aside from the scheme. It is the country that should choose, the authorities should choose, but we underlined that we want this choice should be free”, - said Linkevičius.


Pro-European protesters say riot police force being pulled into central Kyiv
January 15, 2014

The Maidan all-Ukrainian Association, which represents the pro-EU demonstrators, has said on Facebook that members of the Berkut riot police squad and interior troops are being moved into the center of Ukraine’s capital for possibly storming Independence Square, which is under the control of the demonstrators.”Bekut forces and Interior troops are being pulled into the center of Kyiv. The storming of Maidan (the Independence Square) may happen this night and the next ones. It is very important to be on Maidan this night. The
more of us will be there, the less probable the violence,” reads a statement posted on Facebook on Wednesday.


_Ukraine’s Harsh New Antiprotest Law Draws International Condemnation_  
January 17, 2014

There has been international condemnation of sweeping legislation to curb protests in Ukraine, with the European Union and United States expressing “deep concern” over the measure. It comes with protests continuing in Kyiv and other cities against a government volte-face on closer ties to the EU, opting instead for deeper cooperation with Russia. Ukraine’s parliament, the Verkhovna Rada, on January 16 passed a law that cracks down on street protesters and adopted amendments making it easier for the ruling-party-dominated legislature to strip offending members of parliament of their immunity. According to the president’s website on January 17, Viktor Yanukovych has signed the bill into law. The parliament also amended the Criminal Code to introduce provisions recriminalizing defamation and provide additional protection for public officials from critical speech.

The approved amendments also introduce criminal responsibility for distributing extremist materials, which are broadly defined in the law, through the media and the Internet. “[EU] High Representative Catherine Ashton is deeply concerned by the events in Kyiv,” Ashton spokeswoman Maja Kocijancic told reporters at a news conference in Brussels on January 17.

“Several pieces of legislation that were passed in Verkhovna Rada are restricting the Ukrainian citizens’ fundamental rights. They have been passed very hurriedly and in an apparent disrespect of parliamentary procedures and democratic principles.” Kocijancic added that the changes hastily approved by the parliament will not help expedite the solution of the ongoing political crisis in Ukraine. EU foreign ministers are expected to discuss the situation in Ukraine in Brussels on January 20.

EU Enlargement Commissioner Stefan Fuele condemned the parliament’s action. Fuele “is profoundly concerned by... this legislation, which seems to go against democratic principles and limits the fundamental rights and freedoms of Ukrainian citizens,” his spokesman, Peter Stano, told reporters in Brussels. “In the view of Commissioner Fuele, this goes against Ukraine’s European aspirations and goes also against the commitment stemming from the Association Agreement between the EU and Ukraine, to which the Ukrainian government and the Ukrainian authorities are committed and which was initialed, as you know, a long time ago,” he added. “So, the changes are deeply concerning to us.” Separately, Thorbjon Jagland, the secretary-general of the Council of Europe, said the way he laws were “rushed through parliament without a proper debate is unacceptable.” He
also said that “any laws adopted by Ukraine must correspond to the letter and to the spirit of its commitments taken towards the Council of Europe.” U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry on January 17 called the legislation “undemocratic.” He said the new laws “are taking from the people of Ukraine, their choice and their opportunity for the future.” He also said Washington believes the people of Ukraine “want to be associated with Europe.”

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Leonid Kozhara rebuked the West over its criticism and said it was “considered in Kyiv as meddling in the internal affairs of our state,” according to a ministry statement. Kozhara, it said, made his comments during a meeting with the EU’s ambassador to Kyiv, Jan Tombinski, and U.S. Ambassador Geoffrey Pyatt.

‘War on Civil Society’

The new legislation came as the Ukrainian government seeks to end a spate of protests --dubbed “Euromaidan” by organizers-- that have racked the country since President Viktor Yanukovych declined in November to finalize association and economic deals with the European Union. The protests, which at their peak in early December brought hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians onto the streets, have diminished. But hundreds of people remain camped out on the central square of Kyiv or in public buildings in adjoining streets. Opposition politicians regularly use a stage in the square to broadcast messages of support to the protesters and the new rules, almost sure to be signed into force by Yanukovych, would make such actions illegal. The U.S. State Department said the latest measures “cast serious doubt on Ukraine’s commitment to democratic norms.”

Parliament deputy Anatoliy Hrytsenko announced his resignation via Facebook on January 17, comparing Ukraine to North Korea. Jailed former Ukrainian Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko, who is the leader of opposition Fatherland (Batkivshchyna) party, has urged the opposition not to allow the new antiprotest legislation to one into force. Also on January 17, leading Ukrainian rights defenders said that by adopting the new laws, Ukraine’s parliament had “declared war against civil society.”

The joint statement was issued by the chief of the Ukrainian Helsinki Group (UHS) Mykola Kozyrev, UHS Executive Director Arkadiy Bushchenko, and Kharkiv Rights Group Director Yevhen Zakharov. Ukrainian opposition groups have called for a new rally on January 19.


Yanukovych calls on opposition to stop standoff, start negotiations
January 22, 2014

Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovych has called on the opposition to sit at the negotiating table and stop the standoff. “I am urging the people once again
not to fall for calls by political radicals. It’s not yet too late to stop and settle the conflict in a peaceful way. I am calling on the opposition once again to sit at the negotiating table and stop the standoff,” Yanukovych said in a statement posted on the presidential website on Wednesday. Yanukovych regretted the deaths of people in the conflict “provoked by political extremists.”

“My sincere condolences go to the families of the dead,” he said. He said he strongly opposes bloodshed, the use of force, and the fomenting of hatred and violence.”

I am asking the people to come back home. We should restore peace, serenity, and stability in Ukraine,” he said.

The Ukrainian presidential press service reported that Yanukovych instructed the law enforcement agencies to conduct a thorough investigation into the people’s deaths during the ongoing unrest in Kyiv.


Ukrainian Prime Minister Azarov resigns
January 28, 2014

Ukrainian Prime Minister Mykola Azarov has tendered his resignation, the press service of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine has reported.”

I have made my personal decision to ask the Ukrainian president to accept my resignation from the post of Ukrainian prime minister in order to create additional opportunities for a socio-political compromise and settle the conflict peacefully,” Azarov said in a statement.

He noted that the current conflict situation in the country endangering Ukraine’s economic and social development poses a threat to the entire Ukrainian society and every citizen.

“During the confrontation the government has done everything to resolve the conflict peacefully. We have done and are doing everything to prevent bloodshed, the escalation of violence and the violation of human rights. The government ensured the functioning of the economy and the system of social security in extreme conditions,” he said. Azarov said that “during all these difficult years I did everything to ensure that Ukraine could develop normally as a democratic European state.”

“I made decisions and assumed responsibility in the interests of the Ukrainian people. And therefore I can honestly look into the eyes of every citizen of our state, every compatriot,” he said.

He also thanked Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovych for confidence in him.”I am grateful to all MPs who supported during all these years the government’s difficult work on modernizing and reforming the country,” reads the statement.
Azarov also said he was grateful to all Ukrainian citizens who supported the government and him personally, and believed in the correctness of the policy pursued by the Cabinet of Ministers.

“Today the most important thing is to preserve the unity and integrity of Ukraine. It is much more important than anyone else’s personal plans or ambitions. That’s why I made this decision,” he said.

As reported, Azarov was appointed Ukraine’s prime minister in March 2010. On December 3, 2012, the Azarov-led government was dismissed due to the election of a new parliament.

On December 9, 2012, Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovych submitted a motion to the Verkhovna Rada of the seventh convocation appointing Azarov as Ukrainian prime minister. On December 13, the parliament considered the motion and supported this candidacy.


Statement by President Barroso on the situation in Ukraine
February 20, 2014

During his joint press point with the Czech Prime Minister Sobotka, President Barroso made the following statement on the situation in Ukraine:

In our meeting today, Prime Minister Sobotka and I also exchanged views on the situation in Ukraine that we are following with great concern.

As you know, the situation is very difficult and remains extremely volatile. The immediate and urgent priority is to avoid further bloodshed and save human lives. This is also the message I conveyed yesterday to President Yanukovych. The authorities have a special responsibility in ensuring it and demonstrators also need to keep the peaceful nature of the protests. An immediate end to the violence and a meaningful dialogue, responding to democratic aspirations of the people of Ukraine is the only way to solve the political and institutional crisis. As you know, the European Union has been offering its sincere assistance to facilitate dialogue and de-escalate the situation. We have also reiterated our offer of political association and economic integration. But what we have to do now, the most immediate thing is to put an end to violence, violence to stop as soon as possible. We cannot forget the images of the last days and the tragic deaths and injuries of so many people. This is why the Foreign Affairs Council will meet today to discuss the adoption of targeted measures against those responsible for violence and use of excessive force. We will continue engaged and committed to a political, democratic and peaceful solution of the situation in Ukraine together with our international partners.

And I am happy to see that there is now a broad consensus among our Member States in the way to deal with this issue. Just yesterday, because you were meet-
ing an important delegation of business leaders, I spoke about these matters with President Hollande of France and Chancellor Merkel of Germany and, in fact, I have understood how deep is also their commitment to find a peaceful solution and today in the meeting with Prime Minister Sobotka, I have seen the same concerns and determination.”


Statement by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on the latest developments in Ukraine
February 22, 2014

The High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the Commission issued the following statement today: “The European Union is following minute by minute the rapidly changing political situation in Ukraine. I call on all sides to continue engaging in a meaningful dialogue to fulfil the legitimate democratic aspirations of the Ukrainian people. The European Union expects everyone in Ukraine to behave responsibly with a view to protect the unity, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the country. I call on everyone to abide by the rule of the law and the Constitution. We need a lasting solution to the political crisis. This must include constitutional reform, the formation of a new inclusive government and the creation of the conditions for democratic elections. Following the agreement reached by the sides on 21 February, we remain fully committed to support an inclusive political process, help de-escalate the situation and to assist Ukraine in the process of reform. These steps could deliver a stable, prosperous and democratic future for all Ukraine’s citizens. Furthermore, I welcome today’s release of former Ukrainian Prime Minister Yulia Timoshenko after more than two and a half years in detention. This comes as an important step forward in view of addressing concerns regarding selective justice in the country.”


Presidential election campaign begins in Ukraine
February 25, 2014

The presidential election campaign began in Ukraine on Tuesday, February 25. The election campaign starts automatically on the basis of a Verkhovna Rada resolution on scheduling early presidential elections in Ukraine for May 25, 2014, the press service of the Central Election Commission (CEC) reported.
On February 24, the CEC published the schedule of organizational measures on preparing for and holding the elections. According to the schedule, the nomination of presidential candidates begins on February 25 and will last until March 30.

Candidates may be nominated by parties or self-nominated. It is necessary to make a deposit of UAH 2.5 million to register a candidate. For this purpose, the CEC has published the number of a special account opened for the placement of deposits by candidates for the Ukrainian president.

Deadline for the submission of documents to the CEC for the registration of presidential candidates is April 4. The CEC has to create 225 district election commissions. The Verkhovna Rada allocated UAH 1.965 billion to the Central Election Commission for the holding of early presidential elections.


**Crimea declares independence from Ukraine following overwhelming referendum vote**

*March 17, 2014*

Crimea’s parliament on Monday declared the region an independent state, after its residents voted overwhelmingly to break off from Ukraine and seek to join Russia.

In the same resolution, it said that all Ukrainian state property on the territory of the Black Sea peninsula will be nationalized and become the property of the Crimean Republic.

Sunday’s referendum is not recognized by the West, and the United States and the European Union are preparing sanctions against Russia, whose troops have been occupying Crimea for several weeks. Crimean lawmakers have asked the United Nations and other nations to recognize it.

A delegation of Crimean lawmakers is set to travel to Moscow Monday for negotiations on how to proceed further. Russian lawmakers have suggested that formally annexing Crimea is just a matter of time.


**PACE President and leaders visit Ukraine**

*March 21, 2014*

A delegation of the leading members of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), headed by its President Anne Brasseur, is to visit Kyiv, Donetsk and Lviv during a three-day visit to Ukraine from 22-24 March 2014.
The nine-member delegation(*) – made up of the President of the Assembly, the heads of its five political groups and its Secretary General, as well as the two-co-rapporteurs for the monitoring of Ukraine – will assess the situation in Ukraine ahead of an urgent debate likely to take place at PACE’s spring plenary session (7-11 April 2014).

In Kyiv on Saturday 22 March, the delegation is due to meet the Speaker of the Verkhovna Rada and acting President, the Prime Minister, the Internal Affairs Minister and Foreign Minister, as well as the leaders of Ukraine’s main political parties and the chairman of the Meilis of the Crimean Tatar People.

In Donetsk on Sunday 23 and in Lviv on Monday 24, the delegation is due to meet the Governors of each oblast, the mayors of each city, and members of the regional councils, as well as representatives of Russian and Ukrainian cultural organisations (to be confirmed).


Expert says stabilization in Ukraine relates to its European integration
April 24, 2014

Stabilization of the situation in Ukraine relates to the process of integration into the European Union.

Director of Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation Iryna Bekeshkina said this at a roundtable entitled “Problems of Information Security and European Integration of Ukraine”, which was held on Wednesday in Kherson.”Now the issue of European integration -this is a problem of Ukraine. It is a matter of stabilization in Ukraine. They [the EU - ed.] have doubts, fears [about Ukraine - ed.]. And I would say, the more, the fears of Europeans grow faster. This mess, the lack of order. This is a difficult issue,” the expert noted.

According to her, there is another complicated issue. “What to do with that part of Ukraine, which mainly does not want to go to the European Union? We are told: how you can speak for all when they do not want?” Bekeshkina added.


Situation on border with Russia remains difficult – Tymchuk
May 10, 2014

According to the Information Support group, the situation remains difficult on the border of Ukraine with Russia. Head of the Center of Military and Politi-
“For effective countering of infiltration of Russian diversionists’ groups and weapons to the territory of Ukraine, additional forces and means are badly needed, as well as effective support on the part of other power ministries and departments of Ukraine,” he wrote on Facebook.

According to Tymchuk, the situation is especially weakened on the state border in Luhansk and Donetsk regions.


_Ukraine ready to resume water supply to Crimea on its own terms_  
**May 14, 2014**

Ukraine is ready to resume water supply to Crimea through the North-Crimean canal on certain terms, the Chairman of Crimea’s Committee for Water Resources Development and Irrigated Farming, Igor Vail, told ITAR-TASS.

He said the Ukrainian side had sent a letter with a proposal to resume the supplies of freshwater from the River Dnieper to Crimea through the canal upon repayment of a debt of around $146,500, coordination of the price and return of the vehicles used in the Crimean system of water development.

“We have an official letter and no other conditions have been specified so far,” Vail said.

April 26, 2014, Ukraine shut the North-Crimean canal, by which Crimea receives 85% of the freshwater it needs.

May 6, Crimea’s First Deputy Prime Minister Rustam Temirgaliyev said the region is fully independent from the supplies of Ukrainian freshwater today.

He said efforts were being made along several directions to ensure this independence, including the diverting of rivers and the Tagansky freshwater reservoir to the North-Crimean canal.


_Separatists claim to have shot down two Ukrainian planes near Russian border_  
**July 17, 2014**

Two Ukrainian Air Force aircraft were shot down in the east of the Donetsk region on Thursday evening, said Ihor Druz, an advisor to the defense minister of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People’s Republic (DPR).

“The Antonov An-26 transport aircraft was shot down above the city. It fell near the Progress coal mine, near a waste pile. Residential buildings were not
damaged. A group of militia scouts are working at the crash site,” Druz told Interfax.

A Sukhoi Su-25 attack aircraft was shot down near the Russian border later, the defense minister’s advisor said.

“It was hit from a portable antiaircraft missile system. Efforts are under way to locate the crash site,” Druz said.

Source: Interfax

Over UAH 2 billion needed to repair roads and bridges in Donbas
August 21, 2014

More than UAH 2.15 billion is needed to restore the infrastructure, damaged or destroyed during fighting in eastern Ukraine. The preliminary cost of repairs in Donetsk region will be UAH 735.1 million and in Luhansk region -UAH 1.423 billion, the Ukravtodor (State Agency of Motor Roads) press service informs.”

This is the reference sum, as full survey is so far conducted only in areas, liberated from the terrorists. Meanwhile, damage was not yet established in places, where military operations are still conducted, because of the threat to lives of road builders,” Ukravtodor head Serhiy Pidhainy said.

According to him, currently, almost 962 kilometers of public roads experienced the devastation of varying difficulty, of which about 250.5 km - in Donetsk region and over 711.5 km - in Luhansk region and 20 bridges and overpasses of total length of 2,101 running meters.


Ukraine, EU ratify Association Agreement
September 16, 2014

The Verkhovna Rada and the European Parliament have ratified the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the EU.

The simultaneous ratification process took place through a videoconference between Kyiv and Strasbourg, Ukrinform reports.

In the European Parliament a respective legislative resolution was supported by 535 deputies.

In the Verkhovna Rada a draft law on ratification of the Association Agreement was backed by 355 MPs.

Following ratification by the legislative bodies of Ukraine and the EU, the provisional application of certain provisions of the political, institutional and sectoral parts of the document will begin from November 1, 2014.
The agreement will come into force in full after its ratification by all 28 member states of the EU.

The tentative deadline for the implementation of the Association Agreement is ten years.

Ukraine and the EU signed the Association Agreement in two stages: the political part on March 21, 2014 and the economic chapter on June 27, 2014.


Luhansk left without electricity, water is absent
September 18, 2014
The press service of Luhansk City Council disclosed to UNIAN that in a result of firing Kirovska substation in Kamennobrodskyi region was damaged, electricity and water supplies are absent. In a result of absence of electricity, hydraulic power stations stop it work and water supply is also absent. Specialists can not reach the place of accident to liquidate consequences of accident because of continuation of armed clashes in the city.

Read more on UNIAN: http://www.unian.info/politics/941151-luhansk-left-without-electricity-water-is-absent.html

EU releases €600 million loan in assistance to Ukraine
July 22, 2015
The EU today released a loan of €600 million to Ukraine – the first instalment under the new Macro-Financial Assistance (MFA) programme for Ukraine, which amounts to a total of €1.8 billion.

Through this programme, the EU contributes to cover the urgent financing needs faced by Ukraine, while supporting the country’s economic stabilisation. In addition, the EU’s MFA package will assist the Ukrainian authorities in implementing important reforms in the areas of public finance management, governance and transparency, the energy sector, social safety nets, the business environment and the financial sector.

Pierre Moscovici, European Commissioner for Economic and Financial Affairs, Taxation and Customs said the €600 million disbursed today added to the €1.6 billion already provided by the EU since the beginning of the crisis in Ukraine. In addition, the EC envisages disbursing another €1.2 billion in the coming months subject to successful implementation of the economic and structural reforms agreed between the EU and Ukraine.

Macro-Financial Assistance is an exceptional EU crisis response instrument available to the EU’s neighbouring partner countries. This operation is comple-
mentary to assistance provided by the IMF. MFA loans are financed through EU borrowing on capital markets. The funds are then on-lent with similar financial terms to the beneficiary countries.


Should Ukraine agree to ‘imperfect’ local elections in the Donbass? By Denitsa Raynova

January 15, 2016

On 25 October, 2015 the Ukrainian people cast their vote for the first time since the decentralisation reforms which established a new governance structure across Ukraine. In November, 2015 the second round of the local elections took place with twenty nine cities and towns electing mayors and regional councilors in all regions apart from the Donbass. Later that month, on 29 November the people in Mariupol and Krasnoarmiysk chose their mayors. [1] Their vote marked the end of the local elections process in Ukraine in 2015.

There were no elections in the separatist-controlled areas in the Donbass. As a result of the negotiations of the Normandy Group and upon its recommendation, the separatist leaders of the Donetsk People’s Republic (DPR) and the Luhansk People’s Republic (LPR) postponed their plans to hold elections independent of those organised by the Ukrainian state. Further, they agreed to respect the terms of the Minsk II plan and hold elections in the Donbass according to Ukrainian law.

Yet the way in which the elections were held in the rest of Ukraine has serious implications for the future of the Donbass and the Minsk II process.

The preliminary assessment of the first election round prepared by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR) concluded that the monitors witnessed a ‘competitive, well organized … campaign [that] generally showed respect for the democratic process’. However, their report also presented details revealing that these were not entirely free and fair elections. This was for primarily three reasons.


US European command transfers modern equipment to Ukrainian explosives technicians

February 16, 2016

The United States European Command (EUCOM) has transferred modern equipment worth $244,000 to explosives technicians of the Ukrainian State Emergency Service.
A special ceremony was held on Tuesday at the State Emergency Service, an Ukrinform correspondent reports.

“This equipment will significantly increase the security of our explosives technicians and will promote the efficient work on demining activities,” Chairman of the State Emergency Service Mykola Chechotkin said.

He also informed that as a result of the Russian aggression against Ukraine, as well as the actions of reconnaissance and sabotage groups, a considerable part of the territory of Luhansk and Donetsk regions turned out to be under a threat of possible explosions, “this means that now it [part of the territory] is covered with a large number of explosive items”.


Situation in ATO zone remains tense, with cannon artillery being applied for 1st time in long period
March 27, 2016

The combined Russian-separatist forces attacked Ukrainian army positions in eastern Ukraine 44 times in the past 24 hours, according to a report.

“In addition to mortars of calibers banned by the Minsk agreements, militants have again used cannon artillery, for the first time in a long period. The Ukrainian Armed Forces in the area of Zaitseve and Mayorsk were able to keep the defense after they had been attacked four times with 122-millimeter mortars,” the ATO press center’s statement reads.

