



**easternpartnership**  
project

# CONTENT PACKAGE

**The Eastern Partnership Programme (EaP)** is the European Union's programme that is regarded as an Eastern dimension of the European Neighbourhood Policy.

It is an EU framework for strengthening relations with countries of Eastern Europe and South Caucasus:

**Armenia**  
**Azerbaijan**  
**Belarus**  
**Georgia**  
**Moldova**  
**Ukraine**



EaP aims at bringing closer partner countries to European standards by grounding the cooperation on values of democracy, rule of law, human rights, basic freedoms, market economy, sustainable development and good governance. The EU intends to achieve this objective by encouraging and supporting political and socio-economical reforms in the target region.

Remarkably, the EaP is not a strategy of the enlargement. The EU offers Association Agreements along with Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements and visa liberalisation process. Signing Association Agreement stands for privileged political and economical mutual relations, adoption of the EU standards and partially EU law and is a sign that a given state chose pro-European direction in its foreign policy.

The programme was created in 2009 on the initiative of Poland and Sweden represented by their Foreign Ministers. Since then the programme has been challenged by the changing geopolitical situation, as well as managed to achieve some significant results.

On one hand, Belarus and Azerbaijan remain undemocratic regimes that violate human rights and civic freedoms, Armenia has withdrawn from pro-European reforms and most notably Ukraine underwent Revolution of Dignity, lost of its Crimean territory and now faces separatist movements in the Eastern and Southern parts of the country. On the other hand, Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia signed Association Agreements and Moldova became a first country to enter visa-free regime.

The cooperation within is conducted with each country individually on the bilateral level as well as collectively on the multilateral level. The second dimension is based on work of four thematic platforms

- ★ Democracy, good governance and stability;
- ★ Economic integration and convergence with EU policies;
- ★ Energy security;
- ★ Contacts between people

Noticeably, EaP as part of the EU external policy is directed not only to governments but for the first time it addresses the Eastern European society. Civil society was recognised by EU officials as a crucial element of implementation of reforms in the EaP countries. This fact creates a framework that enables AEGEE European Students' Forum to launch its own initiative of this kind and actively contribute in the youth area.





## The AEGEE Eastern Partnership Project

is the continuation of the successful first phase of the project of that name.

Working in the same direction as the European Union (within the framework of its Eastern Partnership Programme) gives a possibility to coordinate the project's activities with a broader, political initiative. Via cooperation with our Network, governments and non-governmental organisations we believe we can influence the increase of **youth power** in target societies and bring positive changes in establishing a strong civil society sector.

The project's values are based on belief that this initiative is a core element of AEGEE's mission of **bridging Europe**. In order to make links between the Eastern and the Western part of our continent we decided to act with the objectives crucial to the **development of civil society** in Eastern European and South Caucasus.

Given this priority, the team chose to work on the following aims and objectives:

### I. To promote the idea of active citizenship and youth participation in the Eastern Partnership program region.

- To advocate to stakeholders and governments for the recognition of the role that youth participation has in shaping a democratic society.

- To empower youth by providing it with knowledge and tools regarding citizens' rights and duties.

### II. To build mutual understanding and trust between people from the Eastern Partnership countries and the rest of Europe.

- To strengthen partnerships and to share practices with youth organizations from the Eastern Partnership and other European countries.

- To promote the respect of human rights as crucial focus area in the consensus-building processes.

- To inform and to create an opportunity for discussion.

## Civil Society

„An area of civic **freedom** which is characterised by **active participation** in public life of society and state that is based on **rights** given to all citizens“.

Civil society is separate from government and acts through **organisations of citizens** and its initiatives. Its basic element is an individual with its rights. Civil society indicates **democratic state**, because only democratic state can guarantee rule of law and all the basic freedoms. Relations between people are based on mutual **trust and solidarity**, which helps to thrive **local communities** and encourages **entrepreneurship**.

**Poor state of civil society** in EaP countries in one of the biggest problems that characterize the region. Notably, all the societies where used to a part of the Soviet Union and that hugely influenced them. The level of their **civic development is very low** comparing to the western European societies.

