

YOUNG EUROPEAN AMBASSADORS EASTERN PARTNERSHIP VISION 2030¹

Working Together for a Better Future

PREFACE

The YEAs' Forum is was a 1-month long activity which brought together in an on-line 'E-Forum' the Young European Ambassadors from the Eastern Partnership countries to work jointly and develop a vision of the future development of the EaP initiative and reinforce the political, economic and social gains made to date.

As we mark the 10th anniversary of the Eastern Partnership initiative, designed by the European Union to bring prosperity, stability and security to its Eastern Neighbourhood, we note that the scope of cooperation between the EU and its Eastern Partner countries, namely, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, has grown exponentially. The EU's investments in support of democracy, good governance, protection of human rights, enhanced educational opportunities, the strengthening of civil society, integrated border management, the development of sustainable economies, energy security and efficiency, and environmental protection and mitigation of climate change has contributed to positive changes to the quality of life of EaP citizens.

Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia have concluded Association Agreements (Including DCFTA) with the EU and the visa requirements for Moldovan, Ukrainian and Georgian citizens who hold a biometric passport and wish to travel to the Schengen zone for a short-stay have been abolished. Thanks to increased collaboration with the EU and the EU Member States, these countries are adapting their legislation and policy-making to European and international standards, strengthening their managerial and administrative capacities to implement economic and social reforms and pursuing policies designed to increase stability and prosperity in the region.

Armenia has signed a Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement with the EU in 2017, while Azerbaijan is close to concluding negotiations on a new comprehensive agreement which will be based on the Partnership Priorities adopted between the two parties in 2018. Armenia and Azerbaijan also benefit from visa facilitation regime with the EU, which relaxed requirements for some categories of people, making the bureaucratic procedures less costly. Belarus has agreed to increase mobility and people-to-people contacts between the European Union and Belarusian citizens, through the signing and launching of the Mobility Partnership.

While co-operation between the EU and the six EaP countries has indeed yielded positive results, a wide array of problems persist, in particular with regard to the independence of the judiciary, high-level and petty corruption, freedom of civil society organisations, media and opposition, LGBTQ+ rights, equality of men and women and social inclusion generally. Therefore, bearing in mind our belief in being **STRONGER TOGETHER**, the Young European Ambassadors from the EU member states and the EaP countries came together to discuss what has been achieved

¹ The ideas, opinions, suggestions and recommendations expressed in this paper are the result of the collective efforts of around 40 YEAs (see the names at the end of the document) only, and do not represent the views of the European Union and its institutions and/or the 'EU NEIGHBOURS east' project.

so far, and to identify what should be the spotlight of the cooperation between the EU and the EaP countries in the next decade.

‘EASTERN PARTNERSHIP 2030: VISION AND ACTIONS’

The recommendations set out below are derived from an online survey, the main target of which was youth (the survey and its results may be found in **ANNEX 6**). We recognise that many of the issues identified below have already been identified by the Commission Services in their pre-planning of the new Financial Perspective 2021-2027 and that many could be achieved by extending and reinforcing co-operation with third countries through Commission Initiative Programmes (e.g. Horizon 2020, Erasmus+ etc.).

STRONGER ECONOMY

Recognising the importance of economic stability and development for the region, we suggest:

- To make more investments in the development of skills, entrepreneurship and employability of youth, and offer more scholarships and fellowships especially in the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) fields, most relevant to the environment of the upcoming 4th Industrial Revolution
- To promote innovative solutions and digital infrastructures, which will boost the economy via support to R&D (Research and Development) in relevant spheres
- To promote innovations in agriculture, primarily precision farming
- To use the experience of the EU member states in digitised state services to reduce transactional costs for businesses
- To promote frictionless trade between the EU and the EaP member countries, which would make SMEs, especially in rural and other vulnerable areas, its main beneficiaries.

Concrete measures towards the steps mentioned above are pointed out in **ANNEX 1**.

STRONGER GOVERNANCE

To ensure the maintenance of the core values which we share, notably respect for democracy, human rights and non-discrimination, we suggest:

- To invest more efforts to assure media plurality and the freedom of the media, by assisting the creation of new informal media channels
- To fight against fake news in the region through information campaigns, and support the establishment of an Eastern Partnership TV/news channel which will be aired in 6 EaP languages
- To fight against corruption through the establishment of an EaP Anti-Corruption Academy and training of anti-corruption ambassadors
- To foster further civil society development by means of civil society training tours and the establishment of a platform, where all the NGOs from the EU and the EaP can easily become co-applicants and apply for EU-financed grants.

The detailed actions to be taken towards stronger governance are stated in **ANNEX 2**.