Avdiyivka is said to remain one of the most hostile areas in the Donetsk direction. The enemy has applied a whole arsenal of weapons but could not dislodge the ATO forces from their positions.

It is reported that militants have also fired near the villages of Luhanske, Novgorod, Mayorsk, Zaitseve, Leninske, Pisky, Opytne, Shyrokyne, Troitske and Maryinka.

“In the Luhansk direction, militants attempted to storm one of the Ukrainian army strongpoints using small arms. The ATO forces have maintained their positions forcing the enemy to retreat,” according to the statement.


State Border Guard Service Russia Installs Drilling Rigs on Ukrainian Fields
July 25, 2016

Russian self-elevating drilling offshore platforms, fixed platforms and supply vessels have been recorded in Ukrainian maritime economic zone.
This is reported by the press service of the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine.

“The State Border Guard Service of Ukraine continues to carry out the tasks aimed at strengthening the protection of the state border and protection of the interests of Ukraine in its exclusive (maritime) economic zone. When monitoring the sea surface from air, the employees of the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine have registered Russian self-elevating drilling offshore platforms, fixed platforms and supply vessels in Odesa and Holitsyne gas fields,” the report says.

As noted, the presence of vessels under the Russian flag on the territory of the gas fields may indicate the continuation of illegal exploration and production of natural resources, as well as the operation of facilities and constructions for commercial purposes without the permission of the relevant Ukrainian authorities.

2. Russian Federation:

Russia complains against Georgia

April 18, 2012

Russian Foreign Ministry’s human rights ombudsman, Konstantin Dolgov, has sent an official letter to the Swiss embassy in Moscow (Switzerland represents Russia’s interests in Georgia) complaining about increasingly frequent cases of human rights violations committed by Georgia against Russian nationals, including, arrests and fines for breaking the Georgian law on occupied territories – unrecognised by Russia. (Under Georgian law, it is illegal to enter Georgia’s occupied territories, that is, Abkhazia and South Ossetia, directly from Russia). Dolgov has asked the Swiss diplomats to inform Tbilisi about Russia’s objections, and to urge Georgia to stop its provocations against Russian citizens. Several days earlier, the Russian Foreign Ministry advised Russian citizens not to travel to Georgia due to the risk of provocations and harassment. (Georgia, which is interested in attracting Russian tourists, unilaterally scrapped the visa requirement for Russian nationals in February of this year).


European Training Foundation Qualifications Platform now available in Russian

May 16, 2012

The European Training Foundation (ETF), an agency of the European Union, has launched a new online community for Russian-speaking qualifications professionals. The new Russian-language community will bring together and support people working on qualifications in ETF partner countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. ETF partner countries include Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine. The community will be part of the ETF Qualifications Platform, which opened in October 2011. It will provide news and an online library and will facilitate discussion of qualifications issues among members.
The new service meets a demand from ETF partner countries, where Russian is still used for international cooperation and information exchange, for a shared space to exchange expertise in qualifications. The community will be facilitated by Russian-speaking ETF staff. The European Training Foundation is an agency of the European Union established to contribute to the development of the education and training systems of the EU partner countries. With an annual budget of €18 million, its mission is to help transition and developing countries to harness the potential of their human capital through the reform of education, training and labour market systems in the context of the EU’s external relations policy.


Development outlook of civil defense and protection of people in XXI century.
Meeting of Expert Council took place in the Emergency Ministry
December 25, 2012

Meeting of Expert Council led by Yuri Vorobyov, Deputy Chairman of the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation took place in the Emergency Ministry on 25 December. The meeting discussed development outlook of civil defense and protection of people and territories of the Russian Federation against natural and man-made emergency situations up to 2030. Valery A. Akimov, Director of National Research Institute of Civil Defense and Emergencies of the Russian Emergencies Ministry presented a report on the subject. In his opinion it is necessary to improve systems of long-term, military and scientific forecasting. In his Report Mr. Akimov named the global dangers we will have to fight in 40-50s of XXI century:

- dangerous natural phenomena, natural and human-made disasters, asteroid dangers, non-stable atmosphere, geo and helio-dangers;
- unsuccessful physics experiments (at big hadronic collider, etc.);
- global warming and other human-caused and natural dangers (erosion of soils, deforestation, etc.);
- systematic multi-factor crisis with application of weapons of mass destruction, especially biological weapons and nano-weapons and others.

Admitting importance of these tasks, the Expert Council today pays special attention to civil defense, development and introduction of new ways to develop RSChS system to ensure safety of each person.

According to Mr. Akimov: “Russia has enough resources to fight those threats”. Ways of resolving these questions have been put on the agenda of the Expert Council. The Russian Academy of Sciences and other agencies are planned to be involved in this work.

Customs Union, EFTA to hold consultations on free trade agreement in April
January 31, 2013
The next round of consultations on the free trade agreement between the Customs Union and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) will take place in Moscow in April, BelTA learned from the press service of the Belarusian Foreign Ministry. At the seventh round of consultations held in Astana on 28-31 January the parties pointed out considerable progress in negotiations and agreed to continue working on the draft agreement. Participants of the consultations discussed contents of the draft agreement and drew special attention to the sections regarding trade in goods, technical barriers, veterinary, sanitary and phytosanitary measures, trade in services. The Belarusian delegation was led by Igor Nazaruk, Deputy Director – Head of the Foreign Trade Policy Division of the Foreign Economic Activity Department of the Belarusian Foreign Ministry. The delegation included representatives of the Industry Ministry, the Agriculture and Food Ministry, the Economy Ministry, the Trade Ministry, the Healthcare Ministry, the State Customs Committee, the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus.


Moscow concerned by EU attempts to drive wedge between Russia and CIS countries – Russian MFA
April 18, 2013
Official Moscow is concerned by the fact that some European Union (EU) forces are attempting to impact the relations between Russia and the countries that are members in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) — which includes Armenia. Russian Federation (RF) Deputy Foreign Minister Alexei Meshkov stated this during the RF State Duma hearings. “We cannot be unconcerned by the fact that some forces in the EU are trying to drive a wedge between Russia and the CIS countries, by artificially forcing them to choose: ‘You are either with Moscow or [with] Brussels,’” he said. Meshkov also noted that according to the RF MFA, “If we are interested in ensuring stability and prosperity from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean, there are no alternatives to merging the integration processes in Europe and in Eurasia,” RIA Novosti News Agency of Russia reports.


Ukraine opts for EU; Customs Union will slam its door shut
September 10, 2013
Faced with a stark choice - if it should be with the European Union or with Russia - Ukraine has long managed to sit on the fence. Now the moment of truth appears to be round the corner. Moscow looks very resolutely minded: if Kiev
chooses the EU, Ukraine will have to say good-bye to its chances of joining the Customs Union.

At the Vilnius summit of the Eastern Partnership this November, Ukraine plans to put its signature to an agreement of association with the European Union, of which the free trade zone agreement is part. In that case, though, the door to the Customs Union of Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan will be slammed in its face.

"After concluding a corresponding treaty on associated membership with the European Union states, the entrance to the Customs Union will be closed to our Ukrainian partners. The European Union leaders have been saying the same all along pretty clearly, too," said Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev. At the same conference, First Deputy Prime Minister Igor Shuvalov said that Russia had invited experts on international law to compare the contents of the agreement with the EU which Ukraine would like to sign, and the clauses of the Customs Union treaty.

"The legal basis of the European Union and that of the Customs Union are not the same. If Ukraine’s agreement with the European Union takes effect, a number of liabilities, crucial to the Customs Union, will not be applicable in Ukraine. For instance, the unified customs tariff rule," he said.


How Russia lost Ukraine
October 23, 2013

Russia’s leaders view the Association Agreement with the European Union that Ukraine and five other former Soviet republics recently signed in Vilnius as a major defeat in this longstanding geopolitical standoff. Moscow is so angry that it is threatening to unleash a trade war with Ukraine and punish Lithuania for pandering to the “treacherous” behavior of the former Soviet republics. Russia finds it particularly offensive that Kyiv’s drift toward Europe is occurring under Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovych, whom Moscow initially hailed as pro-Russian. Moscow thought that after it managed to sign an agreement to rent the Sevastopol naval base for the Black Sea Fleet for the next 10 years, it would be just as easy to bring Ukraine into the Customs Union.


Russia Offers Cash Infusion for Ukraine
December 17, 2013

In a sharp rebuff to the West in the diplomatic wrangle over Ukraine, President Vladimir V. Putin said Tuesday that Russia would come to the rescue of its
financially troubled neighbor, providing $15 billion in loans and a steep discount on natural gas prices. It was a bold but risky move by Russia, given the political chaos in Kiev, the Ukrainian capital, where thousands of demonstrators remain encamped in Independence Square, protesting their government’s failure to sign political and free-trade accords with Europe.

For the moment, however, Mr. Putin seemed to gain the upper hand over Europe and the United States in their contest for Ukraine, a former Soviet republic of 46 million that Russia sees as integral to its economic and security interests. It is by far the region’s most populous and influential country that has remained outside the European orbit. For Mr. Putin, the jousting over Ukraine is the latest of several foreign policy moves that have served to re-establish Russia as a counterweight to Western dominance of world affairs. This year, he defied Washington by granting temporary asylum to Edward J. Snowden, the former National Security Agency contractor, and deflected an American military strike on his longtime ally, President Bashar al-Assad of Syria, with a proposal to eliminate Syria’s chemical weapons. There was no immediate quid pro quo for Russia — at least not in plain sight — as Mr. Putin announced the deal at the Kremlin with Ukraine’s embattled president, Viktor F. Yanukovich. Protesters in Kiev have been deeply worried that Mr. Yanukovich would cut a secret deal to join a customs union that Russia has established with Belarus and Kazakhstan. The union is essentially a free-trade zone across a large section of the former Soviet Union, allowing goods to cross travel through borders without clearing customs.

Over the weeks of protests, however, it became clear that the customs union was a nonstarter for Ukraine, and Mr. Putin said the subject did not come up in their discussions on Tuesday.

In Independence Square, where the large crowd was bolstered by people coming out of work, the initial reaction appeared to be a mix of fury and dismay, with people chanting, “Out with the crook!” But there was no call for drastic new steps. Leaders of the three opposition parties who are coordinating the protest said the demonstrations would continue, and they voiced suspicions about what Mr. Yanukovich had offered in exchange for a Russian bailout.


Russia restarts trade sanctions against Ukraine

January 29, 2014

Russian President Vladimir Putin gestures speak during a press conference with EU Council president and European Commission President on January 28, 2014 following an EU-Russia summit at the EU Headquarters in Brussels. “The EU needs +to clear the air+ with Russia at this summit as sharp differences over
the Ukraine crisis and Eastern Europe test relations”, a senior EU official said. At least two trade associations complained that Ukrainian exports are once again facing troubles at the Russian border, similar to the brief but damaging trade war in August.


FM: Russia will do its best to ensure peace in Ukraine
February 19, 2014
Russia will do its best to ensure peace and calm in Ukraine, the Foreign Ministry reported on Wednesday.

“Russia demands the opposition leaders stop bloodshed in the country and resume dialogue with the legitimate authorities without threats and ultimatums,” the ministry said in a statement.

“Ukraine is Russia’s friendly state and strategic partner. We’ll do our best to ensure peace and calm in the country,” the statement says.

Civilians and law enforcers have died and received serious injuries in Kiev and other Ukrainian cities due to the criminal actions, which were taken by the opposition. Radical forces have seized the buildings of police, the prosecutor’s office and military units in the west of Ukraine. Rioters have jeered at policemen and servicemen. Dozens of them have received wounds.

Russia “is indignant with the lack of reactions from radical groups of the opposition that connive at ‘the brown revolution’ by using demagogic slogans to cover the commitment to democracy and European values”, the statement says.

“There is no clear reaction from European politicians and structures that refuse to recognize that the opposition bears full responsibility for the actions of radical forces in Ukraine,” the statement says.


Putin discusses situation in Ukraine with members of Russia’s Security Council
February 25, 2014
Russian President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday morning held a briefing session with the permanent members of the Security Council on the situation in Ukraine, Putin’s spokesman Dmitry Peskov has reported, according to Ukrinform’s Moscow correspondent.”

The discussion focused on the situation in Ukraine,” he said.

The meeting was attended by Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev, Chief of Staff of the Presidential Executive Office Sergei Ivanov, speakers of both houses of parliament Valentina Matvienko and Sergei Naryshkin, Security Council Secretary
Nikolai Patrushev and his deputy Rashid Nurgaliyev, Interior Minister Vladimir Kolokoltsov, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu, and also heads of the FSB and SVR Alexander Bortnikov and Mikhail Fradkov.


.Executive Order on recognising Republic of Crimea
March 17, 2014
Vladimir Putin signed Executive Order on Recognising the Republic of Crimea. The Executive Order reads, in part:
“Given the declaration of will by the Crimean people in a nationwide referendum held on March 16, 2014, the Russian Federation is to recognise the Republic of Crimea as a sovereign and independent state, whose city of Sevastopol has a special status.”
The Executive Order comes into force on the day of its signing.


Vote by U.N. General Assembly Isolates Russia
March 27, 2014
In the first barometer of global condemnation of Russia’s annexation of Crimea, Ukraine and its Western backers persuaded a large majority of countries in the United Nations General Assembly on Thursday to dismiss the annexation as illegal, even as Russia sought to rally world support for the idea of self-determination.
The resolution, proposed by Ukraine and backed by the United States and the European Union, represented the latest effort to isolate President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia over the annexation, which followed a March 16 referendum in the peninsula that has been internationally regarded as Ukrainian territory.
The resolution garnered 100 votes in favor, 11 votes against, with 58 abstentions. The two-page text does not identify Russia by name, but describes the referendum as “having no validity” and calls on countries not to recognize the redrawing of Ukraine’s borders. Ukraine’s acting foreign minister, Andriy Deshchytysia, called Russia’s actions “a direct violation of the United Nations Charter.”
Russia said Crimea should not have been part of Ukraine anyway, since it had been part of Russia for centuries until 1954, when the Soviet leader Nikita S. Khrushchev gave the peninsula to Ukraine, at the time a Soviet republic.

Joint Declaration by the Foreign Ministers of Ukraine, Russia, France and Germany

July 02, 2014

The Foreign Ministers of Germany, France, Russia and Ukraine strongly reconfirm their commitment to sustainable peace and stability in Ukraine. In this context they stress the necessity of a sustainable ceasefire, to be agreed upon swiftly and to be observed by all concerned, thus putting an end to violence in Eastern Ukraine. Ministers urge that the Contact Group should resume no later than July 5th with the goal of reaching an unconditional and mutually agreed sustainable cease-fire. This cease-fire should be monitored by the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine in conformity with its mandate. In that respect, Ministers agree to take all necessary measures and use their influence on the concerned parties with a view to achieving this goal. Ministers stress the importance of a swift release of all hostages.

Ministers welcome Russia’s readiness to grant Ukrainian border guards access to Russian territory in order to participate in the control of border crossings at the checkpoints Gukovo and Donetsk while the mutually agreed cease-fire is in place. This shall be done in close collaboration between Russian and Ukrainian border authorities and pending the return of the Ukrainian checkpoints Izvarino and Krasnopartizansk to Ukrainian government control.

Ministers invite the OSCE to take all necessary steps to deploy OSCE-observers in response to the Russian invitation at the Russian checkpoints Gukovo and Donetsk while the mutually agreed cease-fire is in place. All sides must contribute to a secure environment.

Ministers stress that this would contribute to an effective control of the Russian-Ukrainian border and called for regular and expeditious exchange of relevant information between Russia, Ukraine and the OSCE.

Ministers emphasize the need to ensure safety and security of journalists working in the area of violence.


Captured Russian troops ‘in Ukraine by accident’

August 26, 2014

Ten Russian soldiers captured in eastern Ukraine crossed the border “by accident”, Russian military sources are quoted as saying. Ukraine has released video interviews of some of the seized paratroopers. The incident comes as the Ukrainian and Russian leaders have held their first-ever bilateral talks in Belarus. More than 2,000 people have died in months of fighting between Ukrainian forces and separatists in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions.

Russia creates emergency fund to deal with Western sanctions  
September 15, 2014

Russia will create a multi-billion dollar anti-crisis fund in 2015 of money destined for the Pension Fund and some left over in this year’s budget to help companies hit by sanctions, Finance Minister Anton Siluanov was quoted as saying on Monday.

Several waves of Western sanctions against Moscow for its involvement in the Ukraine crisis have limited access to foreign capital for Russia’s largest banks and key oil companies.

Some companies have asked the government for help, including the country’s top-oil producer Rosneft which said it would need 1.5 trillion roubles ($39.70 billion US) in aid.

Siluanov was quoted as saying by Russian news agencies that the decision to stop transferring money to the Pension Fund would hand the budget an extra 309 billion roubles ($8.18 billion US).

He said not all of that sum would go into the anti-crisis fund, but that it would also receive at least 100 billion roubles of money left over in this year’s budget.

“This 100 billion roubles will be added to the [anti-crisis] reserve next year, which will allow us to help our companies,” RIA news agency cited Siluanov as saying.

“We are planning to create a reserve of a significant size.”

It was not clear how big the fund would be.

It will be the second year running that Moscow has stopped transfers of funds from the budget to the Pension Fund, which provides benefits for Russia’s pensioners, some invalids and families who have lost their breadwinners.


EESC and EU-Russia Civil Society Forum discusses rule of law and civil society activities in Russia  
July 02, 2015

The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and the EU-Russia Civil Society Forum met at the EESC on 30 June to take stock of the worsening situation regarding the rule of law, fundamental rights and civil society activities in Russia.

The EESC president, himself recently put on a travel blacklist by the Russian authorities, deplored the deadlock in relations between the EU and Russia and proposed that the EU make a symbolic move to re-establish dialogue and relations, suggesting facilitating the visa regime, especially for young people coming to Europe to study.
Participants also called the Russian authorities to repeal the “foreign agent’s law” and abolish the “foreign agents” register, as well as the law on “undesirable” organisations. In addition, practical measures were discussed including easier access to asylum for Russian activists and the implementation of the OECD Anti-Bribery convention to fight corruption abroad.

Source: EU Neighborhood Info Center, http://www.enpi-info.eu/main east.php?id=41443&id_type=1&lang_id=450

Russia to send 51st ‘humanitarian convoy’ to Donbas
March 26, 2016

“Currently we are preparing the convoy, particularly at the territory of the Noginsk rescue center,” Puchkov said, adding that the date of dispatch has not been defined yet as it is being accorded with Ukrainian colleagues and international organizations, TASS wrote.

According to Puchkov, Russia will continue to deliver humanitarian cargos to Donbas. The official added that the situation in the region is getting better as “infrastructure is being improved and the economic entities are being restored, which is a challenging mission though it is being implemented.”

Since August 2014, Russia has delivered 50 convoys containing more than 60,000 tonnes of humanitarian cargos to Ukraine’s Donbas region. Also, as Vladimir Puchkov said earlier on Saturday, “we’ve assisted in improving the social infrastructure.” “We took care of hospitals, medical offices, and power engineering facilities. The infrastructure was restored to the minimum necessary extent in a short period of time,” he added.

As UNIAN reported earlier, the Ukrainian side has repeatedly stressed that all freight coming from Russia in such convoys, which Moscow calls “humanitarian,” entered the territory of Ukraine illegally, without the consent of the government, in violation of national laws and internationally accepted practices.

3. European Union:
„The EU Eastern Partnership has lost momentum”
February 29, 2012

The EU Eastern Partnership (EaP) has lost momentum because of the EU’s economic turmoil, Yanukovich’s pro-Russian policy and his decision to keep Julia Timoshenko in jail, at the high cost of an association agreement with the EU, and Lukashenko’s crushing of all political opposition after winning the presidential election in December 2010. Thus only Moldova and the Caucasian countries remain as target states of the EaP. And Armenia and Azerbaijan are farthest away and no real democracies. As Vladimir Putin is moving back into his role as president, we are likely to see a resurgence of Russian support for Russian ethnics and minorities in EaP countries as well as an intensified use of the energy tool against some of these countries which are more vulnerable to it. And now there is much less the EU’s EaP can do for the partner countries that it was able to do in the not so distant past.


AP’s Prague Summit
March 5, 2012

Meeting in Prague on March 5, Foreign Ministry officials from the Visegrad Four approved groundbreaking rules that will allow the new “Visegrad Four Eastern Partnership” to begin its work. The initiative is based on decisions made last June at a Bratislava summit of the Visegrad Four, which comprises Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic. The summit, however, was incomplete for the absence of Belarus amid tense and fastly deteriorating relations with Minsk. In a joint statement issued in Prague, foreign ministers of the Visegrad Four and the Baltic states registered concern about developments in Belarus, including what they said were a lack of any improvement on human rights and the continuing repression of civil society combined with the absence of any deep democratic and economic reforms. Another major reason for concern for the EU was Ukraine
whose incarceration and trial of former Prime Minister Yulia Timoshenko was deemed politically biased and violating human rights. In an effort to bring the situation about in the EAP countries, the EU members undertook a series of rules and decisions meant to bring the Eastern countries closer to the EU altogether. Rules approved on March 5 calls for what the Visegrad Four described as “the rapprochement of Eastern European partners toward the EU.” The program is to include flagship projects and grants to help boost reforms as well as student grants and scholarship programs aimed at accelerating the political associations and economic integration between the Eastern Partnership countries and the European Union. The Visegrad Four group says its new program with the EU’s Eastern Partnership countries is to be built up gradually, starting in the areas of democratization, economic transformation, regional cooperation, and support for civil society. Romania is not commonly associated with the Visegrad Four Group.

