

## Inter-Parliamentary Conference for the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the Common Security and Defence Policy

**Bucharest, 7 – 8 March 2019**

### Session I

#### **The Eastern Partnership – 10 years of European aspirations**

The Eastern Partnership is a specific Eastern dimension to the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). Through the ENP, the EU works with its southern and eastern neighbours to achieve the closest possible political association and the greatest possible degree of economic integration.

Launched in 2009 as a joint policy initiative, the Eastern Partnership (EaP) aims to deepen and strengthen relations between the European Union (EU), its Member States and its six Eastern neighbours: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine. During the Romanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, we will celebrate 10 years since the launch of the EaP. At the latest Eastern Partnership Summit, which took place in Brussels in November 2017, all partners agreed to deliver tangible benefits to the daily lives of their citizens by focusing on achieving 20 Deliverables for 2020.

These commitments of the EU, its Member States and the six Partner countries cover the four main priority areas of the Eastern Partnership:

1. Stronger Economy (economic development and market opportunities);
2. Stronger Governance (strengthening institutions and good governance);
3. Stronger Connectivity (connectivity, energy efficiency, environment and climate change);
4. Stronger Society (mobility and people-to-people contacts).

The six EaP countries have different level of ambition in their relations to the EU, which is why the EU offers in exchange for undertaking political and economic reforms, the following:

- New contractual relations;
- Deep and comprehensive free trade agreements;
- Steps toward visa liberalisation and a multilateral framework to discuss these issues.

In October 2018, a meeting with the Foreign Ministers of the 28 European Union Member States, the EU's six Eastern partners, as well as the Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, Johannes Hahn, chaired by the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission Federica Mogherini, took place in Luxembourg to take stock of the progress made under the 20 Deliverables for 2020 to bring concrete benefits for citizens.

The High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini said during that meeting: *"The Eastern Partnership is a key component of our foreign policy. Our Ministerial meeting today has been an important moment to review not only the different bilateral relations we have, but also the common work we are doing within the Eastern Partnership framework. We are delivering not only economic benefits, such as increased trade volumes between all six partner countries and the European Union, but also strengthening democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms. We need to keep pressing ahead with implementation if we are to continue to see good results."*

For Romania, the key objective is to promote an active implementation of the EaP. This means that the EU needs to secure sufficient funds in the next multi-annual financial framework for the EaP.

Romania shares a common border with Republic of Moldavia and Ukraine and these countries are representing the external border of EU and NATO. In this context, Romania and EU need to foster stability, security and prosperity in those countries. This can only be achieved through social, economic and political reforms that will help strengthening the democratic institutions. The EU through EaP should fully support the fight against corruption, improving the law enforcement, judicial reform and the reform of public finances in the six Partner countries.

In our view, the EU should evaluate each one of the six countries according to the level of their commitment and promote different tools and policies accordingly.

#### Questions for Discussion:

1. What is the future of the EaP given the political and social changes that are undergoing in the Eastern Partnership countries?
2. Is the project of the European Union attractive enough for the Eastern Partnership countries and their citizens?
3. Is there a need for a specific and well-defined budget to revive the Eastern Partnership?
4. Do the EU Member States have enough political will to grant to the Eastern Partnership countries the opportunity to obtain the full member status in a near future?