STRONGER SOCIETY

To further foster mobility and people to people contacts, we recommend:

- To completely abolish roaming charges between the EU and the EaP countries
- To uphold common policies and standards on the rollout and development of 5G
- To bring artists and creators from the EU and the EaP countries together to spread European values across the region
- To implement cultural and high school student exchanges to bring youth into direct contact with each other
- To implement teacher exchanges, where teachers from the EaP countries and the EU will switch places and teach students about the EU and the EaP accordingly
- To encourage more EU officials with a dual nationality from EaP countries to participate in the “Back to School Initiative” of the EU and to encourage more schools to participate
- To introduce a solid basis for a peaceful coexistence of the EaP states, aimed at bringing younger generation closer to each other
- To help children from the EaP understand what the EU does for them from an early age in schools by incorporating EU studies into school curricula
- To create more international educational opportunities for students, as well as vocational apprenticeships for those who are not currently enrolled in any educational institution
- To launch working opportunities for young adults, especially for minority groups (disabled, oppressed, etc.) outside of their native country in order to get them acquainted with the EU labour policies and values
- To pay closer attention to the initiatives providing educational and working opportunities for youth coming from rural areas
- To widen access to educational trips and tours to people from disadvantaged and minority groups
- To help educational centres and hubs spread and provide people with the information about the international educational trips, assist in completing the applications, give advice on challenging issues.

ANNEX 3 further explains the steps towards stronger society.

STRONGER CONNECTIVITY

Supporting the sustainable development of the region, we believe, certain measures ought to be taken to ensure clean, affordable and diversified energy for youth by 2030. While concrete steps to be taken are listed in **ANNEX 4**, below we recommend the EU and the EaP countries:

- To work further towards energy diversification to decrease the energy dependency of the region
- To create national agencies (where absent) which will deal with energy security issues
- To increase the affordability of energy and its clean share for the households
- To create respective platforms at all levels where the EU and the EaP countries can cooperate in coordination of their decarbonisation strategies, in accordance with their commitments set out in Paris Agreement
- To ensure that the European Neighbourhood Instrument will account for increasing the expenses in training and transfer of best practices in Research and Development in this sphere
- To create a common roadmap towards the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal #7 (access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all).

ENSURING GENDER EQUALITY

Given the existing gender inequality in the region (listed according to categories in **ANNEX 5**), we believe that the EU and its Eastern Partners should work together to deliver stronger policies aimed at fostering equality. To fight against discrimination towards women in any sphere, we suggest:

- To promote equality between women and men in decision-making
- To engage public opinion leaders to break gender stereotypes
- To develop national strategies for regional outreach
- To encourage local, regional and national authorities to introduce gender budgeting principles in their work
- To hold awareness-raising campaigns among private enterprises to ensure presence of women in the company boards according to gender quotas
- To promote further engagement and enrolment of female students in STEM and other spheres traditionally dominated by men
- To provide financial support to rural women-entrepreneurs, with a focus to sustainable and community-centred projects
- To establish a uniform approach in fighting derogatory portrayals of women in the media, including by women themselves.

OTHER ACTIONS

In addition to the thematic suggestions and recommendations presented above, the Young European Ambassadors:

- **Propose to conduct online awareness campaigns with people creating posts on social media about their expectations from the EaP initiative.** This will help the decision-makers to understand better the needs of young people and will create directions for the EU and the EaP countries to set as priorities;
- **Following the proclamation of the year 2019 as the Year of Cultural, we propose to create a Calendar for all the EaP countries identifying the most important holidays of each EaP country (Independence Day, Constitution Day, Spring Calling Day, Ivan Kupala, Blessing of the Grapes, Vardavar, Alaverdoba festival, Flower Festival, National Salvation Day, Nowruz, National Vine Day, Limba noastră etc.).** The Calendar to be published every year and aim at bringing people of various cultures together, promoting mutual understanding and respect.
- **Create an application for gadgets with quizzes about the EaP, the EU and individual countries.** This will aim at raising awareness about the EU, its member states, and EaP countries themselves.
- **Encourage the European Commission to launch an ongoing Cartoon series on the EU and its EaP initiative.** Such a product will attract the attention of the younger generation, getting them acquainted with European standards, cultures of EaP countries. The cartoons should clearly explain what the EaP and the EU stand for, as well as what are the EU institutions, while being informative and attractive at the same time.

ANNEX 1

STRONGER ECONOMY

Economic stability and development represent a significant pillar of success and collaboration between the EU and the EaP countries. Recognising how pressing current challenges are on this front, the youth of the EU and the EaP wishes to see economic cooperation strengthened and would like to point the attention of policymakers to the following areas of action and measures to be implemented:

1. Investment in the development of skills, entrepreneurship and employability of youth, enabling them to elaborate their mobility opportunities

- **Organisation of more study tours or exchanges to EaP countries for students from the EU to the EaP and vice versa.** This will enable students to live the life of a regular resident of the host country and learn about the culture, traditions of entrepreneurship, etc.
 - **More engagement of various schools in the establishment of partnerships** which focus on directing education towards the needs of labour market.
 - **Offering more scholarships, fellowships and hackathons**, especially in the STEM fields most relevant to the environment of the upcoming Fourth Industrial Revolution.
- Mapping social entrepreneurship in the EaP countries and creating a Platform for social entrepreneurship in the EaP countries.** There is a similar platform for the EU.