Source: RFERL, http://www.rferl.org/content/belarus_to_skip_eu_eastern_partnership_talks/24504987.html

**Europe’s relations with its eastern neighbours, work in progress**

**March 15, 2012**

The European Union’s Eastern Partnership is about Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Ukraine, Moldova, and Belarus - six Eastern neighbours of the union. But it is also about Transnistria, South Ossetia and Abkhazia, Nagorno-Karabakh - frozen conflicts resulting from long-lasting military or ethnic disputes over territories in the neighbourhood of the EU. Remember the Nagorno-Karabakh War in 1994, the Russian-Georgian War in 2008, and its consequences - two breakaway territories of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. We must also consider as well the military conflict in 1992, following the dissolution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the breakaway territory of Transnistria. All this is our reality today. In December 2008, the European Commission first proposed the EaP – a specific Eastern dimension of the ENP embracing relations with Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine. Among the goals of the partnership is to bring the partner countries closer to the EU both politically and economically, to promote security, stability and good governance, and to strengthen the energy security. Another main goal is to foster partnership of civil society organisations and governments in partner countries.

In May 2011, the EURONEST parliamentary assembly was established. It aims to provide a parliamentary dimension to the EU’s Eastern Neighbourhood Policy. It includes some 60 MEPs and 60 national parliamentarians from the above mentioned countries—with 10 MPs from each country. It is important to mention that the participation of Belarus in EaP is limited. Future association agreements, which are meant to replace existing partnership and cooperation agreements,
would include either establishment of a deep and comprehensive free trade area or at least an objective of establishing such a free trade area in the future once the partner country is ready for it. In the long-term, the partner countries are also encouraged to establish deep and comprehensive free trade areas among themselves. At the moment, negotiations on an association agreement are going on with Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Moldova. Armenia, Georgia and Moldova started negotiations on the association agreement with the EU in 2010, and are ready to start bilateral negotiations in March 2. The agreement aims at simplification of trade including the exchange of goods and services, mainly through abolition of customs barriers. Armenia has started discussions and it is expected that negotiations between the EU and Moldova will conclude in autumn 2013. As regards Azerbaijan, the country first needs to accomplish its accession to the World Trade Organisation before negotiations could be considered. Therefore, the future association agreement between the EU and Azerbaijan - negotiations on which began in July 2010 - will include only an objective of negotiating a deep and comprehensive free trade agreement only once Azerbaijan is ready for it. The most advanced country is Ukraine, which concluded the negotiations with the EU in October last year. The completion of the negotiations is a success for the union and Ukraine. Negotiations on the association agreement, including an in-depth and comprehensive free trade area, started back in 2007. At the EU-Ukraine summit in Kyiv, in December last year, completion of the negotiation process was announced. The political process for its signature and subsequent ratification will now is taken on by the national parliaments of the EU member states and the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. But trade relations with Belarus remain slow. There are currently no negotiations with the EU on an association agreement. With reference to the formation of a customs union with Russia and Kazakhstan, Belarus does not even see any way for extending the bilateral textile agreement with the EU, which expired by 31 December 2009. The EU is ready to deepen its relations with Belarus in the light of further developments towards the fundamental European values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. Although the progress of the EU-Belarus relationship is conditional. Parliaments can build links between our societies and EURONEST is an essential forum for dialogue and increased mutual understanding between decision makers. We can learn from each other and we can learn together. It is a never ending process.


**EIB conference to discuss Eastern Partnership for Growth**
*April 05, 2012*
Enhanced and successful cooperation between the Eastern Partnership countries and closer cooperation with the European Union will be the focus of a con-
ference hosted by the European Investment Bank (EIB), Eastern Partnership for Growth, due to be held on 24 May in Vienna. A press release said the conference would cover three main topics: regional economic prospects and priorities, local private sector development and infrastructure for economic development. In the sessions, panelists will discuss the role of the banks to provide funding to corporates and SMEs in order to foster local private sector development. The speakers will identify the specific infrastructure needs for the region as a facilitating factor for economic growth and how to step up project development and implementation. The EIB supports the EU Neighbourhood Policy in the Eastern Partner Countries by financing projects of significant EU interest. Its current lending mandates and facilities add up to €5.3 billion in Russia and the Eastern Partner countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine and subject to future Council and European Parliament Agreement, Belarus).


**Joint Statement of the Eastern Partnership Foreign Ministers’ Meeting**

**July 23, 2012**

The third Foreign Ministers’ meeting of the Eastern Partnership took place in Brussels on 23 July 2012. Ministers stated that the Roadmap put forward by the European Commission and High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy constituted a basis for guiding and monitoring the further implementation of the objectives of the Eastern Partnership defined in the Prague and Warsaw Declarations until the next Summit in Vilnius in autumn 2013. Ministers agreed that the next Eastern Partnership Foreign Ministers’ meeting in 2013 would be an occasion to review the implementation of the Roadmap and to discuss the forward-looking development of the Eastern Partnership in preparation of the next Summit in Vilnius.


**Lithuanian foreign minister speaks against removing Belarus from European Partnership**

**August 24, 2012**

Lithuanian Foreign Ministry Audronius Azubalis on August 23 spoke against removing Belarus from the list of countries participating in the European Union’s Eastern Partnership program. Although Belarus has chosen the path of self-isolation, it is necessary to ensure the continuity of the Eastern Partnership in
cooperation with this important neighbor of the EU, Mr. Azubalis said during an annual meeting of the foreign ministers of the Baltic States and Germany, which was held Thursday in Riga, Latvia. “A suspension of Belarus’ participation in the Eastern Partnership would leave Belarusian people without European perspective,” Mr. Azubalis stressed, according to the Lithuanian foreign ministry.

Source: ZAO BelaPAN

6th EU-Ukraine Summit: Joint Statement
February 25, 2013

1. The 16th EU-Ukraine Summit took place in Brussels on 25 February, 2013. The European Union was represented by Mr Herman Van Rompuy, President of the European Council and Mr José Manuel Durão Barroso, President of the European Commission. Ukraine was represented by President Viktor Yanukovych.

2. Acknowledging the European aspirations of Ukraine and welcoming its European choice, the leaders reaffirmed their joint engagement in the political association and economic integration of Ukraine with the European Union on the basis of respect for common values and their effective promotion.

3. The leaders reaffirmed their commitment to the signing of the already initialled Association Agreement, including a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area, as soon as determined action and tangible progress are demonstrated in the three areas emphasized at the 2011 EU-Ukraine Summit, possibly by the time of the Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius in November 2013. Therefore, Ukraine is determined to comply with those areas/elements specified by the Conclusions of the 10 December 2012 Foreign Affairs Council of the European Union to this end. They agreed to focus on these issues as a matter of priority. The signing could be accompanied by an opening for provisional application of parts of the Agreement.

4. The leaders took note of the actions taken so far by Ukraine, and looked forward to it achieving concrete progress by early May 2013.


Source: Council of the European Union,

EaP CSF to present progress in cooperation at CORLEAP Vilnius meeting
September 02, 2013

This week EaP CSF Subgroup on Local Government and Public Administration Reform will participate in the plenary Meeting of CORLEAP, taking place on
the 3 September in Vilnius. Antonella Valmorbidia, its coordinator, will contribute with the Forum’s achievements and share further proposals to the participants.

During the meeting members of CORLEAP will adopt political recommendations ahead of the forthcoming 3rd Eastern Partnership Summit of Heads of State. ‘The aim is to give new impetus to the EU’s Eastern Partnership initiative and put forward the contribution of local government in driving this change’, a press release from Committee of Regions, says. The conference is also due to see the appointment of a new co-chair representing the Eastern partner countries.

The EaP CSF has an official observer status to CORLEAP and the cooperation of the CSF EaP with CORLEAP has been a success. CORLEAP priority in the sphere of Fiscal Decentralisation can be regarded as progress of the Subgroup which worked hard to have it as a shared priority. The subgroup will continue to work together with civil society in the region to carry out constant monitoring of the local government and to advocate for the reform of public administration based on transparency and effectiveness. It previously participated in two meetings of CORLEAP in Poznan and Chisinau.


European Integration Index 2013 for EaP Countries launched in Kyiv
September 04, 2013

On September 04, 2013 at the press conference in Kyiv two EaP CSF Country Facilitators -Boris Navasardian (Armenia National Platform) and Oleksandr Sushko (Ukrainian National Platform) among other experts presented an updated edition of the European Integration Index 2013 for EaP Countries. The European Integration Index tracks the progress of Eastern Partnership countries - Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine – annually with the established methodology. It provides a nuanced cross-country and cross-sector picture that is comparative for the region. The Index is developed by independent civil society experts from Eastern Partnership countries and EU who advocate reforms related to European integration and is supported by the Open Society Institute.


EP condemns Russia’s pressure on Eastern Partnership countries
October 24, 2013

In its resolution adopted on Wednesday the European Parliament expresses strong opposition to Russia’s pressure to deter those countries from associating with the Union, informs LETA/ELTA.
The European Parliament recommends that the association agreement with Ukraine should be signed at the November summit in Vilnius if the EU’s conditions, set by EU foreign ministers in December 2012, are met. MEPs also want the agreement to take provisional effect as soon as it is signed and are ready to complete the formal consent procedure before the end of Parliament’s current term. MEPs also call for an effective mobility policy with its neighbours to the south. “We need to encourage integration at regional level which would lay the basis for development and growth in those countries. We need to adopt a new mobility policy with a new visa policy, which would govern legal immigration and encourage more mobility to help young people to study in Europe and return home to contribute to modernization and development processes,” said Parliament’s rapporteur for the southern neighbourhood, Pier Antonio Panzeri. The resolution also points to the urgent need to promote projects for sustainable and inclusive socio-economic development and integration in the Maghreb. While the successful transition of the EU’s southern neighbours to democracy must be the EU’s priority, social justice and improving the quality of life are also of key importance, they add.


Joint Declaration of the Eastern Partnership Summit, Vilnius, 28-29 November 2013

November 29, 2013

Eastern Partnership: the way ahead

The Heads of State or Government and the representatives of the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Republic of Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, the representatives of the European Union and the Heads of State or Government and representatives of its Member States have met in Vilnius on 28-29 November 2013. The President of the European Parliament and representatives of the Committee of the Regions, the European Economic and Social Committee, the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) the Conference of Regional and Local Authorities of the Eastern Partnership (CORLEAP) and the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly were also present at the Summit.

The Prague Summit in May 2009 launched a strategic and ambitious Eastern Partnership, as a specific dimension of the European Neighbourhood Policy, to further support the sustainable reform processes of all Eastern European countries, States participating in the Eastern Partnership, with a view to accelerating the political association and economic integration of interested partners with the European Union (EU). The agenda agreed in Prague and Warsaw contains
the guiding principles of the Eastern Partnership. The participants of the Vilnius Summit re-confirm their commitment to implement them fully.

The participants of the Vilnius Summit reviewed the considerable progress made in the Partnership since the September 2011 Warsaw Summit bringing Eastern European partners closer to the EU and agreed on an ambitious agenda for the way ahead. In this context, they stressed the crucial necessity of implementing agreed commitments, in particular on political, economic and social reforms.


European Parliament calls for more support to eastern partners, rejects Russia’s role in association process

December 12, 2013

The outcome of the Vilnius Eastern Partnership summit of 29 November shows that the EU must do more to support the European aspirations of its eastern partners, MEPs have said in a resolution adopted today. They urged the December EU Council to send a strong political signal that the door to the EU is still open, despite Ukraine’s failure to sign the Association Agreement. The resolution said the EU must use all the tools it has, including aid, trade, visa waivers and energy-security projects in a “more strategic and flexible policy” to support its eastern partners choosing to strengthen their ties with Europe. Parliament condemned the Russian pressure exerted on Ukraine, Armenia and other eastern partners to deter them from signing agreements with the EU, urging the EU and member states to respond. It called on the Commission to consider counter-measures if Russia breaks World Trade Organization rules with politically motivated trade sanctions against the EU and its partners.

Ukraine – a missed opportunity

MEPs deplored the decision by Ukraine’s President Yanukovych not to sign the Association Agreement, calling it a “major missed opportunity”. They underlined their continued support for it, provided the necessary conditions are met, and called on the December Council to send a strong political signal that the EU remains ready to engage with Ukraine. MEPs voiced their solidarity with the protesters in Ukraine and condemned the “brutal and unacceptable” use of force by security forces on the nights of 9, 10 and 11 December, including during the visit by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton. They demanded the immediate and unconditional release of the protesters arrested and appealed for a top-level EU mediation mission to go to Ukraine. MEPs also called for a European Parliament mission to Ukraine as soon as possible, and pointed to the democratic possibility in any democracy to call new elections “when renewed popular legitimacy is needed”.

Armenia

The resolution regretted Armenia’s decision to join the Customs Union with Russia, after more than three years of successful association talks with the EU, and urged the Armenian authorities to respect the people’s right to protest against it.

Georgia and Moldova - some success

MEPs welcome the initialing of political and trade agreements with Georgia and Moldova at the Vilnius summit and voiced hope they can be signed as soon as possible. They called on the Commission to ensure that the citizens of these countries enjoy some tangible benefits from the deals in the short term. They welcomed the proposal to allow Moldovan citizens to travel to the EU’s Schengen area without visas.

Azerbaijan

Parliament urged the Azerbaijani parliament to reconsider its decision to freeze participation in the EURONEST parliamentary assembly, following the EP’s criticism of the conduct of the presidential elections. It also voiced concerns about detentions, fresh arrests of opposition activists, and harassment of independent NGOs and media. Russia has to keep out Parliament also rejected “very firmly” any proposal to include Russia in association arrangements between the EU and its eastern partners.


Sikorski: EU overestimated association attractiveness for Ukraine
January 03, 2014

The European Union overestimated the attractiveness of its offer for Ukraine regarding the association and underestimated Russia’s determination in this context, Polish Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski told the TVN BIS television channel in an interview. “I agree with the assessment that the EU seriously overestimated the attractiveness of its offer and underestimated something that for us [Poles -ed.] is obvious: to what extent Ukraine is a priority for Russia and how much money the Russian government is ready to invest to strengthen relations with it,” the Polish minister said. He also expressed his belief that there are no facts that could prevent the signature of an Association Agreement between Ukraine and the EU. “I’m not aware of any proven facts that would make association between Ukraine and the EU impossible,” Sikorski said, adding that in the matter “nothing has been yet finally decided”.

Germany calls for rethink of Eastern Partnership by Valentina Pop
January 31, 2014

The EU was wrong not to have analysed possible conflicts with Russia before offering the so-called Eastern Partnership to countries like Ukraine, Gernot Erler, Germany’s new chief of relations with Russia and the eastern neighbourhood told journalists in Berlin on Thursday (30 January).

 Barely a day in his new job, he said that being labelled as “someone who understands Russia” does not offend him. Unlike his predecessor, Andreas Schockenhoff, who did not shy away from harshly criticising the Kremlin on human rights, Erler says it is important to take into account Moscow’s concerns - be they legitimate or not - about the West.

 His appointment was a concession made by Chancellor Angela Merkel to her Social-Democratic coalition partners, who claimed the foreign ministry in the coalition government.

 Erler, who will turn 70 this year, is a fluent Russian speaker and is seen favourably in Moscow.

 A close ally of German foreign minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier - himself a Russophile - Erler was the mastermind behind the idea of a “modernisation partnership” with Russia, or, seeking democratisation through increased economic ties.

 Unlike his previous government roles, his portfolio this time is not just German-Russian relations, but covers the entire post-Soviet area, including the so-called Eastern Partnership countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine).

 He said his name was floated to act as a mediator in Ukraine, where pro-EU protests in Kiev recently turned violent. But in the meantime, EU neighbourhood commissioner Stefan Fuele and EU foreign policy Chief Catherine Ashton have taken on the task.”

 It is best for Germany not to seek a special role in Ukraine but rather to stick to the common European position and support the EU mediation efforts,” Erler said.

 With at least six people dead, several others missing and amid shocking images of “burning policemen,” who had been attacked with Molotov cocktails, Erler said the number one priority is to stop the violence. He said the second priority is to quickly create a functional government because “Ukraine is on the brink of bankruptcy, which would have immense consequences also for Europe.”

 But, looking further down the line, he said the EU must reconsider its Eastern Partnership and why the Ukraine fiasco arose.

Read more at: EU Observer, http://euobserver.com/foreign/122934
Progress reports on implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy
March 27, 2014

Once a year, the European External Action Service and the European Commission publishes reports assessing the progress made towards the objectives of the Action Plans and the Association Agendas.

More details about Regional reports of European External Action Service you will found here: http://www.eea.europa.eu/enp/documents/progress-reports/index_en.html

Eastern Partnership summit was held in Prague
April 24, 2014

The Eastern Partnership summit started in Prague on 24th of April, 2014. Foreign Minister of Ukraine Andriy Deshchytsia represented Ukraine at this event. Presidents of Austria, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Moldova, Georgia and Armenia visited the summit.

The Ukrainian delegation must been represented at the highest level at this event, but due to the complicated political situation the Foreign Minister have represented Ukraine, Radio Svoboda reports.

During the meeting they discussed perspectives of development of initiative of Eastern Partnership and political situation in Ukraine.


Council broadens EU sanctions regarding the situation in Ukraine
May 12, 2014

In the light of the recent developments in Ukraine and in the absence of any steps towards de-escalation, the Council has today widened the scope of EU restrictive measures regarding the situation in Ukraine.

The Council broadened the legal basis for EU restrictive measures in respect of actions undermining or threatening the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Ukraine. It added the possibility to target persons associated with actions and policies undermining stability or security in Ukraine as well as with obstructing the work of international organisations in the country, and entities linked to such persons.

The Council also provided a legal basis for asset freezes on entities in Crimea and Sevastopol which have been confiscated, or entities which have benefited from such confiscation.

The Council also decided to add 13 persons to the list of those subject to a travel ban and a freeze of their assets within the EU. This brings the total number of persons subject to sanctions in connection with the crisis in Ukraine to 61.
At the same time, two confiscated entities in Crimea and Sevastopol will be subject to an asset freeze. The legal texts with the list of the persons and entities concerned will be published in the EU Official Journal later on today and will enter into force at the same time.


**EU increases humanitarian assistance for Ukrainian conflict-affected population**

**August 12, 2014**

The European Commission is giving additional funding of €2.5 million to assist the most vulnerable people affected by the continuing fighting in Eastern Ukraine. This humanitarian aid is geared towards helping to register and relocate internally displaced people (IDPs), provide shelter, food, water, healthcare, psycho-social assistance and protection in preparation for the coming winter. “We are moving to help some of the most vulnerable victims of this conflict. The civilians, many of them women and children have been forced to flee their homes at a short notice, leaving behind even the most necessary belongings. They need our help to live through the months ahead – especially with winter looming. Some of the people also now caught in cross fires without possibility to escape,” said EU Commissioner Kristalina Georgieva, responsible for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection. “I call on all sides of this conflict to facilitate the work of humanitarian organisations and allow for the provision of assistance to the civilian population in need, irrespective of whom and where they are,” the Commissioner added.

The Commission’s humanitarian funding will address the basic needs of the population in the areas directly affected by the conflict, the internally displaced and refugees who have fled the conflict areas, and the returnees who are going back home to recovered areas by the Ukrainian military. This category includes some 3.9 million people.

As on all other crises, the Commission works in close coordination with the UN and humanitarian partners. EU humanitarian experts have been deployed in the regions affected since the crisis began to monitor the situation and ensure timely and coordinated EU support. The Commission’s humanitarian aid experts are fully involved in the humanitarian response preparation for Ukraine, led by the United Nations.

The €2.5 million comes on the top of €250 000 the European Commission provided in Ukraine through the International Federation of the Red Cross/Red Crescent.

Commissioner stresses key civil society role in reform

November 20, 2015

Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy Johannes Hahn has opened the 7th Annual Assembly of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum in Kyiv, saying civil society had a crucial role to play in reform. “Everyone benefits when civil society is strong, proactive and independent. Democratic governments know they are stronger when they listen to you,” he said, adding that the EU had substantially increased its financial support through the Neighbourhood Civil Society Facility (around €150m in the current period compared to €90m last time), benefitting more than 200 organisations across the region. Referring to the review of the ENP, published this week, he said the focus on stability was not to the detriment of civil society: “the EU’s own stability is based on democracy and rule of law. That is the kind of stability we mean.” And he added: “we will do more to strengthen civil society capacities including by creating new Civil Society Fellowships to boost the skills and capacities of up and coming young leaders”.


EaP CSF Addressed Open Letter to UK Prime Minister David Cameron

December 02, 2015

Participants of the 7th Annual Assembly of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum (EaP CSF) in Kyiv addressed an open letter to the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom David Cameron and the Secretary of State for Justice of the United Kingdom Michael Gove expressing their deep concern about the current debate within the ruling Conservative Party in the United Kingdom which appears to be moving to change the country’s relationship with the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and to replace the existing British Human Rights Act that incorporates the European Convention with a new Bill of Rights that could curtail previously granted rights.

Reiterating the EaP CSF support for the European Convention on Human Rights as an indispensable instrument for promoting respect for human rights in the member countries of the Council of Europe (CoE) and noting that the ECHR and the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) in Strasbourg have been effective in defending human rights, the EaP CSF appeals to the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Justice of the UK to maintain the arrangements which hitherto have served well the cause of human rights.

