

Local Democracy in the context of a renewed geopolitical framework in the Eastern Partnership Countries

9th June 2023 in Brussels

Roundtable discussion, 11:00 - 12:30

Maison Hap, Maison Hap 508-510 Chaussée de Wavre, 1040 Etterbeek Room
Orangerie and Parc of Maison Hap

Concept Note

Background

Recent years have brought several new challenges for the Eastern Partnership region related to migration, defence and security, enlargement and international threats from Russia. Little is left of the original goals of the EaP, since the most committed partners have been made member candidates or, in the case of Georgia, offered a clear perspective on achieving candidate status. This indicates the need for a new direction for the EU's enlargement policy in its eastern neighbourhood.

The invasion of Ukraine has caused a huge change in the EU leaders' approach to Eastern Europe, from gradual political integration and democratisation to making rapid, radical political decisions. As a result, the EU has taken unique steps in terms of security, defence and membership enlargement. These moves offer Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia an opportunity to put all the necessary reforms required by the accession process in place while at the same time sharing their experience and motivating the other EaP countries to follow a pro-western path and bring people closer to European values.

At the beginning of February, the European Commission published an analytical report on the level of preparedness of each trio member's legislation in relation to the 33 chapters of the EU acquis. In spring, the Commission started to assess the level of implementation of EU recommendations, while in the autumn the first reports under the EU enlargement package will be published. It is at this time that the decisions will be made on when and under what conditions accession negotiations will be opened with Moldova and Ukraine, and whether to offer Georgia candidate status. For Georgia this will be the most crucial moment in proving its pro-European orientation, despite the signals sent in the recent past and the visible differences between the will of the majority of the population and that of the political establishment.

Another important aspect is cooperation between the trio. This cooperation has mainly been at the bilateral level (between EU and each eastern neighbour). All three countries have different levels of advancement in different fields, which means that there are significant mutual learning

opportunities. **In this context, the respective panel will highlight the importance of local democracy actions in the European Integration process.**

Event

Capitalising on Brussels' increased interest nowadays regarding its eastern neighbours, especially the countries with EU-candidate status, this panel is aiming to showcase the importance of local democracy in the EU-integration processes. The panel discussion, alongside LDA representatives, will have as speakers representatives of EU institutions, EU municipalities that have been engaged for a long time in supporting their eastern counterparts and other civil society experts and actors.

This event is a follow up of a similar exercise held in November 2022 in Wroclaw and aims to provide an update on the state of the play of the 3 countries status, discussing the implications for the region and underlining the crucial importance of good governance and multi-stakeholders approach in addressing the challenges ahead.

Agenda

9th June 2023 in Brussels

Roundtable discussion, 11:00 - 12:30

Moderator: Alexandru Coica, Head of Eastern Partnership Unit in ALDA

- European Institutions

H.E. Dirk Schüebel, EU Special Envoy for EaP

TBC – Member of the European Parliament, (EuroNest member)

Antonella Valmorbida, Secretary General, ALDA

Civil society from Eastern Partnership countries

- Tania Marocchi – Policy and Advocacy Manager, Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum
- Anzhelika Pylypenko - head of the Local Democracy Agency Dnipropetrovsk (Ukraine)
- Nicolae Hristov, head of the Local Democracy Agency Moldova
- Nino Khukhua, head of the Local Democracy Agency Georgia

Working language: English