→ **Promoting innovative solutions and digital infrastructures**, including those aimed at **boosting the economy and energy sustainability**.

- To uphold common policies and standards on the rollout and development of 5G
- As many EaP countries as possible must receive adequacy decisions from the EU which confirm compliance of their data policies with GDPR. This is important because now data flows will be under a more stringent control between the EU and third parties without these adequacy decisions.
- Providing EaP countries with relevant partnerships and support in R&D in areas of vital public interest such as **education, healthcare, fundamental and applied research etc.**
- Promoting **innovations in agriculture**, primarily precision farming, and bringing best practices in farming data collection, crops and fertiliser forecasting, weather and climate risks mitigation etc.
- Continuing **maximal digitisation and elimination of middlemen** in the provision of state services, designed primarily with customers (citizen) in mind. Experience of the EU member states such as Estonia, Sweden, Denmark and Finland, should serve as a guidance to how a wide spectrum of digitised state services improve quality of life and bring down transactional costs for businesses.

2. Promoting frictionless trade between the EU and the EaP member countries, which would make SMEs, especially in rural and other vulnerable areas, its main beneficiaries.

- a. Leveraging institutional and informational capabilities in the DCFTA signatory countries (Moldova, Ukraine, Georgia) that would be relevant in order to **reach out to SMEs and explain to them the potential of exporting to the EU market** and the pathway to get all necessary clearances and documents in order to be able to start exporting;

- b. Encouraging the **process of accession of Belarus to the WTO** and aiding it in officially becoming part of the organisation during 2020 Ministerial Conference in Nur-Sultan. Trade on MFN terms under WTO auspices will serve as an additional stimulus for EU-Belarusian relations, as well as for the sectors of Belarusian economy that aim to move up the regional value chain;
- c. The same support to **Azerbaijan in its accession to the WTO** is highly encouraged;
- d. Forming a platform where relevant EU and EaP countries officials can **discuss various aspects of the impact of GDPR on cross-border digital businesses and ways for EaP countries to get data policy adequacy decisions** from the European Commission as soon as possible;
- e. Encouraging cooperation and information exchange between MNEs, relevant EU countries' embassies in EaP Member States and relevant EaP countries' authorities in order to facilitate the **creation of more regional production clusters in knowledge intensive spheres**, capitalising on high level of education of the workforce and potential to create regional value chains that will boost prosperity in the EaP space;
- f. **Persuading institutions such as the European Investment Bank to make space for financing lines for projects for rural SMEs** that are of low cost and high efficiency, like training on basic financial management and marketing knowledge, developing the knowledge about export procedures, in cooperation with local business associations and national customs services and relevant regulatory agencies, and seed funding for such SMEs (since no commercial banks or state programmes usually cover such projects with low scale and high risks which are still of high importance for the cohesion of rural communities).

ANNEX 2

STRONGER GOVERNANCE

1. Introduction of the basis for maintaining the core values of the EU, among which respect for democracy, human rights, and non-discrimination

- Closer engagement of the EU with partner countries on the issues of **plurality and independence of media**. A strong, independent press is fundamental to successful societies everywhere. We must make media outlets more sustainable and help journalists continue to grow professionally;
- **Creating new informal media channels** established by activists and monitoring them with equal or greater care than formal sources **in order to track the trend of public opinion in times and areas where it can fluctuate dramatically**;
- **Fight against fake news** in the region, mainly through information campaigns;
- **Creating an Eastern Partnership TV channel aired in the EaP which shares the political, economic, social and cultural news from all 6 countries in order to make sure the existence of independent media**. This will also contribute to strengthen connectivity between the EU and the EaP countries. This channel should be broadcasted in all EaP languages, with primary focus on Russian. The channel should be part of a holistic media effort, overseen by a special EaP Media Agency, that would manage TV Channel, production for YouTube, social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, V Kontakte...) and Telegram;
- Justification of the high expectations and aspirations of the citizens in the EaP with regards to **eradicating corruption and bolstering the rule of law and good governance**;
- **Establishment of an EaP Anti-Corruption Academy**, similar to the Euro school in Tbilisi. Such kind of anti-corruption academies already exist in Austria (IACA), Hong Kong etc. This academy will give an excellent opportunity for the participants from different countries with different ranks of corruption to study the latest trends in the region and do experience exchange;
- **Training of anti-corruption ambassadors**, The EU countries could share successful practices with EaP countries, engaging youth activists, business sector, journalists, civil society in order to teach them practical approaches to fight corruption in their countries.
- **Fight against high-level corruption and increasing the level of financial investigations**, mainly by capacity building of law enforcement officials in stolen asset recovery and illicit enrichment cases, by the introduction of “in rem” civil law proceedings for asset recovery without criminal cases.