Were the United Kingdom to break this arrangement by enacting a Bill of Rights allowing Britain’s authorities to deviate from universally accepted standards and to treat the judgements of the ECHR as merely advisory, then this would set a dangerous precedent for rulers of other member countries of the
CoE, who could be tempted to pass their own Bills of Rights limiting the rights of their citizens. Furthermore, such moves would not only undermine the respect for human rights in certain Eastern European countries but they would harm the United Kingdom’s reputation as a promotor of human rights globally.

The letter was signed by the Co-Chair of the EaP CSF Steering Committee Krzysztof Bobiński on behalf of more than 170 civil society organizations from the Eastern Partnership and EU countries which voted on 21 November 2015 at the 7th Annual Assembly in Kyiv.


**MEPs urge Moldova, Georgia, Ukraine to pursue reform and Russia to leave**

January 21, 2016

Russia must end its direct or indirect involvement in conflicts in Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine and stop interfering with their EU aspirations, say MEPs in a review, voted on Thursday, of their progress on reform. One year after the three ratified their association and deep and comprehensive free trade agreements (AA/DCFTAs) with the EU, MEPs highlight remaining reform tasks for each country and take note of the 6 April Dutch referendum on the EU-Ukraine deal.

In a resolution welcoming the progress of Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine on their “chosen path of closer political and economic integration with the European Union”, MEPs call on Russia to end its direct or indirect involvement in conflicts in the territories, including its occupation of Crimea.

They point out that Georgia’s exports to the EU rose by 15%, and Moldova’s by 62% in the first year, and says they expect to similar growth in those from Ukraine.

MEPs also point out that EU financial support must be matched by concrete progress on reform.


**Statement by the Spokesperson on a new death sentence in Belarus**

February 17, 2016

A death sentence was handed down on 16 February 2016 to Sergei Khmelevsky by a Minsk Regional Court. Mr. Khmelevsky’s legal right to appeal should be fully guaranteed.

Mr. Khmelevsky was convicted of a serious crime and we extend our deepest sympathy to the family and friends of the victims.
The EU opposes the use of death penalty, a cruel punishment, which fails to act as a deterrent. We call on Belarus, the only country in Europe still applying capital punishment, to join a global moratorium as a first step towards the abolition of death penalty. Commuting the sentences of persons sentenced to death and launching a public debate on the death penalty with Belarusian society would be an important move in this regard.


Belarus: OSCE Representative condemns attack on journalist and calls on authorities to ensure media freedom

February 03, 2016

The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) has condemned police violence against a journalist in Belarus last week. The statement, issued by the OSCE’s Representative on Freedom of the Media, Ms Dunja Mijatović, calls on authorities to ensure journalists’ safety. The case concerns Pavel Dabravolski, a journalist with the Tut.by news website, who was beaten and detained by police whilst covering the detention of two protestors in a court building in Minsk on January 25, states the press release. “These kind of disturbing and intolerable actions by law enforcement representatives toward members of the media are unacceptable. Police should facilitate the work of journalists, not obstruct their activities and intimidate them.” said Ms Mijatović according to the press release.

The OSCE reports that Ms Mijatović also noted the concerns expressed by media and civil society on the police violence against Mr Dabravolski, as well as the persecution of media in general. The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media observes media developments in all 57 OSCE participating States, providing early warning on violations of freedom of expression and media freedom and promoting full compliance with OSCE media freedom commitments.

4. The Eastern Partnership Multilateral Platforms:

a. Democracy, good governance and stability

Report of Euronest PA committee meeting adopted in Baku
April 02, 2012

A report on “Future challenges of democracy, including issues of independent and free media of the Council of Europe and the Eastern Partnership” is adopted at the meeting of the Committee on Political Affairs, Human Rights and Democracy Euronest PA held in Baku. “We made many compromises in preparing this report,” the co-rapporteur on the report MP Ali Huseynli said at the meeting “The development of European values and human rights is the highest priority for the countries of Eastern Partnership”. Huseynli said an important place was given to the fight against corruption, the development of media during the preparation of the committee report. The second session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Euronest opened in Baku on Monday. Meetings of standing committees, the working group on Belarus, as well as the plenary session will be held during the session. Documents prepared by the committees, together with additions and amendments there to, which will be adopted as a resolution, will be discussed. The EU delegation of 60 people, the national delegations of Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova and Armenia will participate in the meeting. There will be ten people from each country. Euronest inter-parliamentary union includes Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.


Azerbaijan launches primary version of e-government portal
April 25, 2012

The Azerbaijani Communications and IT Ministry has launched the primary version of its e-government portal (ehdis.az), Communications and IT Minister Ali Abbasov told media today. He said that at present, the list of electronic services has been prepared and approved by the Cabinet of Ministers. “We are ready to
render about 60 e-services to the population at this portal,” he said. “A certain part is delivered via “single window” principle. Besides rendering electronic services to the population, our main goal is to create conditions for citizens to submit their proposals, the requirements for electronic services. This will allow creating new services to meet the needs of the population.” The “Electronic government” portal will be a key tool supporting the work with citizens and enterprises of public and private sectors. While creating “Electronic government”, X-Road principle was used. It is designed to combine the existing information bases and systems of state institutions, created on different platforms. Launching the portal will reduce the number of documents requested from the citizens because different bodies will interact with each other electronically.


Moldova and Azerbaijan to benefit from €1.5 million EU initiative to fight organised crime and human trafficking

February 19, 2013

Azerbaijan and Moldova are among the countries to benefit from the EU’s new €1.5 million initiative that will help boost the fight against organised crime and human trafficking. A press release said the new innovative pilot project in Azerbaijan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Moldova and Turkey would help countries to be better equipped to deal with human trafficking and promote regional cooperation on this issue through sharing information and best practice between countries and regions. The project will aim to:

•improve systems of data collection, analysis and exchange at the national and transnational level to increase the knowledge on the scale and nature of trafficking in human beings;
•promote and assist in information sharing and regional coordination on trafficking in human beings;
•enhance national and transnational law enforcement cooperation and the capacity of prosecutors, consular and non-governmental organisations’ staff to address the crime of trafficking in human beings more efficiently.

Launching the project, EU Neighbourhood Policy Commissioner Štefan Füle said: “We are determined to do all we can to work across borders and nations to bring an end to this evil activity of trafficking people wherever it takes place.” “Organised crime is a virus that knows no borders,” Development Commissioner Andris Piebalgs said, “so the remedy must also strike across borders not only to protect the victims, but also EU citizens.” Cecilia Malmström, Commissioner for Home Affairs, said the EU should work with partner countries and organisations “to provide a strong and unequivocal response to this fundamental violation of human rights.” The project, funded under the EU’s Instrument for Stability, is a first pilot phase, to be followed by a second phase that would consolidate its results and broaden the scope by addressing not only law enforcement,
but also assistance and protection of victims. More countries are also expected to join the project in the second phase.


Belarusian Ministry of Justice denied “Young Democrats” official registration
June 26, 2013

The Ministry of Justice denied the Youth public association “Young Democrats” official registration for the third time. As the leader of the Youth public association Aliaksandra Vasilevich informed belngo.info, the officials appealed to a “bad handwriting” in the handwritten lists of the founders, as well as incomplete information about them, wrong fonts in the documents and a number of other faults. Aliaksandra Vasilevich called these reasons formal and contrived. Among other things, the refusal by the Ministry of Justice contained the following statement: “Having studied the submitted documents the Ministry of Justice made a conclusion that the identities of the founding conference participants were not checked.” Apart from that, the lists of the participants from the Harodnia region were declared invalid. “We believe that all the reasons for the registration refusal are formal. All the documents have been properly prepared and submitted on time. But the Ministry of Justice did not allow us to legalize our activities. The authorities do not like and are afraid of youth non-governmental organizations. However, we’ll make other attempts to register our organization either in Belarus or abroad, maybe in some other legal form,” commented Aliaksandra Vasilevich. The last time the Ministry of Justice officials disapproved of the name of the organization “Young Democrats”.


National Platform Annual meeting in Ukraine – civil society to speak in one voice
September 17, 2013

The Annual Meeting of Ukrainian National Platform is taking place today and tomorrow in Kyiv. It is a large consolidated event of the civil society which brings around 100 participants from various parts of the country, regional and national NGOs, independent experts and representatives from the Ministry of the Foreign Affairs, as well as members of the Eurointegration Committee of Verhovna Rada of Ukraine and EU Delegation to Ukraine.

This year’s agenda includes perspectives of the Eastern Partnership on the eve of the November EaP Summit in Vilnius, Lithuania. During the meeting par-
participants plan to develop a consolidated position of the civil society regarding the role of Ukrainian society in the EU integration process, which will be presented during the General Assembly of the EaP Civil Society Forum in Chisinau. A special quest of the meeting was the Head of the EU Delegation to Ukraine Jan Tombinski who said on Monday that ‘he sees goods prospects for the signing of the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the European Union during the Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius in November 2013’. ‘Today we have 10 weeks left to the Vilnius summit, and I can say that today I am more optimistic about the prospects for this summit,’ said the EU Ambassador to Ukraine.

Among other special guests are Petras Vaitekunas, Lithuanian Ambassador to Ukraine, Vsevolod Chentsov, Director of the Department for European Union, Foreign Ministry of Ukraine, Borys Tarasyuk, Co-Chair of the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly and Hryhoriy Nemyria, former Deputy Prime Minister for the European integration in Yulia Tymoshenko’s government.

The conference is moderated by the Coordinator of the National Platform of the EaP Civil Society Forum in Ukraine - Oleksandr Sushko (Institute for Euro-Atlantic Cooperation).


Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum trusted by EU and partner countries
October 07, 2013

The Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum (CSF) is trusted by political leaders from the EaP countries and the EU, and will continue enjoying the support of the EU and its member states. This was one of the key messages that came out of the fifth annual meeting of the Forum last week, held under the title together for a European Future. The event brought together over 250 representatives of civil society organisations from partner countries and the EU, as well as senior government officials, diplomats and representatives of the donor community. In his opening remarks, European Commissioner for Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policy Štefan Füle said the Eastern Partnership summit in November should be a summit of delivery. At the forum, the Commissioner was awarded a special certificate ‘in recognition of the support given to the civil society’ in the Eastern Partnership countries, a press release from the CSF said.

Mikayel Hovhannisyan from the Eurasia Partnership Foundation in Armenia said civil society in his country stands for the highest possible level of integration with the EU. Leila Alieva from the Centre for National and International Studies, Azerbaijan, pointed to a highly polarised society in her country and urged the EU “to strike a right balance between promoting values and pursuing its energy security policy.” Andrej Yahorau, representing the Belarusian Centre for European Transformation, spoke in favour of promoting reforms in his country rather
that “superficial monitoring” of the reforms. A representative of the Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies Kakha Gogolashvili said civil society should be operating in the space between the government and the public, working actively with both.


Polish, Swedish FMs Hail Georgia’s Progress, Warn Against Selective Justice
October 23 2013

The foreign ministers of Poland and Sweden have hailed Georgia’s progress ahead of the Eastern Partnership summit in Vilnius in late November, but warned against selective justice and in particular warned against, as the Swedish foreign minister put it, repeating mistakes of Ukraine.

Source: Civil Georgia, http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=26594

Media freedom in Eastern Partnership countries: Moldova comes top, Ukraine lags behind Armenia
November 18, 2013

Moldova has the highest degree of media freedom among the Eastern Partnership countries, according to the results of the second wave of a survey titled Media Freedom Index of the Eastern Partnership countries presented last week by Internews Ukraine in Kyiv. Georgia came second, followed by Armenia and Ukraine, while Azerbaijan and Belarus hold 5th and 6th places respectively. The Media Freedom Index in Eastern Partnership countries is part of the EU-funded Eastern Partnership Media Freedom Watch project, an initiative of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum. Data on two new ratings – the “Top-3 events facilitating media freedom in the region” and “Top-3 events obstructing free media in the region” – were also presented. Both surveys cover the period from July to September 2013, a press release from the EU Delegation to Ukraine said. Commenting on the survey results, Zoltán Szalai, Head of Press and Information Section of the EU Delegation to Ukraine, stressed the importance of media freedom and freedom of speech as European Union’s fundamental values. “This project contributes to better understanding by the EU the specifics of regional media landscape and facilitates the information exchange between journalist communities of the Eastern Partnership countries,” he said.

Statement of Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum on arrest by Azerbaijan authorities of Anar Mammadli

December 17, 2013

Arrest of Anar Mammadli shows disregard of Azerbaijan authorities for independent election monitoring and civil liberties. Civil Society Forum calls on Azerbaijan authorities to release him immediately

Dear High Representative,
Dear Commissioner,
Dear President of the European Parliament,
Dear Ministers,

The Steering Committee of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum protests strongly about the three months’ detention order imposed on Anar Mammadli, the head of the Election Monitoring and Democratic Studies Center (EMDS) in Azerbaijan, and his subsequent imprisonment on 16 December 2013. The investigation being carried out against Anar Mammadli does not warrant his detention as he has until now answered every summons to appear as a witness in the case, and the fact that he has had his passport taken away means that he is unable to leave Azerbaijan. Prior to October 2013, Anar Mammadli was Working Group 1 co-ordinator of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum (working group for democracy, human rights, good governance, and stability).

Anar Mammadli is a highly respected civil rights activist, and the reports produced by his election monitoring organisation are considered to be highly credible both in Azerbaijan and abroad. We consider that the criminal investigation being conducted against him which derives from grants EMDS received from abroad to conduct its election monitoring activities is another example of the victimisation of civil rights activists by the Azerbaijan authorities.

We urge the authorities to immediately free Anar Mammadli, and to drop all charges against him. The authorities must understand that every additional political prisoner in Azerbaijan undermines the country’s image abroad and its position in the Council of Europe and in the Organization of Security and Co-operation in Europe as well as its relations with the European Union. We urge the European Commission, the EU delegation in Baku, and the European Parliament to condemn his arrest in the strongest terms, and to support the Civil Society Forum in pressing the Azerbaijan authorities for his immediate release.

Yours faithfully,
Steering Committee
Civil Society Forum of the Eastern Partnership

Eastern Partnership Migration and Asylum Panel looks at ways of tackling statelessness

January 13, 2014

Ways to prevent and reduce statelessness were the focus of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) Panel on Migration and Asylum expert meeting, held in Budapest last month. The meeting on 12-13 December, organized jointly by Hungary and Moldova, brought together experts from partner countries as well as from Hungary, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland and Sweden. Participants addressed the problem as a common issue for EU member states and their Eastern neighbours, a press release said, adding that, “international legal aspects, recent trends of statelessness and also national practices and experiences were discussed” at the meeting. The European Commission cited two complementary approaches to the problem, namely prevention and reduction of statelessness. All participants agreed on the need “to have effective statelessness determination procedures in order to be able to grant a status to stateless individuals.”

As some participants suggested, the EU could play a bigger role in addressing the issue of statelessness, for example by advocating the ratification of the relevant UN conventions by EU member states and by promoting regulatory responses to the issue of statelessness determination procedures. In terms of national practices in the areas of identification, reduction and prevention of statelessness, “Hungary shared its latest policy developments, procedures and statistics, to demonstrate how statelessness can be effectively managed, both regarding legislation and practice of status determination.”

Georgia and Moldova presented their national practices illustrating significant legislative and institutional progress achieved in terms of addressing statelessness. Moldova was showcased as a model for the region and beyond. In order to achieve durable and sustainable solutions to the problem of statelessness, participants concluded that the priority for each state would be “to address legislative gaps and introduce efficient mechanisms to grant a status.” The activities of the Panel, in particular expert meetings, are funded by the European Commission. General Support is provided by the Swedish Migration Board and the International Organization for Migration (IOM).


EUBAM lecture on fighting organized crime at ‘EU Study Days’

April 04, 2014

On April 3, EUBAM delivered a lecture on ‘EU best practices in fighting organized crime’. During the lecture students had an opportunity to learn more about the types of criminal groups and the methods of fighting organized crime used by international law-enforcement agencies. Piotr Bartoszek, EUBAM Organized
Crime Investigation Specialist, also talked about the role of EUBAM in supporting Moldovan and Ukrainian law-enforcement agencies in this area. ‘It was a very interesting lecture which stirred up an active discussion during which we tried to find the best solution to resolve the problem of organized crime in Ukraine’, said Yuliya Sapiga, the participant of the event. The EU Study Days is an education project initiated by the Delegation of the European Union to Ukraine. It provides an opportunity for Ukrainian university students and graduates to gain deeper and wider knowledge about the European Union and EU-Ukraine relations from key experts in the field and from different viewpoints. The project also facilitates the establishment of a network of young Ukrainians who will be able to share their experiences and implement joint initiatives in the future.


**EU and IOM assist Belarus and Ukraine to make their common border more secure**

**April 18, 2014**

In March 2014, a new EU-funded project was launched to assist the Republic of Belarus and Ukraine to enhance their common border security. The overall aim of the project titled, “Strengthening Surveillance and Bilateral Coordination Capacity along the Common Border between Belarus and Ukraine (SURCAP Phase II),” is to minimize illicit transnational activity such as smuggling and irregular migration through improved law enforcement cooperation. In Soviet times, the border between Belarus and Ukraine was an administrative boundary and is thus lacking typical border infrastructure. ‘Blue’ border sections (rivers and lakes) constitute over one-fifth of the whole length of the frontier. Dense forests also make it difficult to control the border. Within the SURCAP Phase II project, funded by the EU and implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in partnership with the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), specialized equipment will be procured for the border agencies of Belarus and Ukraine. Regional trainings on integrated border management techniques and best practices, as well as study visits of Belarusian and Ukrainian border guards to the EU, will be conducted. The first meeting of the Steering Committee of SURCAP Phase II will take place at the Delegation of the European Union to Ukraine on 24 April 2014. Officials of the border agencies of Belarus and Ukraine and the EU, together with IOM and ICMPD representatives, will meet to discuss a joint vision and plan for strengthening the border surveillance and bilateral coordination capacity between Belarus and Ukraine.

Ukraine: head of EU mission for civilian security reform arrives in Kyiv
August 12, 2014

“I strongly believe that EUAM-Ukraine’s support and advice to the security sector reform framework in Ukraine, focusing on improvements in governance and effective management of efficient and fair law enforcement under democratic and legitimate control, will help secure peace and stability as well as economic prosperity for the country. In this very ambitious undertaking the fight against corruption is of particular relevance,” said Mizsei upon his arrival in Kyiv. EUAM-Ukraine is an unarmed, non-executive civilian mission under the EU’s Common Security and Defence Policy, a press release issued on Friday said. EU advisers will initially focus on supporting the elaboration of revised security strategies and the rapid implementation of reforms, in coordination and coherence with other EU efforts, as well as with the OSCE and other international partners.


Ukraine, Romania sign border traffic agreement
October 02, 2014

The governments of Ukraine and Romania on October 2, signed an agreement on local border traffic. The official ceremony of signing took place in Kyiv, an Interfax-Ukraine correspondent reported. The document was signed by Ukrainian Prime Minister Arseniy Yatseniuk on behalf of Ukraine, and Romanian Prime Minister Victor Ponta signed it on behalf of Romania. ”The signing of the agreement today is another step towards Ukrainian citizens’ visa-free travels to the EU. Under the agreement, almost half a million Ukrainians who live in a 30-km area near the border with Romania will be able to travel to Romania without visas, and vice versa,” Yatseniuk said after the ceremony. Ukraine fulfills an action plan with the EU for visa-free travels, he said. Yatseniuk also said he hopes that Ukrainians will be able to go to all EU countries without visas.


EU and Eastern Partners enhance cooperation on CSDP
October 03, 2014

The Eastern Partnership (EaP) Panel on cooperation in the area of Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) convened for the third time last week in Brussels. Around 70 representatives from the EU Member States and all six Eastern Partnership Countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine) took part. Gabor Iklody, Director of the EEAS Crisis Management and Planning
Directorate (CMPD), opened the meeting, which was chaired by Alessandro Mari-
ni, Head of CSDP Policy, Partnerships and Agreements Division at CMPD.

Participants discussed security and defence issues and agreed on a number
of new activities and projects in 2014-2015, in cooperation with the European
Security and Defence College, the EEAS and the European Commission. These
projects include joint CSDP courses and training programmes for officials from
partner countries, a CSDP-related research study for several EaP countries, vari-
ous workshops – including on EU Battle Groups –, a joint field visit to Georgia,
and further conferences with civil society. The Panel was established in June 2013
as part of the EaP Platform 1 on Democracy, Good Governance and stability. It
facilitates dialogue on political and practical aspects of participation by interested
partner countries in EU CSDP missions and operations, provides a forum for
sharing experience between the EU, its Member States and interested Partner
Countries on engagement in international crisis management and peacekeeping
activities, development of national capabilities for those purposes, as well as on
overall security sector reforms. After fifteen months the Panel has delivered on its
promises. Bilateral and multilateral cooperation with Eastern Partners in the area
of CSDP has intensified remarkably. The EU and some of the Eastern Partners
have started regular bilateral staff to staff consultations. Ukraine contributed with
a frigate to EUNAVFOR Atalanta earlier this year, and Georgia and the Republic
of Moldova joined for the first time CSDP operations: both of them took part
in EUTM Mali and Georgia contributed one infantry company to EUFOR RCA
(with 156 troops, making it the second largest contributor to this operation).


