



## EURONEST PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

### The Bureau

*- On the occasion of the Fifth Eastern Partnership Summit to be held on 24 November 2017 in Brussels, Belgium;*

- Addresses the following message to the Heads of State and Government, in accordance with Article 18 of the Rules of Procedure of the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly.

1. We, Members of the Bureau of the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly (Euronest PA), representing our Delegations from the European Parliament and from the Parliaments of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, reaffirm our strong commitment to the respect of all **values at the core of the Eastern Partnership**, namely democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, the rule of law and good governance, all of which need to be upheld and strengthened, in the interest of the citizens that we represent. We also recall the **principles** of differentiation, joint ownership and shared responsibility on which our Assembly was constituted in 2011, as well as our common history and our common European heritage which form the foundation of our vision of an indivisible Europe.
2. We commit to increasing our **parliamentary input** towards and **scrutiny** of the Eastern Partnership policy especially as regards the impact of the policy on citizens' lives; as the parliamentary dimension of the Eastern Partnership, we will work to contribute political orientation and solutions to existing challenges as well as to effectively scrutinise our governments and the European Commission / EEAS notably in terms of the negotiation and implementation of new agreements; as parliamentarians, we are accountable to our citizens, aware of our duties and responsibilities, together with the executives from our respective countries, to deliver on this message.
3. We call upon the Summit to set a **clear political vision for the future** of the Eastern Partnership, **based on the core values** of democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, the rule of law and good governance. As regards the **rule of law**, we recognise the high expectations of our citizens to ensure strong and efficient democratic institutions and see corruption, organised crime and abusive oligarchic control eradicated. Thus we recognise the achievements made so far and we commit ourselves to the full implementation of reforms related to the judiciary, the public administration and the banking and financial sector, as well as to the strengthening of civil society and media pluralism, both of which require particular attention.
4. We emphasise the importance of **democratic pluralism** and, notwithstanding the sovereign right of every state to choose its own electoral system, we encourage the implementation of all

**electoral reforms** that are in line with international standards and with the recommendations by the OSCE/ODHIR and Council of Europe's Venice Commission, and that are subject to a transparent process, broad consultation, including between ruling and opposition parties as well as with civil society.

5. We welcome the major **achievements** since the last Eastern Partnership Summit. The conclusion and entry into force of three Association Agreements (AA) including a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) with Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, as well as visa-free regimes with Georgia and Ukraine are key milestones which now need to be confirmed through full implementation. The conclusion of negotiations on a Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA) with Armenia and its upcoming signing announce the deepening of EU-Armenian relations and demonstrate that membership of the Eurasian Economic Union and participation in the EU's Neighbourhood Policy are not incompatible. The launching of negotiations on a new comprehensive agreement with Azerbaijan demonstrates that the Eastern Partnership is effective whilst maintaining the necessary emphasis on the policy's core values. We are convinced that the continuation of the "critical engagement" policy with Belarus is vital for the inclusiveness of the Eastern Partnership and look forward to welcoming Belarus to the Euronext PA as soon as the membership principles laid down in the Constituent Act of our Assembly are fulfilled. At the same time, we stress that EU support should be tailor-made to match the level of shared ambition regarding cooperation with each partner following the principles of both 'more for more' and 'less for less'.
6. We call on the Summit to provide **additional opportunities** to deepen the associated partners' relations with the EU, for those that have made substantial progress in implementing AA/DCFTA-related reforms, in line with the 'EaP+' model under consideration by the European Parliament, as well as to establish a trust fund for Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova which would focus on private and public investments in social and economic infrastructure. These opportunities should include immediate measures such as additional unilateral tariff preferences, the abolition of roaming tariffs between the partners and the EU and the development of high-capacity broadband. Moreover, longer-term objectives should also be considered such as joining the customs union, the energy union and the digital union, association to the Schengen area, integration into EU transport networks, industrial partnerships, increased participation in other EU programmes and agencies and further cooperation in the field of the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP).
7. We acknowledge the **European aspirations** of some of the partner countries and recognise that such prospects will depend on significant reforms being implemented as, pursuant to Article 49 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU), any European state may apply to become a member of the European Union, provided it adheres to the Copenhagen criteria and in particular the core values of democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, the rule of law and good governance.
8. We stress once more that the Eastern Partnership should deliver **tangible results for citizens** in all partner countries notably in terms of education, employment, mobility opportunities and connectivity infrastructure. In this regard, we call on the EU to provide the necessary support, including through the 'Eastern Partnership – focusing on key priorities and deliverables, 20 deliverables for 2020' as an important guide to the future work of the EU and the six partner countries. In this regard, we call on the EU to provide this necessary support through a new Association Instrument to better reflect the ambitions of the Association Agreements. We also call on the EU to ensure that the use of all funds is strictly scrutinised in order to avoid