Strengthening the institutes of mutual assistance;

- **Establishment of beneficial ownership registries in all the 6 countries** for fighting against monopolies and affiliation of businesses and politics.
- **Introduction of mechanisms for the protection of whistle-blowers** in the countries which do not have this and strengthening of the mechanisms which already have it. **Introduction of “qui tam” proceedings which compensate up to 10 percent of the recovered stolen assets. Speeding up the asylum procedures for the whistle-blowers who face life threatening conditions at home after the revelations they made.**
- **Improvement of the system of declarations of assets and income mainly by increasing the transparency requirements, setting as subject of declarations expenses which are not in the form of assets such as luxurious vacations in order to have a complete picture for analysing the financial inflows and outflows of public officials.**

2. Fostering civil society development within the partner countries and enabling them to serve as a bridge between the Government and society,

- **Civil Society Training Tours** for capacity-building of **NGOs in order to raise societal problems, as well as policy making, constructive dialogue.** The activity is aimed to change apolitical civil society organisations to actors that can have an influence in the decision-making of the EaP countries.
- **Establishment of public-private dialogue platforms with Parliament and Government.** Populations of the EaP countries should know the content of negotiations. Hence, instead of discussing behind the closed doors, the public must be well-informed, and its opinion should be presented by civil society organisations.
- Assist the **active and smooth operation of the Civil Society Platform for CEPA Monitoring** under article 336, of the CEPA between the EU and Armenia;
- **Establishment of a platform where all NGOs from EU and Eastern Partnership can easily become co-applicants and apply for EU financed grants.** The latter platform should give an opportunity for easily finding possible co-applicants based on the country and sectors and sub-sectors of activities of the NGO.

ANNEX 3

STRONGER SOCIETY

1. Fostering the development of the people to people relations.

- a. To support cultural activities that would bring artists and creators from EU to EaP countries and vice-versa;
- b. To implement projects that would help High School students from EU and EaP countries to build connections and visit each other;
- c. To support creators and artists from the EaP countries to spread the message and values of the EU;
- d. To implement cultural exchanges that would bring youth from the EU to the EaP countries, so both sides can get into direct contact with each other;
- e. To implement and encourage projects such as seminars, workshops and conferences that would help people on both sides find similarities in their cultures, culinary matters, languages etc...
- f. Similar to the “back to school initiative” of the EU, we would highly encourage EU officials with a dual nationality from EaP countries to take part in the initiative. This would be highly beneficial to the EaP youth and has proven to be very interesting throughout previous exchanges;
- g. To introduce a solid basis for a peaceful coexistence of the EaP states, aimed at bringing younger generation closer to each other;
- h. Based on the “EU and I” ABC about EU Cooperation within each country, help children understand what the EU does for them from an early age, by adding the syllabus to the national education curriculum (in history or geography lessons in primary school);
- i. To encourage and implement “teacher exchange” programmes where teachers from the EaP and EU switch places and teach students of EU and EaP countries on a monthly basis across middle schools and high schools;
- j. The subjects can range from language knowledge to science and philosophy.
- k. We encourage a complete abolition of roaming charges between EaP countries and the EU.

2. A more peaceful coexistence

Introduction of a solid basis to ensure a **peaceful coexistence** of the states and to support the adoption of negotiations as a means of resolving disputes between states;

- a. More and more peace-building activities amongst youth should be developed aimed **at the peaceful settlement of issues between Armenia and Azerbaijan**. YEAs from the mentioned countries are inclined to believe that the Eastern Partnership platform is the only platform for youth from those 2 countries to communicate with each other. Furthermore, they noted that this communication provides them with a chance to see each other in the positive light.
- b. Residual activities **on preventing “frozen conflicts”** and separatist movements in EaP countries.

ANNEX 4

STRONGER CONNECTIVITY

1. Energy diversification

The main goal of energy diversification for the EaP countries is to ensure their energy security. Historical dependency on Russia puts pressure on the decision - making process, especially in the cases of Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia.

Currently, some countries have already established some energy cooperation links. Azerbaijan, being the only energy producer in the region, has established an energy cooperation network with the other GUAM countries. In addition, Azerbaijan provides Belarus with oil and oil products.

Talking about the EU participation in the energy security, the Energy Flagship Initiative can be mentioned. Launched in 2010, it pursued three main goals: to facilitate the trade of gas and electricity between the EU and the six EaP countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine), to improve energy efficiency and to expand the use of renewable energy sources. Based on the bi-annual meetings, representatives from EaP countries share, among other, best practice on the development of energy interconnections, including diversification of supply.

At municipal level regional support is provided through the Covenant of Mayors and Sustainable Urban Demonstration Energy projects (SUDEP), as well as through the reinforcement of the Eastern Europe Energy Efficiency and Environmental Partnership (E5P).