European Commission renews support to European Endowment for Democracy
July 01, 2015

The European Commission today adopted a decision to allocate €12 million
to the European Endowment for Democracy (EED), financing the core function-
ing of the foundation for the period end 2015 to 2018.

The €12 million allocated will also finance conferences, seminars, publications,
 networking events, training courses and other activities organised by the EED.

Established at the end of 2012, the EED provides grants to organisations and
activists working to promote democracy and human rights and who do not have
access to other funding mechanisms.

The geographical focus of the EED was initially the European Neighbour-
hood region. In December 2014, its geographic mandate was broadened, and the
EED can now act outside of the Neighbourhood region.

php?id=41429&id_type=1&lang_id=450
**EEU-EU dialogue expected to improve Eastern Partnership Initiative’s efficiency**
*November 26, 2015*

The dialogue between the Eurasian Economic Union and the European Union will improve the efficiency of the Eastern Partnership Initiative. The statement was made by Belarusian Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Alena Kupchyna during the meeting of heads of the foreign affairs ministries of the Eastern Partnership Initiative member states in Tbilisi, Georgia during the sixth round of informal ministerial talks, BelTA has learned. According to the press service of the Belarusian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Alena Kupchyna underlined the need for greater differentiation, for raising the performance of the Initiative by implementing concrete regional projects and via establishing a dialogue and enabling interaction between two integration associations — the Eurasian Economic Union and the European Union — for the sake of creating common economic space stretching from Lisbon to Vladivostok in the future. The meeting focused primarily on the implementation of the Eastern Partnership Initiative and prospects of its further development after the Eastern Partnership Initiative’s summit in Riga, including in view of the revision of the European Neighborhood Policy. During the event the Belarusian Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs met with heads of the delegations of other partnering states, Commissioner for European Neighborhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations Johannes Hahn, and Deputy Secretary General of the European External Action Service Helga Schmid. A number of matters concerning bilateral and multilateral cooperation were discussed, including the development of relations between Belarus and the European Union noted the source.


**Heads of Five Border Guard Agencies welcome improving cooperation**
*December 04, 2015*

On 2 December 2015 EUAM representatives have participated in the first-ever meeting of the Heads of Border Guard Agencies of Ukraine and Neighboring EU Member-States (Poland, Slovakia, Hungary and Romania) in Lviv. Representatives of FRONTEX, the Delegation of European Union to Ukraine and EUBAM also attended. The heads of border guard agencies informed each other about the state of play and found common ground for effective integrated border management strategies that was highly welcomed by EUAM and other attending international organizations.

The challenges at the common border of Ukraine and the European Union were highlighted during the meeting, specifically a side effect of the migration crisis in southeastern borders of the EU. This year 1377 illegal migrants were detained at southeastern borders of Ukraine (that is 2.5 times more in comparison to the last year). Syrians, Afghans and Vietnamese are dominating nationalities among the illegal migrants.
Another key topic of the meeting was facilitating the free movement of persons and cargoes across the border within the framework of European integration aspirations of Ukraine. During informal talks with the participants EUAM emphasized the importance of further reforming of civilian security sector sphere on the border, aimed at strengthening multilateral cooperation on preventing illegal cross-border activities and enhancing the fight against smuggling. The Heads agreed on a common approach toward further development of joint border controls and adopted a communique in this regard. The city of Lviv was proud to host this event in the Mirror Hall of the Opera.

Source: EUAM,

**Moldovan Human Trafficking Victims to enjoy better protection, assistance**

*January 11, 2016*

The Moldovan acting cabinet today approved a regulation-framework on the organisation and functioning of the assistance and protection service for victims of human trafficking and minimum quality standards. According to the government’s communication and press relations bureau, the document provides for the creation of the service, its goal, objectives, principles, organisation and functioning. It also includes 31 minimum quality standards regarding this service. The given service is meant to provide victims and potential victims of human trafficking with a unique assistance and protection programme, in compliance with international requirements. According to the framework-regulation, people asking for help will receive psychological and legal counseling, as well as assistance to help them reintegrate into the social life and prevent them from becoming victims again. The approval of the document is part of the commitments the Moldovan government had made in the context of the enforcement of the National Implementation Plan of Moldova-EU Association Agreement. Almost 90 victims of the human trafficking and 228 potential victims hosted by six specialized centres throughout Moldova received proper assistance in 2015.

Source: Eastern Partnership Panel on Migration and Asylum

**EaP national authorities learn about civilian Common Security and Defence Policy in Finland**

*February 19, 2016*

On 17-19 February, twenty five government officials from different institutions of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries gathered in Helsinki to learn
about civilian Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). During the study visit, the participants - national decision makers responsible for civilian crisis management - familiarised themselves with Finland’s experience. The programme included meetings with officials of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Interior, as well as workshop sessions about the Finnish legal base with regard to: participation in civilian CSDP missions; recruitment procedures; pre-deployment training and social guarantees of seconded personnel. The visit is co-organised by the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of the Interior in close cooperation with the European External Action Service’s Crisis Management and Planning Directorate. The trip took place in the framework of the Panel on cooperation in the area of CSDP within the EaP Platform on Democracy, Good Governance and Stability, and is co-funded by the European Union, reports the EEAS press service.


Georgia lauded as ‘most advanced’ in the Eastern Partnership
March 02, 2016

Spanish Foreign Minister José Manuel García concluded a visit to Georgia by praising the Caucasian republic’s rapid implementation of its EU association agreement and highlighted Madrid and Tbilisi’s ‘close links’. On Monday (29 February), García-Margallo, accompanied by Spain’s ambassador to Turkey Rafael Mendivil, was welcomed by President Giorgi Margvelashvili, Prime Minister Giorgi Kvirikashvili and President of the Parliament David Usupashvili, in the nation’s capital of Tbilisi. The former Soviet republic is currently undergoing a deep process of reforms following a period of rapprochement with the EU, having signed an association agreement back in June 2014. The agreement was the main talking point of the Spanish delegations visit, as Georgia has prioritised NATO and EU membership as two ambitious objectives.

The association agreement includes obligations to carry out structural reforms and García-Margallo indicated that Georgia has placed itself in a commanding position in terms of integrating with the EU. Diplomatic sources told EFE that the Georgian president also brought up the matter of visa liberalisation with the Spanish minister, ahead of its planned implementation next summer. García-Margallo confirmed that Spain would support the Georgian authorities in implementing the measure.

Belarus: EU Human Rights Representative visit
March 09, 2016

The European Union’s Special Representative for Human Rights, Stavros Lambrinidis, is on a three day official visit to Belarus that started on 8 March 2016. During his visit, Lambrinidis will meet representatives of the Belarusian authorities, political parties, civil society and human rights defenders. According to the Delegation of the European Union to Belarus, the EU Special Representative will also participate in an international conference on death penalty organised by the United Nations in Minsk on 10 March 2016. The news on the visit can be followed on the EU Delegation’s web-site as well as Stavros Lambrinidis’ twitter page.


Eastern Partnership study: civil participation in decision making
May, 31, 2016

Challenges and opportunities in the field of participatory policymaking in the six Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine) are featured in a new study on civil participation in decision-making in this region, supported by the joint EU/Council of Europe (CoE) Programmatic Cooperation Framework (PCF). The publication examines existing laws, agencies and procedures governing civil participation in political decision-making at national and local level in the six countries. The 1st part of the study is available here. It will be complemented by a second study conducted in 2016 that will examine the experience of implementation of civil participation in political decision making, an EU/CoE PCF press release said. The whole publication will be later translated into the languages of the Eastern Partnership countries to ensure as wide a dissemination as possible.


EaP disaster risk management: new web platform for information sharing
June, 17, 2016

A web based platform for the collection and visualization of disaster risk related information needed for the understanding of disaster hazards in the Eastern Partnership (EaP) region has been developed by the EU-funded Programme on Prevention, Preparedness and Response to Natural and Man-made Disasters in the EaP Countries (PPRD East 2 Programme). The Electronic Regional Risk Atlas (ERRA) is a platform for coordination among institutions responsible for preventing and addressing risk hazards. The platform was presented during a regional workshop held in the Ukrainian capital Kyiv this week, where the participants
agreed on disaster risk assessment methodologies, debated how to ensure that the information available through the web platform is useful to the relevant authorities, and at the same time complies with the main EU directives and guidelines in this field - the EU Floods Directive, the EU Risk Assessment Guidelines, the INSPIRE Directive, and the Guidelines on the collection of Loss Data.


1 July 2016: EU-Georgia Association Agreement fully enters into force
July, 01, 2016

Today, 1 July 2016, the Association Agreement (AA) between the European Union and Georgia fully enters into force. The Agreement aims to deepen political and economic relations between the EU and Georgia, also through the creation of a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA), said a press release from the European Commission (EC). “By removing customs tariffs and quotas and by comprehensively approximating trade-related laws and regulations to the standards of the European Union, the Agreement offers Georgia a framework for boosting trade and economic growth,” the EC added, highlighting that the AA will facilitate Georgia’s progressive integration with the EU single market. “Georgian citizens will increasingly be able to reap the benefits of closer association with the EU as a result of our Association Agreement,” said EU Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations Johannes Hahn. “Better business opportunities for Georgian small- and medium-sized enterprises, improved safety of locally-grown agricultural products and enhanced energy efficiency: these are just a few areas where we already saw promising signs during the provisional application of the Agreement, which can now progress even further,” he added, calling on the country to make full use of the substantial assistance - around €100 million per year - that the EU is providing to support the country’s reform agenda.

The EC press release also highlights that by signing up to an AA with the EU, Georgia has made a number of commitments in the areas of democracy, the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms, good governance, a market economy, sustainable development and other areas.


EU high officials to take part in EaP Informal Partnership Dialogue in Ukraine
July, 08, 2016

Johannes Hahn, EU Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, Elżbieta Bieńkowska, EU Commissioner for Internal
Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, and the European External Actions Service Deputy Secretary General Helga Schmid, will travel to the Ukrainian capital Kyiv to participate in the seventh Eastern Partnership (EaP) Informal Partnership Dialogue between 11 and 12 July. Hosted by Ukraine, the meeting brings together Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Ministers of Economy of the six EaP countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine) for informal high level discussions on further development of the Eastern Partnership and on international issues, the EU said in a press release today. The event offers an opportunity to reflect on the progress made across the key areas of cooperation agreed at the Riga summit last year. The participants will discuss the implementation of the renewed European Neighbourhood Policy and will exchange views on ways of enhancing the effectiveness of the EaP, with a view to the next EaP summit foreseen for 2017, the EU added.

The Informal Partnership Dialogues are held twice a year and hosted in turn by the EaP partner countries. As stated in the EU press release, such meetings allow for open, informal exchange of views between the partner countries and the EU high level representatives on foreign policy and sectoral cooperation areas.

Source: Enpi-Info,
http://www.enpi-info.eu/maineast.php?id=45764&id_type=1&lang_id=450

Ukraine: EU Mission facilitates knowledge exchange between Ukrainian and Romanian anti-corruption bodies

July, 11, 2016

A delegation from the Romanian National Anticorruption Directorate and the country’s Prosecutor’s Office visited the Ukrainian capital Kyiv last week to meet their colleagues from the newly established National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine (NABU) and the Specialized Anti-Corruption Prosecutor’s Office of Ukraine (SAPO). During the three-day visit, facilitated by the European Advisory Mission in Ukraine (EUAM), the Romanian experts conducted an institutional and training needs assessment for these agencies.

The visit is part of a larger bilateral project funded by the Romanian government for ‘Strengthening the institutional capacity of Ukrainian judicial authorities to investigate corruption cases’. It foresees a set of trainings for detectives and analysts of NABU and specialized prosecutors of SAPO, EUAM said in a press release. Ukrainian anti-corruption agencies expressed an interest to learn about modern IT technologies and their use in investigations, work with under-cover agents, independent wiretapping, advanced data collection and analysis, and investigation of illicit enrichment. According to the EUAM, these topics will be integrated into the agenda of the forthcoming training activities that will take place this autumn in both Kyiv and Bucharest.
The **EUAM** was formally launched on 1 December 2014, with a mandate to support Ukrainian state agencies in the reform of the civilian security sector. The mission works towards achieving the sustainability of Ukrainian security services that will be able to deliver the rule of law and law enforcement, increase public confidence and trust, and ensure full respect for human rights.

**Source:** ENPI Info, http://www.enpi-info.eu/maineast.php?id=45780&id_type=1&lang_id=450

---

**EU Delegation to Belarus appalled by the murder of Belarusian journalist in Kyiv**

**July 20, 2016**

“I was appalled to learn of the assassination of Pavel Sheremet in Kyiv today,” Jim Couzens, Charge d’Affaires a.i. of the EU Delegation to Belarus said reacting to today’s news of the explosion of the car driven by Pavel Sheremet, a journalist of Belarusian origin, in the centre of the Ukrainian capital Kyiv. “Pavel Sheremet was an important Belarusian journalist who did so much for free speech in Belarus, Russia and Ukraine. On behalf of the EU Delegation to Belarus I would like to offer my deepest condolences to his family, friends and colleagues. I hope there will be a thorough and conclusive investigation into this heinous crime,” added Jim Couzens.

**Source:** ENPI-Info, http://www.enpi-info.eu/maineast.php?id=45860&id_type=1&lang_id=450
b. Economic integration and convergence with EU policies

The EU experts to help Armenia to improve the competitive field

July 23, 2012

The Armenian State Commission for Protection of the Economic Competition with the EU Twinning project continues to organize events aimed at improving the competitive situation and existing problems in Armenia. As “Armenpress” was informed by SPEC, the next events will be held on July 24 in Lori and on July 25 in Aragatsotn regions. The seminar, organized by the EU member states experts arrived in Armenia and the Armenian SPEC members and workers, is related to the public assistance questions. During the event, specialized experts from EU member states, Nikolaus Graf Victum and Mrs. Monica Hoshrayter, will touch upon the role of the state support monitoring process, as well as the regional and local self-government bodies and ministries involved in it. The experts will also present examples of economic competitive field and their experience of solving such problems. It should be noted that the regional events are organized within the “Competitive and state assistance law enforcement strengthening in Armenia” Twinning program. The ultimate goal of the program is the improvement of the competitive environment in Armenia and the strengthening of the Armenian SPEC enforcement capacities of the legislation. The project is funded by the European Union. The total amount of financing is 1.1 million euro.


Georgia discusses acceleration of construction of the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars

January 31, 2013

The capital of Georgia has hosted a meeting to discuss the construction of the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway. The meeting of Economy Minister Giorgi Kvirikashvili with Chairman of the Bilateral Coordination Council of Marabda-Kartsakhi railway and head of Azeryolservis JSC Javid Gurbanov discussed accelerating the construction of the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway, Turkish media report. The parties discussed and agreed on a plan for future activities to accelerate work on the Georgian section of the construction. The project to create the BTK railway transport corridor includes the construction of Kars-Akhalkalaki line with the length of 98 km, including 68 km in Turkey, 30 km -Georgia. Georgia will construct 183-km section of the railway Marabda-Akhalkalaki-Tbilisi to increase capacity to 15 million tonnes of cargo a year. Azerbaijan allocated Georgia soft loan amounting to USD 775m for the construction and reconstruction of the Georgian sections of the BTK.

Ukraine, EU agree on informal dialogue on business climate  
February 25, 2013
An agreement on an informal dialogue concerning a business climate, signed in Brussels within the frames of the 16th Ukraine-EU Summit, will bring large investments to Ukraine. Economic Development and Trade Minister Ihor Prasolov has said about this, a UKRINFORM correspondent report. “An important document was signed today, which will strengthen bipartite economic relations between Ukraine and the European Union, including it will attract large investments to Ukraine’s economy,” he said. Prasolov added that this agreement is urgent from the viewpoint that the European Union is the largest partner of Ukraine. In 2012, turnover between the parties made up USD 50.7 billion, which is 29.2% of total commodity turnover of Ukraine. According to the signed document, a more effective dialogue between Kyiv and Brussels will be held, including meetings of businessmen, at which it is planned to discuss the issues of mutual interest, as well as problems hampering expansion of bilateral economic relations. The agreement was signed by Economic Development and Trade Minister Ihor Prasolov and Director General for Trade of the European Commission Jean-Luc Demarty for the term of five years with possibility of its prolongation for another five years.


Larger projects will be implemented in Azerbaijan’s road transport complex’  
April 25, 2013
During past 5 years, $ 11.6 bln was invested in reconstruction of republican and local motor roads, as well as other transport infrastructure objects, said the Minister of Transport Ziya Mammadov. According to him, in 2012, $ 3.3 bln was directed to this sphere and makes 16.8% of total investments, APA reports. Mammadov said that new projects are being implemented to increase of transit potential of Azerbaijan: “Innovations are applied in City transport System Management. Besides, constructions of Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway and new Baku International Sea Port are going on”. The Minister underlined that larger projects are planned to be implemented in Azerbaijan’s road transport complex during next years. Especially, works will be conducted for renewing of transport structure of the capital in connection with the 1st European Olympic Games.


CIS goods provide a quarter of Azerbaijan’s imports  
August 26, 2013
In January-July Azerbaijan imported most of its products from Russia, the share being 14.18 per cent of Azerbaijan’s imports. In comparison with the same
period last year Russia increased its exports to Azerbaijan by 16.33 per cent to $0.876 billion, according to a report from the Azerbaijani State Customs Committee. In total, currently 24.23 per cent of Azerbaijan’s imports fall to the CIS countries, 33.56 per cent to the EU and 42.21 per cent to the other countries. The total imports from the EU in January-July 2013 constituted $2.07 billion which exceeded the indicator for the same period last year by 43.14 per cent, from the CIS $1.5 billion (an increase of almost 15 per cent) and from other countries $2.61 billion (an increase of 2.39 per cent). During January-July Azerbaijan’s imports constituted $6.18 billion which is 16.63 per cent more compared to the same period of 2012.


Five investors to be hosted at Free Economic Zone of Balti as of 2014

September 27, 2013

Investments of eight million Euros will be made in the Free Economic Zone of Balti, located in Moldova’s second largest city. The Economy Ministry announced on Thursday that five foreign investors will launched their production factories in the region as of 2014. “I Plast TM”, “Ceccato Production”, “Eastsord production” and “LMF Climatization” are four investors with Italian capital, while “Bipmobile” is investors with Romanian capital.

The Economy Ministry foresees a production worth 350 million Lei yearly. Most of the goods produced here will be exported to the European Union and the Commonwealth of Independent States. The investments are expected to generate 120 jobs, while the average wages will be around 6,500 Lei. The Free Economic Zone of Balti hosts already a branch of Germany’s Dräxlmaier Group which has created 2,943 jobs.


Ukraine to need at least 5 years to bring space sector into line with EU standards, says space agency chief

October 24, 2013

Ukraine’s State Space Agency (SSAU) estimates that bringing technical standards in Ukraine’s space industry in line with those of Europe would take at least five years, SSAU Chief Yuriy Alekseyev said.”We have submitted our proposals about that to the government,” he told Interfax-Ukraine. He said the State Space Agency was still estimating how much this adjustment would cost.

**Halt in Ukraine-EU relations threatens Ukraine’s credit profile – Fitch**

**November 23, 2013**

Ukraine’s announcement that it was halting preparations to sign the Association Agreement with the European Union threatens to leave in limbo a process that, if fully implemented, would strengthen Ukraine’s credit profile, Fitch Ratings has said.

But the retreat may also reduce the more immediate risk of Russian economic retaliation, which has already affected Ukraine’s exports in 2013,” Fitch said. Fitch noted that it downgraded Ukraine to ‘B-’ from ‘B’ this month. This reflected the sovereign’s fragile external financing position and constraints on its ability to borrow in foreign currency to refinance heavy external debt repayments in 2014-2015, in the absence of an IMF agreement.”

These remain the key rating drivers, and the risks they present are reflected in the continuing Negative Outlook on the rating,” reads the statement.


**Azerbaijan, Georgia to discuss problems of socio-economic development in border regions**

**December 19, 2013**

The advantages and opportunities of territorial cooperation between Azerbaijan and Georgia will be the main topic of a regional conference to be held on Dec.19 in the Georgian region of Kakheti.

The conference will be held under the title ‘the way to strengthening Eastern Partnership territorial cooperation: Azerbaijan-Georgia territorial cooperation programme’.

Within the EaPTC, the EU contributes to strengthening border relations and contacts between regional and local authorities, communities and civilian organisations to find joint solutions to common socio-economic problems of regional development. The general problems of economic and social development of border regions of the two countries will be the subject of comprehensive discussion, according to a message from the EaPTC Support Programme which is the organiser of the meeting.

The meeting will offer a platform to local authorities and civilian organisations for an open discussion on the priorities of territorial cooperation and features of regional development in order to find joint solutions to the topical problems of border regions, according to the organisers. Representatives of the ministries and agencies of Azerbaijan and Georgia, regional and local authorities of border regions, civilian organisations and European experts will participate at the conference.

**Belarus near bottom in Index of Economic Freedom**

**January 16, 2014**

Belarus was ranked 150th among 177 countries in this year’s Index of Economic Freedom, moving up four places in the report published annually by the US-based Heritage Foundation and The Wall Street Journal.

Belarus was 42nd among 43 countries in the European region, with Ukraine being at the bottom of the list. Belarus’ overall score rose by 2.1 to 50.1 on the 0 to 100 Index scale. The increase was mainly due to “notable improvements in investment freedom and government spending,” the report says.

