

## European Movement International

### Resolution on the European enlargement process and the reinvigoration of the Eastern Partnership

Over the past year, important developments have marked the European enlargement process as well as the Eastern Partnership. In the context of the enlargement process, the first intergovernmental conference with Serbia took place in January 2014; Kosovo concluded negotiations on the Stability and Association Agreement in May, and Albania was granted candidate status in June. However, most of the attention was directed towards the Eastern Partnership countries and Ukraine in particular. The refusal of former Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich to sign an Association Agreement with the European Union was not only a blow to the Eastern Partnership but also the start of a continuing crisis in Ukraine, resulting in a country mentally and physically divided, as well as increasing tensions between the EU and Russia. Eventually, Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia signed Association Agreements with the EU in June 2014.

The European Neighbourhood is central in achieving the European Union's key objectives to promote peace, spread its values and promote the well-being of its peoples. **To ensure that these objectives are achieved, the European Union must stay committed to its Enlargement policy and Eastern Partnership, and let itself be guided by its vision of a peaceful and stable European continent instead of by populist anti-enlargement sentiments.**

With this in mind, **the European Movement proposes the following:**

*With regard to the candidate countries and potential candidates*

- In light of the progress made over the past year; the continuation of negotiations with **Montenegro** and **Serbia** and the opening of negotiations with **Albania**, negotiations should focus on the issues that have proved to be most difficult in the past, in line with the European Commission 'fundamentals first' strategy: improving the rule of law, strengthening democratic institutions, guaranteeing fundamental rights, reforming the judiciary, and fighting organised crime, as well as good neighbourly relations and regional cooperation.
- In view of the persistent obstacles in the accession processes of **Turkey** and the **FYR of Macedonia**, symbolic issues that delay the accession process should be put into perspective with the overall objective of membership negotiations. Regarding the FYR of Macedonia, further reform could be threatened if the opening of negotiations is blocked much longer. In the case of Turkey, implementation of the 1970 Additional Protocol would clear the way for the opening of new chapters.
- Following the 'fundamentals first' strategy in negotiations with **Kosovo** and **Bosnia and Herzegovina** as has been established with the current candidate countries.
- In view of the impact that accession to the EU might have in the future with regards to the distribution of competences and powers among levels of government; we call on national authorities, the European Commission and the European Parliament to **take even more in**

**consideration local and regional government and civil society views in the negotiations process.**

*With regard to the Eastern Partnership*

- Preparing the institutional set-up and subsequently starting the provisional application of the Association Agreements and Deep and Comprehensive Trade Agreements signed in June 2014 with **Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova**, as foreseen in the Agreements, for the duration of the ratification period. After the completion of the ratification process, implementing the Agreements to establish sustainable and lasting reform.
- Developing a new agenda for the Eastern Partnership, as a follow up to the ratification and implementation of the Association Agreements and to assure the continuous engagement of the European Union with its Eastern Partners, including:
  - The **diversification of the Eastern Partnership strategies, policies and instruments** in accordance with the different needs, capacity and expectations of the different partners. The development of issue-specific regional policies to replace one all-encompassing regional policy.
  - In the case of Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova **an unequivocal commitment from the European Union to set a path towards, and set criteria for, enhanced partnership and deepening integration** after implementation of the Association Agreements by the Eastern partners.
  - In the case of Armenia and Belarus **a re-examination of the Eastern Partnership in view of the current incompatibility with the Eurasian Customs Union, and the divisive effect of European association for the region** increasing regional instability. With regard to Azerbaijan, cooperation in issue-specific regional policies, based on its particular needs and expectations, is proposed. In its current form of one all-encompassing policy, the Eastern Partnership does not offer viable tools and goals to sustain a durable partnership with Armenia, Belarus and Azerbaijan, or to uphold the reform efforts of Azerbaijan and Armenia.
- In order to develop and implement this innovative and diverse agenda on the Eastern Partnership, a change in the institutional and political set-up of the Eastern Partnership including:
  - **Engaging other regional actors** (Russia, Turkey) in the Eastern Partnership framework to avoid conflicting policy objectives and regional division. In particular, strive to overcome the zero-sum approach of Russia towards the Eastern Partnership and the idea of competition with the Eurasian Customs Union. Extend the Eastern Partnership policies to Russia where possible.
  - The **politicisation** of the Eastern Partnership, placing the Eastern Partnership under the sole authority of the HR/VP, and ensuring the full backing of, and involvement in, the Eastern Partnership of all Member States. The technocratic approach of the Eastern Partnership has led to unexpected geopolitical consequences. A fundamental debate on the future of the Eastern Partnership as well as the inclusion of Russia in the Eastern Partnership could overcome the division amongst Member States on the policy.

- The development of **new and flexible tools and instruments** that can react rapidly to fast-changing situations and take into account the different contexts of different countries. Conditionality does not work for all partners, and should be complemented with other instruments such as people-to-people contacts and support for civil society. In this regard, a more effective, organised, transparent and credible Civil Society Forum will offer a space for real discussion, exchange of ideas and substantive output. Both civil society and local and regional governments involvement will increase legitimacy and implementation of reforms and remove the perception of 'top-down', elite-led reform.

**The European Movement calls upon** the new European Commission, High Representative and Member States, to take up its proposals, to remain committed to European enlargement and to reinvigorate the Eastern Partnership in time for the 2015 Riga Summit. In addition, the European Movement urges the candidate and potential candidate countries to continue their reform efforts. The combined efforts of all actors will bring the key objective of the European Union, peace and stability on the European continent, a step closer.