Furthermore, launched in 2016 EU4Energy programme supports EaP countries in achieving their energy policy objectives, with an important step - an opening of the EU4ENERGY Governance regional office in Tbilisi.

Some countries have already created national agencies in order to deal with energy security issues. In Azerbaijan an Energy Efficiency Department within the Ministry of Energy was created. The EU has also supported the government of Ukraine in establishing an independent energy regulatory authority and new gas and electricity laws to improve efficiency in the energy sector.

Among current achievements, we could list the interest that was stated by Moldova and Ukraine in promoting the Trans-Balkan pipeline which from their perspective is needed to complement the capacity of the Ungheni – Chisinau gas pipeline with gas stemming from the Southern Gas Corridor ensuring supply in both directions, plans for Hermanowice-Bilche Volytsia gas pipelines (Poland-Ukraine), that was supported by the European Investment Bank, a technical presentation on the new methodology to assess potential new interconnectivity projects of key interest to the Eastern Partnership, extension of the existing Iasi-Ungheni pipeline to Chisinau and many others.

Apart from pipeline infrastructure, it is important to remember about LNG as well. It is an alternative to Russian pipeline gas that is in full development in Europe. The attention of the policymakers should be brought to the fact that we expect actions in connecting pipelines in the EaP countries to American LNG delivered at Swinoujscie LNG terminal in Poland. Moreover, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine should be aided and guided in developing their own infrastructure able to receive LNG shipments.

We find it regrettable that the amendments recently passed to the EU Gas Directive still permitted the finishing of construction of Nord Stream II, which hampers energy diversification efforts undertaken by Ukraine and Moldova, as well energy security of the region as a whole.

In 2017, the US and 12 EU member countries from Eastern and Central Europe launched the Three Seas Initiative, which is an infrastructure initiative aimed at improving connectivity within the region, especially in the energy sphere. In 2018 at its summit in Bucharest the initiative was officially endorsed by the European Commission and Germany. Inclusion of the EaP countries in such an ambitious and necessary format of cooperation would facilitate their development, enhance their security and help improve various spheres of infrastructure - from roads to pipelines to digital.

2. Clean, affordable and diversified energy for youth of the EU and the EaP for 2030: A path for sustainability

Energy, along with data, will remain for dozens of years as the backbone of the global economy. There are serious worries that the current economic situation will lead to our generation living in poorer conditions than the one of our parents. One of the ways in which this potential peril can be tackled is increasing affordability of energy and its clean share in the overall energy mix.

Households in the EaP countries spend a tremendous amounts of money monthly, especially during winter season, on heating and gas bills. Leaving aside such important reasons for that as opaque and corrupt methodologies of pricing, the sources of this energy play a significant role in forming the bill. Heating costs constitute significant part of housing costs, and affordability of housing is the issue of the generation.

In order for the EaP to become more clean energy - friendly by 2030, the youth of the EaP proposes to the consideration of the honourable Ministers, Prime Ministers, Heads of State and European officials the following set of measures:

1. Creating a common platform at the tracks of high-level, expert and youth cooperation in coordinating EU and the EaP countries' decarbonisation strategies in accordance with their commitments taken in the process of implementation of Paris Agreement;
2. Taking necessary lobbying efforts for the EaP countries to join the most important global clean energy forums with the support of the EU, such as Clean Energy Ministerial Conference;
3. While in the negotiations for the EU Multi annual Financial Framework 2021-2027, making sure that the structure of the European Neighbourhood Instrument will account for increasing importance of

cooperation in clean energy sphere, transfer of best practices, training of relevant specialists and increased R&D expenses in this sphere, building up on successes achieved in the process of implementation of the projects inside relevant programs like Horizon 2020;

4. Pushing for the creation of a common EU - EaP Roadmap for the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal #7 “Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all”, with special attention to pay for compliance with indicators 7.2 (“by 2030, increase substantially the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix”) and 7.3 (“by 2030, double the global rate of improvement of energy efficiency”);
5. Focusing the attention of EU-EaP clean energy cooperation on sectors the most relevant for the welfare of youth, i.e. housing and mobility, where transition to clean energy will increase the rate of ownership of cars and housing units, which is declining in our generation in comparison with the generations before.

ANNEX 5

STRONGER POLICIES FOR GENDER EQUALITY

Gender equality and non-discrimination is one of the most overlooked and underachieved deliverables out of all the 20 Deliverables for 2020. Causes of the underlying sexism and discrimination process tend to lie in a region's historical, religious and cultural peculiarities, which tend to contribute to persistent gender stereotypes and low levels of tolerance towards minorities from a political, economic and social point of view. We also decided to categorise measures to improve gender equality and non-discrimination in three key pathways: political, economic and social. Overall, we would highly encourage setting up activities aimed at fostering **women rights**, mainly the local implementation of the Beijing Platform and CEDAW Committee's Concluding Observations.