Belarus scored higher on freedom from corruption, government spending, fiscal freedom, labor freedom, trade freedom, and investment freedom and lower on business freedom and monetary freedom. The country’s score on property rights and financial freedom did not change, BelaPAN said.

“Over the 20-year history of the Index, Belarus has improved its economic freedom score by 9.7 points, driven by gains in seven of the 10 economic freedoms including fiscal freedom, monetary freedom, and trade freedom,” the report says. “Offsetting much of the overall score gain, three other critical areas of economic freedom - property rights, investment freedom, and financial freedom - have recorded losses of 20 points or more over the same period.”

In the 2014 Index, Belarus has moved up from the economic freedom status of “repressed” to “mostly unfree” for the first time, the report says. Nonetheless, pervasive state controls persist in many areas of the economy, and widespread state investment and redistribution activities have stifled progress in the development of a modern diversified economy, the report says.

With a score of 90.1, Hong Kong was ranked the world’s freest economy for the 20th consecutive year. The Belarusian government has repeatedly declared an intention to make Belarus one of the world’s 30 most business friendly nations in the World Bank’s Doing Business report.


**We will become a member of WTO but only we know when it will happen**

**February 07, 2014**

A conference on the implementation of state programs of socioeconomic development of Azerbaijani regions was held at the Heydar Aliyev Center on 5 February. The conference was attended by Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev.

In his speech, the president touched upon Azerbaijan’s WTO accession.

“Each government should protect and protects its market. Azerbaijan is also going on this path. As you know, we are not yet a member of the World Trade Organization, despite the fact that they invite us to join it with perseverance. This issued is raised to Azerbaijan regularly: why Azerbaijan does not join the World
Trade Organization. It has reasons, the first of which is the protection of the local manufacturer, protection of the Azerbaijani market. We must first create conditions for our farmers, companies.

We, as a first step, should provide conditions for farmers and campaigns. If we, as they say, open our market, poor quality, cheap foreign products will enter the market easily and this will deal a great blow to local production and peasants will suffer losses. Therefore, we do not do this. And today I want to say that we will become a member of the World Trade Organization, but only we know when it will happen. Only when exports products dominate in agriculture and industry in Azerbaijan, we will become member of WTO and we will see whether in this case they will invite us to join this organization with the same perseverance. This is because the market of Azerbaijan is a dynamic and it is growing all the time. Azerbaijan is turning into a rich country and population is growing. Of course, great efforts are made to gain a free access to this market. Once again I want to say it is a priority to boost local production, reduce dependence on imports, and grow export-oriented products. All state agencies should contribute to this”, president said.


*European Investors Delegation in Georgia*

*April 15, 2014*

The investment opportunities of Georgia and particular projects were discussed at the meeting today held at the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia. Dimitry Kumsishvili, First Deputy Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia and Ketevan Bochorishvili, Deputy Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia received the delegation of European investors. The investors got interested in energy, real estate and other sectors, as well as discussed the possibilities of implementation of large infrastructure projects in Georgia. The European investors will hold meetings with other government bodies. The delegation includes businessmen from Belgium, France and other European countries. Prince Juan Bagrationi organized their visit to Georgia.


*EU-Ukraine-Russia trade talks on implementation of EU-Ukraine DCFTA*

*July 09, 2015*

Experts from the EU, Russia and Ukraine met in Brussels on 7-8 July for trilateral talks with the aim of finding solutions to the concerns raised by Russia
regarding implementation of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement/Free Trade Area (AA/DCFTA), which will be provisionally applied as of 1 January 2016.

The parties held a constructive interchange of views and discussed technical regulations, sanitary and phytosanitary issues and customs cooperation, while some progress was made on the basis of concrete suggestions put forward by the EU for all areas.

The experts will continue their work in the coming weeks and further steps will be decided on this basis, including a next ministerial meeting in early September.


EU-Modova: Joint civil society dialogue forum discusses application of trade agreement
July 16, 2015
Civil society representatives were joined last week by senior European and Moldovan officials for the first Joint civil society dialogue forum, dedicated to trade and sustainable development in the implementation of the EU-Moldova Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA).

The forum sought to identify common solutions aimed at proper application of the DCFTA provisions on trade and sustainable development, so that it has a positive impact both on business and the environment, labour market etc.

Civil society representatives noted the importance of the Forum for civil society involvement in order to tackle the challenges in the implementation of the Association Agreement.

The Joint civil society dialogue forum will be held annually.


Belarus eyeing EU-Ukraine FTA opportunities
February 17, 2016
Belarus and Ukraine are set to take advantage of the Ukraine-EU free trade area in promoting the bilateral relations. This matter was discussed during the fifth session of the Belarusian-Ukrainian Advisory Council for Business Cooperation which was held in Kiev, BelTA learned from the press service of the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The meeting discussed the main areas of trade and economic cooperation between Belarus and Ukraine, the possibility of taking advantage of the opportunities provided by the Ukraine-EU FTA in the
bilateral relations, issues regarding the use in the bilateral trade of the rules to determine the country of origin of the goods in the CIS. The parties also discussed the interregional collaboration, contentious issues regarding the settlements under foreign trade contracts, the main areas of the joint activity of the Chambers of Commerce and Industry. Partaking in the event was Chairman of the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry Mikhail Myatlikov, President of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Ukraine Gennady Chizhikov, representatives of the Belarusian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry for Economic Development and Trade of Ukraine, the Ministry of Agrarian Policy and Food of Ukraine, ten Belarusian and 30 Ukrainian companies. The next meeting of the Belarusian-Ukrainian Advisory Council for Business Cooperation will take place in Belarus in 2017. The Belarusian-Ukrainian Advisory Council for Business Cooperation was founded in 2010 to promote trade and economic cooperation between Belarus and Ukraine, expand business contacts and increase trade between the two countries.

**Read full text at:** http://eng.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-eyeing-eu-ukraine-fta-opportunities-89046-2016/

---

**Free trade zone: what benefits can Azerbaijan reap?**

**March 18, 2016**

Azerbaijan is set to actively work in the next six months to create its first-ever free trade zone.

The free trade zone is being created under an order signed by President Ilham Aliyev on March 17. It will be located in the Alat township of Baku’s Garadagh district and will also include the new Baku International Sea Trade Port.

The presidential order states that the purpose of creating the free trade zone is to ensure a sustainable economic development and increase competitiveness, strengthen Azerbaijan’s position as a logistics and transportation center, and create a multi-vector transportation infrastructure in the country.

So, what benefits can Azerbaijan, its economy and citizens make from the free trade zone?

- More foreign investments

The creation of the free trade zone is a logical continuation of Azerbaijan’s policy of becoming a logistics and transportation hub, and attracting transit cargo flows.

**Read more on:** TREND, http://en.trend.az/business/economy/2508804.html
c. Energy Security:

**INO Gate project launches activities in Azerbaijan**

**February 10, 2012**

The team leader of the newly launched INOGATE project, ‘Energy Saving Initiative in the Building Sector’ (ESIB), Roberto Lo Cicero Vaina, has just completed a visit to Azerbaijan with a view to launching project activities in the country, ENPI information centre reported. Highlights of the six-day visit include the signing of agreements with Azerbaijani counterparts on energy efficient technologies. A number of meetings were held within the framework of the visit, with representatives from the Ministry of Industry and Energy of Azerbaijan, the Ministry of Economic Development, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the EU Delegation to Azerbaijan among others.

A particularly constructive meeting took place with the City Administration of Baku for the selection of a building as an object for Energy Audit and possibly for physical rehabilitation with the introduction of energy saving measures. Roberto Lo Cicero Vaina introduced the ESIB project objectives and highlighted the role of each team member as well as the project duration and organisation. A delegation of Azerbaijani engineers was invited to the training and energy audit that will take place in Tashkent from 27 to 29 February.

INO Gate is an EU-funded programme promoting international energy co-operation between the European Union and the Partner Countries of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. It works to support the EU policy frameworks of the Baku Initiative, the Eastern Partnership - Energy Security Platform and the Energy Community.


---

**Moldova and Ukraine sign new deal on electricity supplies**

**April 03, 2012**

Moldova’s state-owned Energocom and Ukraine’s Power Trade signed an agreement on the supply of electricity to Moldova – Moldovan media, citing ‘sources close to the negotiations’, reported on 3 April. The document is to come into force after approval by the Moldovan National Energy Regulatory Agency (ANRE). No official information regarding the financial terms of the deal has been released; according to confirmed reports, however, the price of Ukrainian gas has been set at 6.9 cents (USD) per 1 kWh, that is, equal to the tariff charged by Russia’s Inter RAO.

**Ukrainian parliament allows for reorganisation of Naftogaz, but says no to privatization**

*April 14, 2012*

Ukraine’s Verkhovna Rada adopted an amendment to the bill on pipeline transport on 13 April. The new law states that reorganisation (mergers, transformations and separations) of state-owned enterprises – daughter companies of the Naftogaz Group – which manage the shipment of natural gas through Ukraine’s main pipelines and its underground storage, can be carried out by the Ukrainian government solely in line with Ukraine’s obligations under the Energy Community Treaty. The new bill prohibits the privatisation (as well as leasing, etc.) of assets belonging to both Naftogaz and any companies which may be established as a result of the reorganisation of the group. Control over Naftogaz assets – or assets of its subsidiaries – can only be handed over to other companies owned fully by the Ukrainian state. The bill also prohibits Naftogaz from filing for bankruptcy.

According to the opposition, the new law allows for a fragmentation of the state’s stake in Naftogaz, which effectively paves the way for the privatisation of the company.


---

**Azerbaijan replaces section of major gas pipeline affected by fire**

*April 25, 2012*

SOCAR will complete the construction of a new branch of the Altiagac-Agsu pipeline by mid-May where a fire broke out in April, SOCAR’s Azerigas PU told Trend on Wednesday. Gas leak on Altiagac-Agsu gas pipeline with diameter of 1,200 millimeter occurred on April 13, after which the fire took place. As a result of the taken measures, gas transportation via the pipeline was stopped, the fire was extinguished. The Altiagac-Agsu gas pipeline is part of the Mozdok-Gazimogomed main gas pipeline, which supplies gas to Russia. Problems on the main gas pipeline have not affected gas supplies to Russia. There are no problems with gas transportation through the pipeline at the moment, and it is operating in the normal mode, Azerigas said. “After the completion of construction of a new branch, pumping gas via the old branch will be redirected to the new line,” Azerigas noted.


---

**Representatives of the Ministry of Energy of Belarus visited Brussels**

*June 19, 2012*

On 18-19 June representatives of the Ministry of Energy of Belarus visited Brussels. On 18 June Belarusian experts took part in the meeting of Eastern Part-
nership’s Platform 3 “Energy Security”, which was focused on energy infrastructure and development of energy systems in EU partner countries. On 19 June the delegation of Belarus took part in the events held within the EU Sustainable Energy week. The delegation’s agenda also included bilateral meetings with the Directorate-General for Energy of the European Commission and Secretariat of the Energy Charter.

In September Ukraine to start building Europe’s largest transforming station
July 12, 2012

In September this year Ukraine will launch a project to build a new overhead power line 750 kV with the extension of the Kyivska substation for power delivery of the Rivne and Khmelnytsky nuclear power plants and ensuring the transfer of these powers to central and eastern regions of the country, President Viktor Yanukovych said at an informal meeting with the Club of Editors-in-Chief of the CIS Countries, Baltic States and Georgia in Crimea on Wednesday. “We’ll actually close our system and ensure the development of the Khmelnytsky, Rivne nuclear power plants due to the construction of transmission lines and transforming stations. This will be the largest transformer station in Europe,” the president said. According to him, this project will significantly improve the quality of electricity, which will increase its exports. “We have a huge reserve for export, but wherever we supply this electricity, our customer wants it to be quality,” the president emphasized. He added that today this project is 100% provided with the necessary resources.

Power supply restored in 345 towns and villages in Ukraine
August 15, 2012

Power supply was restored in 345 towns and villages in ten regions in Ukraine as of 07.00 on August 15, the press service of the Ukrainian Emergencies Ministry has reported. In particular, electricity supply was restored in 109 towns and villages in Vinnytsia region, 80 in Kyiv region, 65 in Khmelnytsky region, 36 in Ternopil region, 17 in Volyn region, 13 in Rivne region, 12 in Chernivtsi region, six in Ivano-Frankivsk region, five in Cherkasy region, and two in Chernihiv region. According to the Ukrainian Weather Center, rain in Ukraine will last until August 17.
Traian Basescu: Romania - Rep. of Moldova energy interconnection must be achieved as soon as possible

September 30, 2013

The interconnection between Romania and the Republic of Moldova’s energy systems must be achieved as soon as possible, President Traian Basescu declared on receiving Speaker of the Parliament of Moldova, Igor Corman.

Traian Basescu also expressed hope that for the construction of the next 400 KW power lines the EU will make financing available for the Moldovan side. “As far as we are concerned, we remain open, but the big problem is yet to come, because until the effective interconnection with the Republic of Moldova, at least in the energy sector, risks are quite high. We have another two lines of 400 KW already designed and we need to finance them after we complete the 100 KW lines. We must build them. We hope this happens just like with the gas pipeline, with the EU funding the part that falls on the Republic of Moldova,” Basescu said. “I was upset to see that one deadline was announced [for the works] and then find out that there is actually a different date, because the interconnection agreement - complete with the priorities - has been signed for three years now and at least the 100 KW line and the gas interconnection should be achieved as soon as possible, because there is a distance from words to hard facts,” said the head of the state.


License granted to build first reactor of Belarusian nuclear station

October 25, 2013

The Belarusian state enterprise Directorate for Nuclear Power Plant Construction has been granted the license to build the nuclear reactor of the first power-generating unit, the Directorate’s official website reads.

BelTA has learned that the Nuclear and Radiation Safety Department of the Belarusian Emergencies Ministry (Gosatomnadzor) issued special permit (a license) No. 02300/239-4 of 13 September 2013 for building the nuclear reactor of the first power-generating unit of the Belarusian nuclear power plant to the Directorate for Nuclear Power Plant Construction. A Russian design is used to build the Belarusian nuclear power plant. It is 100% compliant with national laws and IAEA recommendations. The Belarusian nuclear power plant design borrows heavily from the AES-2006 design, which has been developed in Saint Petersburg and is now used to build the second Leningrad nuclear power plant and the Baltic nuclear power plant. The Belarusian nuclear power plant will have two power-generating units with the total capacity of up to 2,400 MW. The first power-generating unit is scheduled for commissioning in 2018.

**Eastern Partnership: Armenia, Georgia and Moldova join Eastern Europe Energy Efficiency and Environment Partnership**  
*October 22, 2013*

Armenia, Georgia and Moldova have joined the Eastern Europe Energy Efficiency and Environment Partnership (E5P) in a move to significantly boost their support for energy efficiency and the reduction of harmful emissions. During a pledging conference held on Monday 21 October at the European Investment Bank (EIB) in Luxembourg, the international donor community raised an additional €60 million to enable expansion of the activities of the E5P Fund (....) Štefan Füle, EU Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy and responsible for EU’s policy also towards these partner countries said: “With this funding we are able to support Ukrainian municipalities to provide sustainable and affordable heating to the population and to improve water quality. I am delighted that Armenia, Georgia and Moldova have decided to join the partnership. The European Commission, as the main donor of the fund, is ready to provide up to €30 million for the three countries that are joining the facility, in order to co-finance energy efficiency and environmental projects in municipalities.”


‘**TAP will play an important role in the solution of European energy dependency’**  
*December 19, 2013*

‘Most of the former Eastern European countries now are dependent on Russia for gas and oil.’

Answering the questions from The European Azerbaijan Society (TEAS), Member of the European Parliament Katarina Nevedalova (S&D, Slovakia) stated the followings on EU-Azerbaijan cooperation of energy security: “TAP has not only relevance due to the improvement of trade relations between the European Union and Azerbaijan. It tackles primarily topics like energy security and energy dependency. As a Member of the European Parliament from Slovakia, it is not difficult for me to recall the complications we had with the Russian Federation due to gas supply a few years ago, AzerTAc reports.

Most of the former Eastern European countries now are dependent on Russia for gas and oil. Therefore the diversification of the energy resources is extremely important in today’s unpredictable world markets.”


**On Energy security, Eastern Europe is often its own worst enemy by Judy Dempsey**  
*January 23, 2014*

Russia is having a good run in Eastern Europe.
Vladimir Putin, the Russian president, clinched a major energy deal with Viktor Orbán, the Hungarian conservative prime minister, who visited Moscow two weeks ago. The Russian state atomic energy corporation Rosatom agreed to help build a nuclear power plant in Paks, Hungary. It will also provide €10 billion ($13.7 billion) in loans.

In Poland, Italian energy company ENI announced that it was abandoning attempts to extract shale gas. North American firms ExxonMobil, Marathon Oil, and Talisman Energy already pulled out several months ago. Meanwhile, U.S. energy company Chevron decided to quit neighboring Lithuania even though it had won a tender to explore shale gas in the Baltic state. And in Ukraine, Putin persuaded President Viktor Yanukovych not to sign an association agreement with the EU by promising to reduce the price of Russian energy supplies to Ukraine by a third and providing loans amounting to €10.9 billion ($15 billion).

All four cases have one thing in common: the absence of a coherent, strategic EU policy on energy security in Eastern Europe. Despite EU attempts to promote energy security through diversifying sources and building storage facilities and interconnectors, Eastern Europe is still hampered by unclear legislation and political differences vis-à-vis Russia.

Read more at: Carnegie Europe, http://ht.ly/stm0h

Georgia Opens Talks to Join Europe’s Energy Community
February 14, 2014

Georgia launched on February 20 negotiations with the European Commission on joining the Energy Community, organization which fosters energy market cooperation between the EU and neighboring countries.

“Today’s negotiations mark Georgia’s path towards regional integration and enhanced energy cooperation with the EU,” said European Commissioner for Energy Günther Oettinger, who held talks in Tbilisi including with PM Irakli Garibashvili.

The European Commission said in a press release that by becoming a member of the Energy Community and by “implementing EU energy legislation, Georgia will have closer ties with EU’s single energy market”, which will help to attract investments and increase the financial sustainability of the energy sector.

Negotiating teams from the European Commission and Georgia discussed in Tbilisi a timetable for Georgia to implement key EU rules on electricity and gas networks, environment, renewable energy, energy efficiency, oil and on energy statistics.

According to the Georgian officials talks are expected to last for six or eight months and signing of accession treaty is aimed before the end of the term of sitting European Commission in October. Along with the EU states, members of the Energy Community are: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia,
Ukrtransgaz offers to sign interconnection agreement with Eustream
April 28, 2014
Ukrtransgaz, the Ukrainian transmission system operator (TSO), has offered Eustream, the Slovak TSO, to sign the interconnection agreement between the operators of the two adjacent networks. Such an agreement is in line with the requirements of the European Energy Community, of which both countries are full members. As of today; Eustream has declined signing such an agreement. Additionally, in response to the information distributed by Slovak TSO Eustream on 24.04, Naftogaz would like to note that Gazprom Export does not exercise the function of transmission system operator in Ukraine and that there is no such contract signed between the Russian company and Ukrtransgaz.

Energy Community and INOGATE strengthen ties and cooperation
July 10, 2015
A coordination meeting between the Energy Community Secretariat and INOGATE Technical Secretariat held in Vienna this week proved to be very fruitful in exchanging experience in ENP East countries and especially, in Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia.

As a result of the meeting, the cooperation between the two Secretariats was strengthened and new joint actions agreed. The aim is to strengthen the interest in transposing the EU’s 3rd Internal Energy Market Package in participating countries, while generating interest in even partial transposition for non-member countries.

The Energy Community entered into force in 2006, and aims to extend the EU internal energy market to South East Europe and beyond, and enhance the overall security of supply. Parties have committed themselves to liberalise their energy markets and implement key EU legal acts in the area of electricity, gas, environment and renewable energy. Among the Eastern Partners, Moldova (since May 2010) and Ukraine (as of February 2011) are both full members of the Energy Community. Georgia is a candidate member, and Armenia an observer.

INOGATE is an EU-funded programme promoting international energy cooperation between the European Union and the Partner Countries of Armenia,
Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. It works to support the EU policy frameworks of the Baku Initiative, the Eastern Partnership – Energy Security Platform and the Energy Community.

Source: EU Neighborhood Info Center, http://www.enpi-info.eu/main east.php?id=41527&id_type=1&lang_id=450

Naftogaz proposes to change the procedure for building gas safety stocks and to introduce a transparent method of calculating the guarantee required by the transmission system operator (TSO) from the transmission service customers

February 11, 2016

NJSC Naftogaz of Ukraine considers the existing mechanism of building and using natural gas safety stocks lagging behind the gas market development, especially since the introduction of the Law of Ukraine “On the Natural Gas Market”, and proposes to introduce changes to the mechanism.

With active assistance of Naftogaz and in line with the best practices of EU member states, regulatory acts on imposing special obligations on gas market players and on security of supplies have been developed and adopted.

These documents already now allow a more purposeful use of gas safety stocks to ensure security of supplies, in particular, they can safeguard gas supply for protected consumers (households, district heating companies and socially important facilities) in the event of unexpected supply interruptions.

Therefore, Naftogaz considers that the responsibility for building gas safety stock can now be imposed only on suppliers of protected consumers, and the volume of required safety stock is to be calculated by the Ministry of Energy and Coal Industry on the basis of an analysis of existing risks of supply interruption.