any misuse and that they are given the necessary visibility. We also underline the necessity to strengthen civil society in the partner countries and its role within the Eastern Partnership by uncompromisingly opposing all legislation that seeks to curtail its legitimate activities and by encouraging its deeper involvement in public life.

9. As regards **mobility**, we call on the EU to support Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine in the continued implementation of the Visa Liberalisation Action Plans to order to improve people-to-people contacts, notably through close cooperation in the areas of police and customs to safeguard against security threats, criminality and overstays. We also call for the launching of visa liberalisation dialogues with Armenia, Azerbaijan as well as with Belarus, should it achieve the required significant progress in the area of fundamental values.
10. We call on the Summit to provide a renewed impetus on boosting **sustainable economic growth**, trade and investment opportunities, including intra-regional opportunities, with a particular focus on small and medium enterprises (SMEs). We stress in particular the need for structural reforms, notably those allowing for improved competitiveness and a more favourable business environment. We also call for adequate access to sources of financing, notably for SMEs and the development of the necessary transport and connectivity infrastructure, including through an ambitious investment plan for the TEN-T core network.
11. We remain deeply concerned that the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the EU's Eastern partners remain undermined by **unresolved conflicts**, most of which were initiated and are still actively sustained by the Russian Federation in contradiction with its international commitments to uphold the international legal order, notably as a permanent member of the UN Security Council. We maintain that it is the partners' sovereign right to identify their own foreign policy priorities and choose the level of ambition for their relations with the EU.
12. We therefore call on the Summit to also address security threats and to find viable solutions to unresolved conflicts in the Eastern Partnership region, in accordance with the fundamental principles of international law and with the support of current - and if necessary additional - EU-led mediation and peacekeeping efforts. In particular, we call for the full and genuine implementation of the Minsk arrangements in **Eastern Ukraine** and of the 1999 Istanbul OSCE decision as regards the Republic of Moldova, for tangible results in the Geneva International Discussions and a full implementation by Russia of the 12 August 2008 Ceasefire Agreement in Georgia's occupied territories of **Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia**, as well as for a breakthrough in the 5+2 negotiations on **Transnistria**. We further adhere to the EU's non-recognition policy of the illegal annexation of the **Crimean Peninsula**. Finally, we call for an immediate end to military hostilities between Armenian and Azerbaijani forces which already claimed too many lives and call on both sides, in the interest of all their citizens, to solve the **Nagorno-Karabakh** conflict which does not have a military solution, through a re-launch of substantive negotiations in good faith and genuine confidence-building measures and dialogue. We reaffirm our full support to the mediation efforts by the co-chairs of the Minsk Group, including at the level of Presidents, based on the 2009 OSCE Basic Principles, in line with the Helsinki Final Act.
13. We emphasise the importance to improve **energy** independence and efficiency, particularly through a diversification of energy sources, including renewable energy and a reduction of our dependence on fossil fuels. We call on the Summit to commit to specific investments in that regard and to ensure that future energy projects do not undermine regional energy security and,

for nuclear power plants, that these fully respect international nuclear safety and environmental protection agreements and obligations.

14. We call on the Summit to attach particular importance to improving **communication** of the Eastern Partnership, notably as regards the goals of the policy and its concrete benefits for citizens and to reflect on ways to more effectively target disinformation and fake news, in all languages of the partner countries.
15. We note that the **Eastern Partnership has proven instrumental** in uniting our countries in a joint expression of shared values and a unique mechanism for pursuing our common goals of promoting stability, supporting democratic reforms, enhancing people-to-people contacts and boosting trade as well as delivering concrete benefits for our peoples. We **must continue** to promote the Eastern Partnership as a necessary policy whilst voicing ambitious expectations for the future, in order to ensure it delivers tangible results for our citizens and helps all partners to uphold our common values and ensure growth and prosperity.