PATHWAY 1: COUNTERING POLITICAL ISOLATION AND UNDERREPRESENTATION

'Women in every part of the world continue to be largely marginalised from the political sphere'

2011 UN General Assembly resolution on women's political participation

Societies remain divided and dominated by gender stereotypes, forming a vicious circle, where politicians and decision-makers find no incentives to promote and implement gender-oriented policies.

- **Lack of societal awareness of this issue**

According to Eurobarometer data from 2017, among women, 62 % think that there should be more women in political decision-making positions in their country, while only 44 % of men agree. Both the 62% and the 44% statistic clearly show a lack of clear comprehension on the issue, or perhaps a general disinterest.

- **Insults and threats against women in politics**

Statistics aside, it is perfectly obvious that the level of abuse and violence directed at women in politics because they are women is frightfully high, even across the EU and a mere trip to a female politician's Facebook page will prove as much.

Measures:

- ✓ Promoting equality between women and men in decision-making;
- ✓ Setting national mechanisms for observation of women rights as a pre-condition for granting finances to states;
- ✓ Crosscutting deliverable pertaining to civil society support and women empowerment to be further expanded (e.g. Civil Society Facility and Civil Society Policy Fellowships), as the civil sector remains the most open for further women engagement;
- ✓ Engagement of public opinion leaders (potentially representing youth) in projects aimed at breaking

gender stereotypes and promotion of success stories in this regard. Ambassador programme among high-rank public figures, business representatives, celebrities, academia and minority representatives;

- ✓ Development of national strategies for regional outreach. The population concentrated in the cities has a basic awareness on the topic, meanwhile, in the villages and small town, the situation differs;
- ✓ Encouragement of local, regional and national authorities (national parliaments due to their obligation to adopt state budgets; and regional and local councils) to introduce gender budgeting principles in their work;
- ✓ Courses, conferences and seminars with women entrepreneurs and politicians at school in early ages.

PATHWAY 2: COMBATING ECONOMIC INEQUALITY

‘About two-thirds of the world's illiterate adults are women. Lack of an education severely restricts a woman's access to information and opportunities’

2015 Gender equality United Nations Population Fund.

- **Economic inequality** resulting from widespread vertical and horizontal segregation on the labour market, pay gap between women and men, and unbreakable "glass ceiling". The pay gap differs from country to country, with an EU average being 16 per cent. At the same time in Azerbaijan women on average earn almost 50 per cent less than men, almost four times higher than in the Republic of Moldova, where the pay gap is somewhere between 12 and 13 per cent.

Besides the immediate difference in the level of salaries between men and women, gender stereotypes also influence the roles that women are allowed to play in society, thus limiting their professional and personal development. At the same time, it is fair to underline that men also suffer from gender stereotypes.

Measures:

- ✓ Awareness-raising campaign targeting senior management and shareholders of private enterprises, bringing their attention to economic benefits of breaking the ‘glass ceiling’ and vertical segregation on the labour market;
- ✓ -Introducing at the legal level the requirement in the EaP countries to have at least one woman on corporate board if it's composed of 4 or less members, at least two women for 5-8 member board and three for 9+, and establishing a transition period for all to reach those standards (including state owned enterprises) until 2025;
- ✓ Advocacy for the introduction of gender quotas for public company boards, both through introduction of relevant legislation and regulations;
- ✓ Informational campaign targeting women and men, boys and girls, breaking the existing gender stereotypes widespread in EaP countries. Need to promote further engagement and enrolment of female students into STEM. Engagement of women excelling in spheres traditionally

dominated by men (business, law-enforcement, IT sector, engineering, emergency services, transportation and military) is highly desirable;

- ✓ Provision of grants and sub-grants to local CSOs and experts to raise financial literacy and entrepreneurship skills among women and girls living in rural areas;
- ✓ Financial support to rural women-entrepreneurs (including those who previously participated in training sessions on financial literacy and entrepreneurship), with a specific focus to sustainable and community-centred projects.

PATHWAY 3: ELIMINATING SOCIAL DISCRIMINATION

It is virtually impossible to achieve any tangible progress in economic and political empowerment, while women and girls remain inadequately protected against gender-based violence (GBV) and domestic violence. The leading role in such protection is vested in the state and its respective institutions. And even though all European states ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the process of accession to and ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (the Istanbul Convention) continues to stall.