At the same time, given the high credit risks of gas market players, the current model of relations in the gas market envisaged in regulatory acts pursuant to the Law of Ukraine “On the Natural Gas Market” creates significant financial risk for the TSO, Ukrtransgaz. These risks are associated with its core business – provision of transmission services, particularly the service of commercial balancing.


IAEA to carry out nuclear infrastructure review mission in Belarus in 2017

February 19, 2016

In 2017 the IAEA will carry out a nuclear infrastructure review mission in Belarus. This matter was discussed at a meeting of the Russian-Belarusian working
group on nuclear infrastructure development of the nuclear power industry of Belarus, BelTA learned from the press service of the Energy Ministry. “Special attention was given to the intensification of mutual cooperation for the preparation of the nuclear infrastructure in Belarus for the launch of the nuclear power plant. Bearing in mind that in 2017 the IAEA will send a nuclear infrastructure review mission to assess Belarus’ readiness for the launch of the nuclear power plant, the joint working group took a decision to convene for the next meeting in the summer 2016,” the press service said. Deputy Energy Minister Mikhail Mikhadyuk informed the meeting on the results of the technical meeting on nuclear power infrastructure at the IAEA headquarters in Vienna in February, noting that Belarus made significant progress in the development of national nuclear infrastructure. The meeting also reviewed the status of implementation of the action plan of the Russian-Belarusian cooperation in development of Belarus’ nuclear infrastructure in 2015, a plan for cooperation for 2016-2017, and the supervision during the commissioning of the nuclear power plants in Russia. The parties reaffirmed the need for continued cooperation in establishing the system of emergency preparedness and response in Belarus, a crisis center, and a physical nuclear security system. The participants of the working group also visited Ostrovets to get familiar with the construction process of the Belarusian nuclear power plant, and the training and information centers. The Belarusian-Russian working group on nuclear infrastructure was set up in 2013 following the decision of the Energy Ministry of Belarus, Rosatom State Corporation, the Gosatomnadzor of Belarus, and the Sosny United Institute of Energy and Nuclear Studies.


Belarus, Armenia sign agreement on cooperation in nuclear power industry
February 22, 2016

Belarus and Armenia signed an agreement on cooperation in the nuclear power industry, the press service of the Economy Ministry of Armenia said. The document on cooperation in the peaceful use of atomic energy was signed by Deputy Minister of Energy and Natural Resources of Armenia Areg Galstyan following the 12th meeting of the Armenian-Belarusian intergovernmental commission on economic cooperation. The meeting took place in Armenia. Armenia’s Economy Minister Karen Chshmaritian told media that Armenia and Belarus have developed a robust foundation for the development of bilateral relations in every sphere and area. “Further strengthening of economic cooperation as well as the EEU potential will help expand the cooperation range in the future,” he stressed. Armenia invites Belarus to invest in mechanical engineering, processing and food industry, agribusiness, alternative energy, tourism. “One more mutually
beneficial platform for cooperation can be free economic zones in Armenia where companies working in the area of high technology, engineering, and jewelry are fully exempted from taxes. It is also important that the implementation of a number of infrastructure projects such as the construction of the transport corridor North-South, the railway service between Armenia and Iran as well as the open skies policy will promote the expansion of transit potential of Armenia, improve the conditions for investment and business and strengthen Armenia’s importance as an significant link between Europe, Middle East and Asia,” said the Armenian Economy Minister.

Read full text at: http://eng.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-armenia-sign-agreement-on-cooperation-in-nuclear-power-industry-89143-2016/

**SOFAZ reveals revenues from largest oil project**

*March 22, 2016*

Revenues of Azerbaijan’s State Oil Fund (SOFAZ) from the development project of Azeri-Chirag-Guneshli (ACG) block of oil and gas fields totaled $117.799 billion from early 2001 to March 1, 2016, SOFAZ told Trend.

“The Fund’s revenues from the project totaled $790 million in Jan.-Feb. 2016, some $442 million of which accounted for January,” said SOFAZ.

A contract for development of ACG block of fields was signed in 1994. The proven oil reserve of the block nears one billion tons.

The shareholders of the project are: BP (operator in the Azeri-Chirag-Guneshli) - 35.78 percent, Chevron - 11.28 percent, Inpex - 10.96 percent, AzACG - 11.65 percent, Statoil - 8.55 percent, Exxon – eight percent, TPAO - 6.75 percent, Itochu - 4.3 percent and ONGC - 2.72 percent.

d. Contacts between people

*A call for negotiations in the Armenian interethnic conflicts*

*April 06, 2012*

The Anapa region was subject to a confrontation between nationalists and Armenian youth caused by an event held there on April 1. In the same time, nationalists and the Armenian diaspora asked the both sides to try to resolve the issues peacefully. According to the “Caucasian Knot” correspondent there were assaults on the people who participate in the “Russian jog” running, because of their chants and slogans. Almost 30 people took part on the scuffles and the Chief Directorate of the Ministry of Interior Affairs of Krasnodar region declared in the press statement that: “After the incident five persons who got light bodily injuries, including scratches and bruises, asked for medical aid”. The officials reported that the parties made use of professional wrestler’s techniques and in response the Russian side decided to organize a new action on April, 8 and organize themselves on the social networks. Interethnic conflicts are widespread especially with the start of the holiday season said Djanik Margaryan, Deputy Chairman of Armenian cultural center of Anapa. He recommended that the police to be aware of the slogans such as: “Armenians, get away from Russia!” and “Russia for the Russians” which can be seen though the city.

*Source: Caucasian Knot* http://www.eng.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/20640

*Armenian Foreign Minister: Armenia will continue to sustain peace establishment in Afghanistan*

*April 18, 2012*

Armenian Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian attended FM Council extended session of NATO Afghanistan International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) on April 19, in Brussels. ISAF has been deployed in Afghanistan since 2001 under the authority of the UN Security Council (UNSC) which authorized the establishment of the force to assist the Afghan government “in the maintenance of security”. According to Armenian News-NEWS.am, at the meeting, the Foreign Minister reconfirmed Armenia’s commitment to continue assisting in the efforts toward establishing peace, security, stability, and interethnic solidarity in Afghanistan and said that “Armenia came to Afghanistan to participate in the joint international efforts to help that country in establishing peace with itself, its neighbors, and the international community, [and] to not allow the destructive actions by terrorist forces. We have been eyewitnesses to that in our region, and we know what that means”.

Azerbaijan sends another caravan with humanitarian aid to Krasnodar Territory

July 10, 2012

The Azerbaijani Ministry for Emergencies has sent 22 more trucks with humanitarian aid to the flood-struck Krasnodar Territory, APA reports. 20 vehicles carry drinking water, one carries hygiene packages for children and 1 carries clothes for women and children. General-Major Ilham Abdullayev, Commander of the Civil Defense Forces of the Ministry for Emergencies, said that the second caravan was ordered by President Ilham Aliyev. 51 specialists were sent to the Krasnodar Territory. 38 Azerbaijani specialists are operating. The first 22 vehicles were sent on July 8. 24,000 people in the Krasnodar Territory suffer from the flood. 172 of them died.


EU to finance 15 NGOs aimed at protecting human rights in Georgia

January 28, 2013

EU has chosen 15 Georgian and European non-governmental organizations to carry out their projects in Georgia. The projects are aimed at strengthening the role of civil society in promoting human rights and democratic reforms, supporting the rule of law and good governance. The European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) has allocated €1.34 million for financing. Budgets of individual projects range from €52 thousand and €100 thousand. The projects will focus on protecting the rights of vulnerable groups such as internally-displaced persons, ethnic, religious and other minorities, children, women and people with disabilities. The EIDHR was established in 1994 as a mechanism to finance various projects supporting and promoting human rights and democracy in countries outside the EU.


Visa Ban of Belarusian Activists rescinded

April 05, 2013

The Vilnius Administrative court on 25 February has rescinded a decision by the Lithuanian government’s Migration Department to ban Nicholas Ulasevich, a Belarusian citizen and the coordinator of the “The Astrawiec Nuclear Power station is a crime” campaign. Mr Ulasevich and his travelling companion Tatyana Novikova, another anti nuclear campaigner, were placed on a Schengen black list for three months in September 2012 during the referendum campaign in Lithuania on the planned construction of an atomic power station there. The reason given for the ban was that Ulasevich and Novikova were “a threat to public or-
der, international relations and national security”. The court has rehabilitated Mr Ulasevich and Ms Novikova. The Civil Society Forum meeting in Stockholm last November protested against the travel ban in a resolution which said: “we do not see any basis for such action against environmental activists” and appealed for the order to be rescinded.


European Union unlocks new opportunities for territorial cooperation between Armenia and Georgia  
October 09, 2013  
For the first time the Regional Conference “Advancing Territorial Cooperation in Eastern Partnership Countries: Armenia – Georgia Territorial Cooperation Programme” will be held on October 11, 2013 at the Cultural Centre of Stepanavan, Armenia. The European Union in the framework of its Eastern Partnership Territorial Cooperation Programme (EaPTC) promotes and strengthens cross-border relations between regional and local state authorities, communities and civil society organisations to develop joint solutions to common social and economic development challenges in the participating border regions. The Regional Conference has a two-folded objective: to raise awareness of the wide public of the border regions of Armenia and Georgia on the opportunities and benefits the potential beneficiaries from both sides of the border may enjoy from participation in the Programme, as well as to provide a platform for open discussion of priorities and prospects of territorial cooperation at the local level, taking into consideration the specificities and needs of the participating border regions. Mr. Vache Terteryan, First Deputy Minister for Territorial Administration of the Republic of Armenia, Mr. Tengiz Shergelashvili, First Deputy Minister for Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia, representatives of Armenians and Georgian regional and local authorities, civil society organisations and European experts will participate in the event. The Regional Conference is organized by the EU-funded Eastern Partnership Territorial Cooperation Support Programme (EaPTC Support Programme).


Davutoglu hints at possibility of opening border with Armenia  
November 07, 2013  
Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu hinted at a possibility of opening the Armenian-Turkish border during a meeting of the parliamentary committee
on foreign relations. According to Akşam newspaper, Nationalist Movement Party member Sinan Ogan asked the minister whether the works carried out near the Armenian-Turkish border in Iğdır province, as well as railway repair might imply opening of the border. Davutoğlu confirmed the possibility of opening the border before 2015 and said he will visit Baku in the near future to discuss the issue with the Azerbaijani leadership. At the same time, he again linked opening of the border with the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, saying: “If Armenia withdraws troops from Karabakh, we will open the border and restore railway communication.”


Czech parliament to set up Armenia Friendship Group
December 13, 2013

Interparliamentary friendship groups - one of the first, with Armenia - soon will be formed in the new Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic. Jan Hamáček, newly elected Speaker of the Czech Chamber of Deputies, noted the afore mentioned Thursday during his talk with Tigran Seyranyan, Armenia’s Ambassador to the Czech Republic and Slovakia, informs the Armenian MFA press service. The interlocutors stated that the interparliamentary ties are developing dynamically, especially between the Armenian National Assembly and the Czech Senate. In this context, Hamáček vowed his commitment to deepen cooperation with the Czech Chamber of Deputies, too. The parties exchanged views on Armenia - European Union and Armenia - Czech relations, and the Nagorno-Karabakh peace process.


Brussels notes benefits of Association Agreements with Eastern Partnership countries
January 15, 2014

The European Commission has said that Association Agreements that were proposed to the Eastern Partnership countries are beneficial not only these countries and the EU, but also to neighboring countries. Peter Stano, spokesperson for EU Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighborhood Policy Stefan Fule, said this at a briefing in Brussels on Tuesday, while commenting on recent statements made by the Russian side regarding the functioning in Moldova of two economies (the issue concerns Transdniestria) and the application of a deep and comprehensive free trade area as part of the Association Agreement, which can bring problems. “These agreements are the EU’s proposal to respective countries and their citizens regarding mutual benefits for both EU citizens and the citizens of these countries. And the neighbors of our neighbors will also get benefits,” he
said. Stano also recalled the European Commission’s rule, according to which “we do not comment on various statements and their interpretation “by people “who have no relation to these agreements.”


**Eastern Partnership Culture Programme launches a new Cycle of Culture Policy Exchange Workshops to promote policy reforms in the EaP region**

*April 09, 2014*

Between 10-13 April 2014 the Regional Monitoring and Capacity Building Unit (RMCBU) of the Eastern Partnership Culture Programme will hold its 1st Culture Policy Exchange Workshop of the Cycle 2014 in Dilijan, Armenia for 47 culture professionals from the six EaP countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine).

The Cultural Policy Exchange Workshop Cycle 2014 “Implementation Tools & Approaches to Policy Reforms” is a follow-up to the workshops held in 2013 with a common goal to promote policy reforms and modernization at government level, strengthen ‘professionalization’ of the culture sector in the partner countries and contribute to exchange of information, experience, and best practices among culture actors at regional level and with the EU. This Workshop Cycle 2014 will continue to address and deepen strategic thinking and approaches on strategy and policy development, including elaboration of implementation plans for strategies and policies. It will also contribute to identification of possible Eastern-Partnership-wide joint strategies based on common needs of the EaP region and stimulation of public-private partnership between national stakeholders of EaP countries. The Workshop Cycle 2014 will include three workshops to be held in Armenia (10-13 April 2014), Azerbaijan (03-06 July 2014) and Belarus (23-27 September 2014). Workshop participants will work on their culture policy or strategy concepts with the purpose of initiating or supporting cultural policy reforms in their countries. As a result up to 20 culture policy or strategy documents and/or implementation plans are expected to be developed through the training.


**EU-Eastern Partnership Culture and Creativity Programme launched in Moldova for next two years**

*December 10, 2015*

The European Union - Eastern Partnership Culture and Creativity Programme unveiled its activities regarding the culture and creativity sectors for the next two years in Chisinau today. Attending the event were acting Culture Minister, Monica Babuc, European Union Ambassador to Moldova Pirkka Tapiola,
Head of the EU-Eastern Partnership Culture & Creativity Programme Tim Williams, representatives of the diplomatic corps accredited in Chisinau, as well as of Moldovan culture institutions. In his greeting message, EU Ambassador to Moldova Pirkka Tapiola stressed the importance of the aforementioned programme for Moldova. “Thanks to this programme, you will participate in actions that will modernize the Moldovan society, in order to turn it creative, sustainable, for a better future of the state,” Pirkka Tapiola said. For her part, acting Culture Minister Monica Babuc said the institutional and managerial development was a key moment of the programme. “Next year, we will set up an institute of continuous training of employees from culture institutions. Culture can represent an important factor for our country’s development,” Babuc said.

According to Head of the EU-Eastern Partnership Culture & Creativity Programme Tim Williams, culture is an expression of the society in its daily life. Culture and creative industries will configure the education, finances, public health, labour and information in the 21st century,” Tim Williams said. The European Union - Eastern Partnership Culture and Creativity Programme that started in last February is financed by EU with a budget worth 4.29 million euros. The programme’s purpose is to support cultural and creative sectors’ contribution to sustainable humanitarian, social and economic development in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.

(Reporter N. Roibu, Editor M. Jantovan)


Eastern Partnership Youth Policy Report has been published
February 10, 2016

A report on the current legal frameworks for youth policies in the six Eastern Partnership countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine) has been prepared by the Eastern Partnership Youth Regional Unit Project (EPYRU) upon the request of the European Commission’s Directorate General for European Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations. The EPYRU web-site reports that the study includes an analysis on youth issues across relevant policy spheres in the Eastern Partnership region, with a particular focus on youth employment policies.

The ‘Eastern Partnership Youth Policy Analytic Report’ was prepared between September and December 2015. It is accompanied by references and examples of good practices for cross sectoral cooperation as well as recommendations on the development of youth policy and possible measures of EU support. The document published on the EPYRU Project web-site provides a brief summary of the information contained in the report.

**EaP Culture Programme shares tips for promoting cultural projects**  
*March 16, 2016*

The EU-funded Eastern Partnership (EaP) Culture and Creativity Programme has shared some recommendations on how to promote culture and creativity projects that usually have limited budgets for advertising. The six practical tips include the need to clearly identify the audience, look for alternative channels of communication, apply an individual approach to journalists, focus on life stories using ‘human’ language and communicate through traditional media as well as directly - online and offline.

The EU-Eastern Partnership Culture and Creativity Programme supports the cultural and creative sectors’ contribution to sustainable humanitarian, social and economic development in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. The four year programme will run until 2018 covering topics like cultural leadership, cultural and statistical research, audience development, cultural journalism, advocacy and fundraising.

**Source:** ENPI-Info, http://enpi-info.eu/main EAST.php?id=44218&id_type=1&lang_id=450

---

**Moldova: EU’s Horizon 2020 Policy Support Facility to enhance research and innovation sector**  
*July, 15, 2016*

The European Commission (EC) presented a report with key policy recommendations to help modernize Moldova’s science and innovation sector. This is the first time that a country associated with the EU makes voluntary use of the Horizon 2020 Policy Support Facility, the EU said in a press release. The facility is an instrument that gives governments’ practical support to identify, implement and evaluate reforms needed to enhance the quality of their public research and innovation systems. “The recommendations in the report are stepping stones for smart reforms, helping to get the most out of the Moldovan research and innovation ecosystem,” said Carlos Moedas, European Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation.

The Peer Review of the current state of affairs in Moldova’s research and innovation sector was carried out upon request of the country’s Academy of Sciences by experts from independent experts and senior government officials from several EU countries.

According to the EU Delegation to Moldova, the report presents key policy messages and operational recommendations to help modernize the research and innovation system of the country. It also outlines seven policy messages addressed to the Moldovan authorities.

The Horizon 2020 Policy Support Facility provides expertise and operational support to the design, implementation and evaluation of structural reforms of
the national research and innovation systems. It is done through a broad range of services: country peer reviews, support to specific policy reforms, and project-based mutual learning exercises to improve policy-making practice. The facility is funded under Horizon 2020, the EU’s research and innovation programme.

5. Flagship Initiatives

23 - 24 April 2012, Baku – Workshop on “Experience Sharing in Organising Activities for K9 Services for Detecting Drug Smuggling”

April 25, 2012

The two-day workshop on “Experience Sharing in Organising Activities for K9 Services for Detecting Drug Smuggling” within Component 2 of the project “Eastern Partnership - IBM Flagship Initiative Training Project (EaP IBM FIT)” took place in Baku (Azerbaijan) from 23 - 24 April 2012. The training gathered ten participants from the State Border Service and State Customs Committee of Azerbaijan. The aim of the workshop was to share with participants from Azerbaijan EU good practices in dog handling in the detection of drug smuggling and dangerous goods. The workshop was lead by experts from the Slovenian Police. During the event, the international experts gave presentations on strategic planning and organisation, the efficient use of available resources and the specific conditions for the efficient use of service dogs and handlers with limiting factors. During the group work, participants identified the present and future needs concerning the use of service dogs for detecting drugs in Azerbaijan. In addition, an overview on professional standards, verification and management was discussed and special attention was given to sharing information on K9 training centres and K9 operational units. The participants of the workshop raised awareness about the conditions that significantly affect the efficiency of drug searching dogs. Four participants of this training also took part in the follow-up training in Tbilisi (Georgia) from 25 - 27 April 2012.


25 - 27 April 2012, Tbilisi – Training on “Experience Sharing in Organising Activities for K9 Services for Detecting Drug Smuggling”

April 28, 2012

The training on “Experience Sharing in Organising Activities for K9 Services for Detecting Drug Smuggling” within Component 2 of the “Eastern Partnership
- IBM Flagship Initiative Training (EaP IBM FIT) Project took place in Tbilisi (Georgia) from 25 - 27 April 2012. The training gathered participants from the border guard, police and customs services of all six Eastern Partnership countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine). The aim of the training was to share with participants from the Eastern Partnership countries EU good practices in dog handling and organising K9 activities in the detection of smuggled drugs. The event was conducted by two experts from the Slovenian Police. During the training, the international experts gave presentations on the history and development of technical resources for drug detection, drug detection dogs and drug searches. In addition, an overview on K9 training centres was presented, including their role and responsibilities inside the EU system and inside the national systems of participating countries. The participants of the training also became familiar with the legislation, rights, duties, limitations and conditions regarding the use of drug detecting dogs. Another part of the training was focused on the impact of the administrative and operative organisation of service dogs and dog handlers. Experience was shared on international cooperation, as well as cooperation with FRONTEX. At the final stage of the training, the international experts presented in detail a selection process of dogs by Slovenian Police and showed a movie on a K9 training centre in Slovenia. As a result of the training session, participants have enhanced their skills in working with drug detecting dogs and their capacity to carry out K9 activities. In addition, an excellent network for the future exchange of information between all six EaP countries in the field of dog handling was established.


**Eurobarometer survey shows strong support for coordinated EU action in dealing with disasters**

*June 07, 2012*

The Special Eurobarometer 383 on Civil Protection was conducted in face-to-face interviews among some 26,751 respondents in the 27 Member States of the European Union. The survey took place between February and March 2012 and looked at four core themes: • (1) Concern about man-made or natural disasters • (2) Attitudes to EU civil protection activities • (3) Awareness and attitudes of EU co-ordination of civil protection • (4) Knowledge and information on EU civil protection activities.

Main results: EU citizens express a high level of concern about man-made and natural disasters. 75% said they are concerned about man-made disasters such as oil spills and nuclear accidents. Floods and earthquakes comes next with 67%, while 64% of respondents say they are most concerned about terrorist attacks and 59% about armed conflicts. The majority (84%) agree that EU Member States should be obliged by law to prepare and publish disaster management
plans. Opinions are fairly consistent across the EU, with at least 75% of those surveyed in each country agreeing that EU Member States should be obliged by law to prepare and publish disaster management plans. Respondents in Luxembourg, Malta and Slovakia are most likely to agree (91% in each case). -92% agree that not all countries have sufficient national means to deal with a major disaster on their own. Respondents in Cyprus, Sweden, Denmark and Germany are most likely to agree with this statement. -89% agree that the EU needs a civil protection policy because major disasters can have cross-border effects. Since the last survey in 2009, the overall support has increased by 4 percentage points. The same proportion (89%) agree that the EU should help any non-EU country worldwide hit by disasters by co-ordinating the sending of experts and equipment to affected areas.

In Cyprus there is the highest proportion of respondents (96%) who agree that a coordinated EU action in dealing with disasters is more effective than actions by individual countries. A high level of agreement is also found in Greece (91% agree) and Belgium 2 (88% agree), while there are relatively high levels of disagreement in Finland (19%), Netherlands (18%), and Austria (17%). -38% are aware of the EU’s co-ordination role of civil protection actions inside and outside the EU. The figures for many countries are similar to the EU27 average of 38%. Respondents are most likely to say they are aware of EU co-ordination of civil protection both inside and outside the EU in Malta (56%), Belgium (51%), Lithuania (50%) and Cyprus (49%). Stated awareness is lowest in Sweden (20%), Denmark (23%) and Czech Republic (23%).

Key findings
There is high level of concern about various natural and man-made disasters among the citizens of the EU. There is a strong support for the civil protection activities to be coordinated across the EU. About nine out of ten EU citizens agree that the EU should play an important role in coordinating these activities. A vast majority agrees that a coordinated approach is more effective than actions by individual countries. Overall, the results show a high level of solidarity with victims of natural and man-made disasters outside the EU. Nine out of ten agree that the EU should help any non-EU country worldwide hit by disasters.

The EU Civil Protection Mechanism

When the scale of a disaster overwhelms national response capabilities, a country hit by a disaster can benefit from civil protection resources or teams from other countries. One of the main roles of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism is to support and facilitate the provision of assistance offered to the affected country by the EU Member States and other participating countries in the Mechanism. Assistance can include search and rescue teams, medical teams, shelter, water purification units and other relief items requested. The EU Civil Protection Mechanism is made up of 32 states (27 EU Member States plus Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway) which co-operate in the field of civil protection when major natural or man-made disasters occur both
inside and outside the EU. The delivery of European civil protection assistance is coordinated by the European Commission’s Monitoring and Information Centre (MIC) accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The MIC is currently being transformed into the European Emergency Response Centre.

The EU Civil Protection Mechanism also supports the Member States in preparing for and avoiding disasters through awareness raising, organization of trainings, simulation exercises and exchange of experts.


Caucasus and Central Asia: €8m allocated from Commission disaster preparedness programme in 2012
August 24, 2012

The Caucasus region (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia) and Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) have been allocated €8 million from the European Commission’s Disaster-Preparedness Programme (DIPECHO) to help people at risk from disasters. “Building up the resilience of people who face the forces of nature is a central plank of our humanitarian aid policy,” said Kristalina Georgieva, European Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response.” Experience shows that simple measures for disaster-preparedness like early warning alerts, elevated homes or providing boats can make all the difference between saving and losing lives, homes and livelihoods. We see disaster risk reduction as an investment, not as a cost: in fact a euro spent on preparing for disasters saves €7 responding to them.” The DIPECHO programme seeks to reduce the impact of natural disasters including floods, hurricanes, droughts, earthquakes, tidal waves/tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, forest fires and storms by strengthening the response capacity of local communities and national authorities. The projects include reinforcing infrastructure, training, awareness-raising, establishing or improving local early warning systems and contingency planning. In all, €35 million has been earmarked to help the most vulnerable and poorest communities in Central America, Central Asia and the Caucasus region, South-East Asia and Southern Africa.


Azerbaijan drafts new bill on radiation safety
February 27, 2013

Azerbaijan keeps the issues of radiation safety in spotlight and has drafted new bill on radiation safety. Following grave nuclear explosions nuclear and radiation
safety issues attract increased attention around the world. Read more about it in Azernews online newspaper’s print edition published on February 27. Also, in the new edition you can read articles about worldwide commemoration of Khojaly victims, to be held in Azerbaijan, Azerbaijan’s keeping its fiscal policy stable and the Foreign Ministry’s position about White House official response to the petitions on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and Khojaly tragedy, posted on its website.


Members of European Parliament will inaugurate € 4 million EU-funded projects to protect Ukrainian regions affected by the Chernobyl accident

April 19, 2013

On April 26, 2013 the EU Delegation to Ukraine is organising a press tour in Ivankiv (Kyiv region) with Members of the European Parliament’s Green Party. At the Ivankiv hospital, the members of Parliament, Ms. Michèle Rivasi and Ms. Corinne Lepage, will inaugurate a € 4 million EU-funded project which will help protect the health of the people living around the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone. They will also pay tribute to the victims of the Chernobyl accident together with representatives from the central and local Ukrainian government, the European Union and the Science and Technology Centre of Ukraine. The health and environmental situation in and around Chernobyl remains a matter of great concern. The European Union is working together with Ukraine to improve the quality of health care in the region. The EU will invest €1.4 million to provide the Ivankiv Hospital with equipment to:

- Measure the radioactive and chemical agents in human beings and their food
- Monitor the levels of internal radioactive contamination of the population
- Prevent diseases in mothers and children by medical control to pregnant women
- Create a counseling centre to teach the population about healthy nutrition.

This work is part of an overall support package of €4 million relating to:
- Support to small farmers and construction of greenhouses
- Creation of an incineration plant for contaminated wood, to avoid further spreading of radioactivity through forest fires.
- Further study on the contamination in the area in and around Chernobyl.

Background:

The EU is the main donor and partner to alleviate the negative impact of the Chernobyl accident. It is the main contributor to ongoing work to construct a secure shelter for the Chernobyl power plant. The EU is also investing to improve radioactive waste management, training and to support the nuclear regulator.

**U.S., Armenia hold disaster preparedness workshop**
*July 23, 2013*

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Kansas National Guard are among more than 100 participants involved in the Republic of Armenia’s National Response Plan Workshop July 9-11 in Yerevan. This event is organized under the framework of the U.S. commitment to regional security through high level disaster response preparation. This is the fourth major exercise of its kind involving the Corps’ Civil Military Emergency Preparedness (CMEP) Program and the Kansas National Guard. The Corps assists countries with planning large-scale disaster preparedness exercises. The Guard is involved through its State Partnership Program, which pairs Kansas with Armenia to exchange ideas on many common challenges, including the best way to respond to and recover from disasters in their respective countries. The disaster preparedness event includes participants from over 18 Armenian government agencies and organizations, including the Metsamor Nuclear Power Plant. Representatives from Kansas are from the Kansas Division of Emergency Management, Kansas City, Kansas Police Department and the Wolf Creek Nuclear Generating Station. The United Nations Disaster Management Team also participated in the disaster response exercise.

**Source:** The Armenian Reporter


**The Sub-Regional Workshop on Control Of Major Accident Hazards Involving Dangerous Substances (Seveso Directive) Has Started In Kyiv**
*September 23, 2013*

On Monday, 23rd of September, the Sub-regional Workshop on control of major accident hazards involving dangerous substances (Seveso Directives) has started in Kyiv and will continue for 5 days.

It has gathered 25 high representatives of emergency services from Armenia, Georgia and Ukraine. Participants were welcomed by Anatoly Boiko, Deputy Head of the State Emergency Service of Ukraine; Jean-Francois Moret, Sector Manager, Nuclear Safety, Civil Protection, European Union Delegation to Ukraine, and Sergej Anagnosti, Team Leader, PPRD East Programme.


**Ukrainian website views scenarios of political crisis development**
*December 12, 2013*

On-going protests in Ukraine have entered a phase of static stand-off between the opposition and the government, a pro-opposition website has said. The article
summarizes available indirect evidence on who could have ordered the violent dispersal of a pro-EU integration rally by riot police in central Kiev on 30 November. The authors look at three likely scenarios for future developments, two of them admitting a trade-off between the sides. The following is the text of the article by Serhiy Leshchenko and Mustafa Nayem entitled “Day and night of Viktor Yanukovych: Who drowned Maydan in blood?” published on the Ukrainian Pravda website on 6 December 2013; subheadings have been inserted editorially:

Lost opportunity at EU summit

One week ago [Ukrainian President Viktor] Yanukovych could have approved a decision which could have drastically changed his future. Had he signed the Association Agreement on Friday [29 November] morning, he could have returned home as a triumphantor who has approved a crucial decision for his country and guaranteed a place for himself in history textbooks.

He could have outweighed all the negative information accumulated around his family’s corrupt dealings. He would have reset his relations with the West and guaranteed himself a quiet retirement in 2015 or even in 2020. He would even have obtained certain legalization in the West as regards his jailed political opponents because the demand for Yuliya Tymoshenko’s release was not an ultimatum any more. Yet from a capricious child whom the West had tried for two years to educate through negotiations, Viktor Yanukovych turned overnight into an odious, blood-stained and mad despot.

Now former heads of the US Department of State and the most influential Ukrainian Diasporas in the world demand imposing sanctions against him while the European governments have been demonstratively stonewalling him for five days on end. The centre of the capital has turned into a setting for an apocalyptic film with barricades and campfires. He can stay quiet in the sarcophagus of Mezhyhirya [presidential residence near Kiev] only having several hundred units of cannon fodder posted around with [riot police force] Berkut stripes on their sleeves. Ukrayinska Pravda has managed to trace the timeline of the bloody night in Maydan on 30 November and learn about plans and scenarios being hatched out in the offices of power these days. So, Viktor Yanukovych arrived in Kiev towards the evening of Friday after the failed Eastern Partnership summit in Vilnius. Without calling at Bankova Street [where presidential administration is based] he went to Mezhyhirya.

Yanukovych spent a few hours in his palace spread over an area equal to the Principality of Monaco. Then he left for night hunting in Sukholuchchya, a state-run hunting farm now controlled by Yanukovych’s offshore companies. In fact, according to our sources, during the slaughter in Independence Square, Yanukovych was also revelling in the blood of animals 70 km to the north of the capital.

Read more on: Ukrayinska Pravda website, Kiev, in Ukrainian 6 Dec 13; The British Broadcasting Corporation
BARROSO WARNS KYIV
January 23, 2014
The EU was shocked by the latest deadly violence in Ukraine, warning Kyiv that it may take action after two months of conflict, which has just resulted in the first deaths of protestors. On 23 January in Brussels, European Commission President José Manuel Barroso told the press that “We [...] Deplore in the strongest possible terms the use of force and violence”. He stated that “we will continue following closely these developments, as well as assessing possible actions by the EU and consequences for our [the EU and Ukraine’s] relations” and pointed out that the EU had “several instruments” at its disposal. Concerned by the “recent restrictions on fundamental freedoms, including freedom of expression and freedom of the media,” Barroso assured that if Ukraine did not comply with the principles of democracy, the EU would take very clear action.

High Representative Catherine Ashton also called for “an immediate end” to the escalating violence, which has been an “extreme concern” for her.

Enlargement Commissioner Stefan Füle is due to visit Kyiv on 24-25 January. Ukraine is a priority partner country within the European Neighbourhood Policy and the Eastern Partnership. At the end of 2013, its government decided to suspend the signing of an association agreement that had been negotiated with the EU.

Source: Europolitics, Europe Information Service SA

Information Package on how to behave in Emergencies is presented in Azerbaijani Language
April 11, 2014
On April 11 the EU-funded PPRD East Programme presented the information materials in Azerbaijani language under the Public Awareness Rising Campaign on civil protection, disaster management and disaster risk reduction. Manuals were presented in the course of the Third meeting of the National Advisory Group in Baku. In Particular, in the framework of information campaign the Guide for family on how to behave in emergencies, interactive poster and social advertisement video were presented. Purpose of the campaign is to raise awareness of broad public on civil protection, disaster management and disaster risk reduction making a particular focus on increase of individual behavior culture and involvement of citizens in preparedness, increase of readiness and response to disasters. Additionally, the organizers intend to attract national and local mass media attention to ways of risk reduction through cooperation of citizens with rescue teams before, during and after disasters. Representatives of various divisions of the Ministry of Emergencies of Azerbaijan, Republican Centre of Seismic Service of the National Academy of Sciences, Ministries of Health, Economy and
Industry, Foreign Affairs, Ecology and Natural Resources as well as other representatives of public took part in the meeting.


Ukraine: EU steps up humanitarian assistance
July 01, 2015

The European Union has stepped up its humanitarian assistance for people affected by the crisis in eastern Ukraine, with a new humanitarian aid package worth €15 million announced today by visiting Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos Stylianides. „It’s essential that humanitarian aid gets to all vulnerable people affected by the conflict. Humanitarian organisations need to have safe and speedy access to the conflict areas”, said Stylianides. „This additional funding will give a significant boost to our on-going aid operations, reaching the most vulnerable people through the provision of food, hygiene kits, blankets, healthcare, clean water, shelter and other lifesaving assistance, both in government and non-government-held areas,” added Commissioner Stylianides.


EU supports radioactive waste management in Ukraine
July 07, 2015

The EU and Ukraine have completed a project aimed at improving the infrastructure for radioactive waste management within the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone, handing over both mobile and centralised laboratories for the measurement and characterisation of radioactive waste materials, at a ceremony on 1 July.

The Mobile Laboratory will be used by Ukraine’s “Central Radioactive Waste Management Enterprise” mainly for the identification, characterisation and measurement of wastes, stored at temporary sites around the Exclusion Zone.

The project also provides Ukraine’s “Ecocenter” with state of the art equipment located in a Central Analytical Laboratory, in the city of Chernobyl. The laboratory will facilitate characterisation of radioactive waste materials, prior to processing, long-term storage and eventual disposal, in line with international best practice, Ukrainian regulations and IAEA recommendations.

The project cost more than €6 million and took just two and a half years to complete.

Russian Emergencies Minister Vladimir Puchkov for intensive cooperation of SCO member-states  
November 13, 2015

Russian Minister of Emergency Situations Vladimir Puchkov has taken part in the Eighth Meeting of SCO Disaster Management Senior Officials dedicated to the 10th anniversary of the intergovernmental agreement on cooperation between the SCO member-states.

Speaking with his counterparts, he drew their attention to the necessity of continuing intensive cooperation of the SCO member-states in the area of disaster management.

“It is necessary to continue cooperating intensely and to try to bring this cooperation into practice”, - Mr. Puchkov said.

An important role in this process is played by further development of national management complexes, improvement of information exchange system and development and introduction of modern disaster and risk management technologies.

According to Mr. Puchkov, the meeting in Chengdu is “a very important, key event”. “Here we have heads of all services that provide help to people in trouble, prevent natural disasters and are first responders. We have to work hard today, we plan to discuss cooperation and risk management. Following our joint work, a protocol will be signed and will give an impulse to further cooperation and collaboration”, - he said.

Cooperation within the SCO allows for introduction of new technologies and approaches and provides for implementation of ideas in ensuring life safety.

The event is attended by heads and representatives of emergency agencies of Kazakhstan, Kirgizia, China, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, the SCO under Secretary and ICDO Secretary General Vladimir Kuvshinov.

The meeting was held on 12 November in the city of Chengdu, China that was hit by a devastating earthquake on 12 May 2008. The meeting was chaired by China’s Minister of Civil Affairs Li Liguo.


Thorbjorn Jagland offers condolences over Azerbaijani oil rig disaster  
December 10, 2015

Secretary General of the Council of Europe Thorbjorn Jagland has offered condolences to Azerbaijan’s President Ilham Aliyev over the accident at Azerbaijan’s Guneshli offshore field which led to human losses.

“It was with great sadness that I learned of the appalling incident at an offshore oil platform in Gunashli late on 4 December,” Jagland said in his letter of condolences.
“I extend my sincere sympathies to the families of the afflicted,” he said. “Please allow me also to wish all courage and strength to the workers wounded in the incident for their recovery, as well as to those emergency services still searching for those who are missing.”

“In my capacity as secretary general, I should be grateful if you would convey the condolences of the Council of Europe to the victims’ families and to the people of Azerbaijan,” Jagland added.


**Fire on second oil well on the platform No 10 extinguished**

*December 18, 2015*

Last noon fire on the second oil well of the platform No 10 on the Guneshli field in the Caspian Sea, which caught fire because of the strong storm on December 4, 2015, was extinguished by the Azerbaijan Ministry of Emergency Situations.

“Every day two brigades of experienced firemen equipped with special safety devices are dropped from the Ministry’s vessels, which have been trying to extinguish the fire since December 10, to the platform,” reported the Ministry on Thursday.

A group of 11 experienced firemen from the Ministry of Emergency Situations’ State Anti-fire Service, was dropped to the platform on December 15 and thanks to their efforts fire on one of the oil wells has been fully extinguished.

“Extinguishing of burning gas wells on the platform of the Guneshli field is at the final stage,” reported the Ministry.

* Till now 33 people have been rescued from the platform. Bodies of seven more people have been found and 23 more oilmen are considered missing.

Source: Caspian Barrel, http://caspianbarrel.org/?p=37483

**Moldovan foreign ministry issues warning of travel to Ukraine over flu epidemic**

*January 26, 2016*

The Foreign and European Integration Ministry (MAEIE) recommends that the Moldovan citizens temporarily abstain from travelling to Ukraine, given the appearance of a flu epidemic triggered by the virus A/H1N1, about which the Ukrainian authorities have informed, the MAEIE information and media communication service has reported.

If travels to Ukraine cannot be avoided, the concerned people are warned to take caution measures, buy protection masks, pay increased attention to personal hygiene, and avoid crowded places.

**PPRD East 2 announces Steering Committee meeting in Brussels**

*January 25, 2016*

The EU-funded Flagship Initiative on Prevention, Preparedness and Response to Natural and Man-made Disasters in the East Partnership Countries (PPRD East) will hold its second Steering Committee meeting in Brussels on 4 February 2016, reports the PPRD East web-site. The purpose of the meeting is to review the 2015 programme implementation report from the PPRD East 2 Expert Team and present the Work Plan for 2016-2018. The PPRD East Programme is the EU-funded Flagship Initiative for increasing disaster risk management capacities of Eastern Partnership societies and improving protection of populations from the negative consequences of natural and man-made disasters in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.

*Source: ENPI-Info,*

http://www.enpi-info.eu/main east.php?id=43487&id_type=1&lang_id=450

**Turkish Airlines plane makes emergency landing in Baku by Azad Hasanli**

*February 08, 2016*

An aircraft of the Turkish Airlines made an emergency landing in Baku on Feb. 6, Azerbaijan Airlines has told Trend.

“A Boeing 777 plane, flying on the Dehli-Istanbul route, made an emergency landing in Baku on Feb. 6 at 09:30, due to an object [mobile phone] on its board,” said the airline Feb. 8.

The plane continued its flight after a re-examination procedure, the airline added.

In total, there were 331 passengers and 14 crew members on board the plane.

*Source: TREND,* http://en.trend.az/azerbaijan/other/2491693.html

**Chernobyl and Fukushima contamination ‘a risk for decades or even centuries to come’, warns Greenpeace**

*March 09, 2016*

Thirty years after the Chernobyl nuclear disaster, people living in affected areas are still consuming contaminated food and drink and coming into daily contact with dangerous levels of radiation, Greenpeace research has found.

In a report on the long term consequences of Chernobyl and Fukushima, the world’s worst nuclear accidents, Greenpeace said the local populaces would live with the legacy of contamination for decades to come.

On April 26, 1986 reactor number four at the Soviet Chernobyl nuclear power station, in what is now Ukraine, exploded after a safety test went wrong. The blast
and a subsequent fire sent a huge plume of radioactive material into the air, drifting north over northern Ukraine, Belarus, western Russia and the Baltic states.

Three decades later, Greenpeace found “ever-present contamination” from Chernobyl in food, milk and the wood used for construction and heating, and warns the catastrophe could have health implications that last decades.

“The Chernobyl disaster caused irreversible damage to the environment that will last for thousands of years,” states the report released on Wednesday. “Never in human history has such a large quantity of long-lived radioisotopes been released into the environment by a single event.

“This contamination touches every aspect of the lives of the people who must live in these places,” the study continues. “It is in what they eat and what they drink. It is in the wood they use for construction and burn to keep warm as well as in the ashes they use as fertiliser on their fields and orchards. And just as this contamination will be with them for decades to come so will the related impacts on their health.”


Azerbaijan’s emergency situations ministry operates in enhanced mode
March 18, 2016

Azerbaijan’s Ministry of Emergency Situations is operating in enhanced mode to operatively prevent any possible emergency events and eliminate their consequences, as well as to ensure safe recreation of the population on the eve of Novruz holiday.

The ministry’s relevant structures received appropriate instructions.


Two Hospitalized After Explosion in Central Ukraine
March 22, 2016

Two people have been hospitalized following an explosion in the central Ukrainian city of Kirovohrad.

The blast occurred on March 22 in the city’s central Bohdan Khmelnitskiy Square. Two cars were damaged by the explosion.

Law enforcement officials in the region of Kirovohrad said that an unknown explosive device has detonated in a metallic garbage bin.

Investigations have been launched into the incident.

Last year, a series of bomb blasts hit Ukraine’s eastern city of Kharkiv and southern port city of Odesa.
Authorities blamed the explosions on Russia and groups linked to pro-Russian separatists in the country’s east.