Measures:

- ✓ More measures must be taken to implement sex education across schools in the EaP region, starting from a young age. The same goes for LGBT Rights, a subject which is considered to be taboo in most domestic households in rural regions. The same goes for people who are suffering from sexually transmitted diseases, who are often stigmatised and ignored. Teaching about these matters-as well as the importance of consent- at a young age might change the youth's vision on human rights, and in turn that of their parents hopefully.
- ✓ Derogatory portrayals of women in the media and targeted insults directed to other women based on their gender amongst main media platforms, including by women themselves, should be sanctioned based on a uniform all-EU approach striving to eliminate harmful gender stereotypes;
- ✓ The EU should work towards ensuring stronger social media engagement and concrete measures on their side to prevent comments, insults and groups directed at women.
- ✓ Stronger legislative proposals must be implemented across the EaP region with regards to violence against women and its persecution

ANNEX 6

ONLINE SURVEY

We conducted a survey comprising 11 questions, with 10 closed questions, and 1 open question amongst the EaP youth. The questions are about personal details of the respondents, their knowledge, perceptions and feelings about the EU, the media portrayal of the EU in Eastern Partnership countries, the problematic areas in the region and the main expectations from the EU. In the end of every country section, YEAs, based on survey results, presented their vision on the future of the cooperation of the EU with the Eastern Partnership countries.

QUESTIONNAIRE AND PRESENTATION OF THE RESULTS:

Age of Participants:

Around 90% of participants were in the 16-24 age range and 673 respondents amongst the EaP countries participated.

General Knowledge:

The most popular EU institution in the region is European Parliament, as opposed to the European Court of Auditors which is not well-known among the respondents. In general, the EU institutions are well recognised amongst the respondents from the EaP countries.

Knowledge of the Eastern Partnership:

An overwhelming majority of the respondents have heard about the Eastern Partnership initiative (around 90%) and EU Delegations in their respective countries (around 85%). However, the open question regarding the expectations from the EU demonstrated that while there is a good general knowledge about EU Institutions in the region, many of the EaP citizens are not very knowledgeable about EU policymaking and laws.

Trust in the EU:

The majority of the respondents from the Eastern Partnership countries indicated moderate trust in the European Union. It's also interesting to note that the correlation between age groups and the trust in the EU has not been found.

Little

Belarus- 55.3%

South Moldova-70,4 %

Azerbaijan- 67.4%

Ukraine-64.6%

Moderately

Armenia-50%

Completely

North Moldova-100%



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Perception of the EU:

Most of the survey participants considered the EU to be a global political actor. Surprisingly, while the European Union aims to bring a norm-based political order to the EaP region, the image of the EU as a normative actor-one of the multiple-choice options- is almost absent. On the other hand, more people see the Union as an economic actor;

A global political actor

Armenia- 85%

Georgia-80.5%

Ukraine-65%

Azerbaijan- 50%

Belarus-44.7%

An economic actor

Moldova-66.7%

Belarus-44.7%

Satisfaction with the relationship with the EU:

In terms of the satisfaction regarding the current state of the EU cooperation with the Eastern Partnership countries, mixed results are at stake. In Ukraine, Armenia and Georgia, most of respondents have indicated satisfaction about the relations of their countries with the EU, as opposed to Azerbaijan where majority of the suppliants were dissatisfied about the EU-Azerbaijan cooperation. It could be explained by the fact that youth expect normative developments from the EU in EU-Azerbaijan cooperation, while the issues such as energy security are rather prioritised in the EU agenda; in Belarus, the results showed only 10% of satisfaction while 40% expressed their dissatisfaction, 50% are neutral.

Satisfied

Ukraine-74.8%

North Moldova-66.7%

Georgia-47.9%

Armenia-50%

Azerbaijan-50%

Neutral/I don't know

South Moldova-55.6%

Belarus-48.9%

Influence of the Media:

Online media resources and in particular, social media captured more information on the EU-EaP relations, according to the respondents. Interestingly, in Georgia, TV news is the most active media resource portraying

EU-Georgia relations. According to the survey participants, the EU-EaP relations are portrayed mostly in a neutral way or positively in Armenia, Georgia and Ukraine, while in Azerbaijan the share of answers on neutral (32,6%), negative (30,4%) and positive (26,1%) is almost equal; Belarus is different with a prevailing “neutral” option (60%) and positive and negative options are relatively equal (21,3% and 17% respectively).

Main Issues:

While the problematic policy areas differ across the region, corruption is still seen as a dominant problem in almost all the surveyed countries. Respondents also believe that judicial independence, education, healthcare and research and innovation are problematic areas in need of improvements. Normative expectations, in particular, with regard to tackling corruption, together with abolishment of visa regime, attraction of more investments, support to the reforms in the field of education are the most prevalent expectations of the EaP citizens from the EU, based on the survey responses.

To sum up, the youth of the Eastern Partnership region believe that the EU-EaP relations are in need of further integration, in particular, with regards to human rights, respect for the rule of law and democracy, while also deepening the economic cooperation and strengthening the mobility and people-to-people contacts.

RECOMMENDATIONS PER COUNTRY:

Based on the results of the online survey and the personal views of the YEAs, we recommend that:

FOR ARMENIA:

- Recommends that Armenia and the EU further develop and strengthen the relationship and go beyond CEPA.
- Ensure the active and smooth operation of the Civil Society Platform, formulated under CEPA.
- Suggests more exchange programs by the EU so that the educational institutions in the country become more advanced.
- Calls upon Armenia and the EU to start a dialogue on visa free regime to bring more opportunities for exchange between societies in the fields of education and trade.
- Calls upon the EU to contribute to capacity development of young professionals by expanding the scope and number of traineeship opportunities in the EU institutions.

FOR AZERBAIJAN:

- Strongly encourages the EU institutions and officials to demonstrate much more commitment to the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms in Azerbaijan, in particular, freedom of assembly and expression.
- Urges the EU to support Azerbaijan in the field of good governance, in particular, ensuring the absence

of political interference in the judiciary and supporting Azerbaijan in the eradication of corruption, in particular, high-level corruption.

- Calls upon the EU to further support civil society organisations of Azerbaijan, in particular, those in vulnerable situations, e.g. critical CSOs on human rights and gender equality.
- Strongly encourages the EU to help Azerbaijan eradicate discrimination and hate crimes on all grounds, including gender identity and sexual orientation, not only through institutional capacity-building projects and legislative changes, but also through support to Azerbaijan in inclusive education, which should also include very well-taught sex education.
- Calls upon the EU to provide further institutional support to Azerbaijan in the fields of education and healthcare.
- Further requests the EU to support Azerbaijan to fight against unemployment, promote economic freedoms, tackle climate change and help rural areas develop.

FOR BELARUS:

- Congratulates Belarus on youth movement growing and young people getting familiar with the EU throughout Erasmus, Erasmus+ projects, being part of youth initiatives (YEAs), taking part in pro-European programmes (EYP).
- Aware of the EU being the 3rd biggest economic partner of Belarus, hopes for the cooperation to be deepened, creating an appropriate environment for investments, stabilisation of already existing economic contacts.
- Calls upon both parties to activate the prolonged dialogue between Belarus and the EU about the adoption of visa-free regime.
- Calls upon the European Commission to strengthen educational connections between EU and Belarus and develop intellectual and human-resources exchanges.

FOR GEORGIA:

- Encourages both the EU institutions and the Georgian authorities to base their cooperation on increasing the productivity of the new generation and giving the youth opportunity to have an impact in economic, social and environmental fields by implementing more projects.
- Calls upon the EU to provide more political support for conflict solving and peace-building in the relationships between the countries.
- Suggests developing investment relations as well as trade and economic contacts between Georgia and the EU by financial support, business sector expansion.
- Calls upon the European Commission to help preserve human rights, including right for education, culture and identity of each country to promote diversity.

FOR REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA:

- Strongly encourages to focus on the involvement of **young 'voices'**: active and successful youngsters that can share their experience, promote the EU and its unlimited possibilities better.
- Organise more online presentations and driven activities in the areas, where people are less aware of the EU and EaP initiative.
- Encourages to improve the cooperation in educational sphere between Moldova and EU: increasing university exchanges, making them more approachable than before, including Erasmus projects and exchanges.
- Asks the EU to un-freeze the support to the Republic of Moldova.
- Asks the EU to strengthen the technical/policy advice support to EaP countries in the key issues as rule of law, gender equality, industrial revolution 4.0 and open government.
- Calls upon the closer cooperation in the energy sector, investments by EU in clean energy.
- Calls upon the EaP countries to work together on the reforms from the inside, so this cooperation can lead them to become more democratic and eco-friendly

FOR UKRAINE

- Congratulates the EU on implementing over 10,000 academic exchanges in 2015-2018 (42% of all mobilities in EaP region) and involving over 9,000 young people and youth workers from Ukraine into participation in Erasmus+ Youth projects.
- Hopes to strengthen the connections between Ukraine and the EU in the educational sphere.
- Urges the European Council to uphold stricter policies against violators of international law in order to ensure peace in the EU neighbourhood seeing as we are concerned about the ongoing foreign policy and internal challenges Ukraine is facing
- Invites the EU to contribute to capacity development of young professionals by expanding the scope and number of traineeship opportunities in the EU institutions.

GLOSSARY:

CEDAW — Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women

CEPA — Centre for European Policy Analysis

CSO — Civil society organization

DCFTA — Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas

E5P — Environmental Partnership

EaP — Eastern Partnership

EIGE — European Institute for Gender Equality

EU — European Union

EYP — European Youth Parliament

GBV — Gender-based violence

GDPR — General Data Protection Regulation

GUAM — Organization for Democracy and Economic Development

IACA — International Anti-Corruption Academy

IT — Internet-technology

LNG — Liquefied natural gas

MFN — Most favoured nation

MNEs — Multinational enterprise

NGOs — Non-governmental organisations

R&D — Research and Development

SMEs — Small and medium-sized enterprises

STEM — Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics

SUDEP — Sustainable Urban Demonstration Energy projects

UN — United Nations

UNFPA — United Nations Population Fund

US — United States

WTO — World Trade Organization

YEAs — Young European Ambassador

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