Mostly, society of the EaP region is **passive and disempowered**. People expect government to secure them economically as it was in the past so they don't take up their own initiatives, especially in the area of entrepreneurship and small business. Due to relatively short period of independence political culture hasn't developed yet among the people. There is growing NGO sector nevertheless. However, active citizens and organizations often face **administrative barriers** and **lack of governmental support**.

Despite many common features, **the situation in each country differs**. The most difficult circumstances are in **Belarus**. Their **opposition is largely repressed** and anti-regime activists risk political imprisoning. On the other hand, in **Ukraine** we have witnessed **civil society awakening** after happenings at Maydan. People took responsibility for their country in their hands, fought for values they believe in and learnt how to organise an efficient community.



*Territory: 29.743 km<sup>2</sup>  
Population: 3.200.000  
Capital: Yerevan*

*President  
Serzh Sargsyan*

### *EU progress*

*In mid July 2013 Armenia and the EU agreed to sign the Association Agreement. However in September 2013 Armenian political leadership announced wish to join the Russian-led Eurasian Customs Union, so that the mentioned agreements with the EU are not likely to be signed in the foreseeable future. Nevertheless, visa facilitation agreement has been agreed and came into force in January 2014. It is planned that Armenia and the EU will launch new talks over the renewed framework of cooperation on the political level and to establish new legal framework for the future cooperation.*

The **Armenian** nation has ancient roots (in the 1st century B.C. Armenia was the most powerful state in Asia Minor). Nevertheless, for most of its history Armenia was a part of greater empires. Despite the fact, the Armenians managed to preserve their own cultural and religious identity.

In the turmoil period of the Soviet history, Armenia declared its independence on 21 September 1991 as a result of nationwide referendum. Meanwhile in the first years of independence (1991 - 1994) the country was involved in the military conflict with neighboring Azerbaijan over the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh (for more information see: special territory section). Today, Armenia also has closed borders with its western neighbour, Turkey, which unilaterally closed the Armenian-Turkish border back in 1993. The main matter in the tough relations between the sides is Turkey's denial of the Armenian Genocide in 1915 in the Ottoman Empire.



# ARMENIA

## Interesting Facts

- ★ The Armenian language is related to most of the European languages (belongs to Indo-European family), but it has its own alphabet.
- ★ In the world there is an estimated 7 000 000 Armenians living in diaspora, which means 2/3 of ethnic Armenians live outside the country (e.g.USA, Middle East, Western Europe, Russia, Ukraine).
- ★ Armenia is the oldest country that embraced Christianity. King Tiridates III announced it as a state religion in 301 A.D.
- ★ In 1895 and 1915 under the rule of the Ottoman Empire there was genocide of ethnic Armenians in the present day Eastern Anatolia region of Turkey. Up to 1.5 million people were killed. Another millions faced forced labour and deportation from the homeland. The government of Turkey denies this act to be recognised as genocide, though the genocide was recognized by another 18 states in the world.





Azerbaijan is a country rich in natural resources: mainly oil (70% of the whole country's production) and gas. This abundance has become a main engine of country's rapid economic development and modernisation as well as strategic importance for the regions' politics.

However, the country's democratic changes cannot be further from its rapid economic development. The ruling Aliyev family is accused of widespread authoritarianism. Freedom of press is questionable and the possibilities of civil society and opposition parties are very limited. There are cases of political imprisonment.

# AZERBAIJAN

## Interesting Facts

★ Azerbaijan is one of the biggest oil and gas producers in Europe, which has a long oil industry history as far back as the 19th century when the production first started. As the 21st biggest oil producer in the world (third in Europe) Azerbaijan shares more than 1% of the world's production of.

★ Azerbaijani is a Turkic nation, of which majority is Shia muslims. Azerbaijani is a Turkic language similar to Turkish and many central-Asian languages. The language is written with Latin letters, but during Soviet times a version with cyrillic script was adopted. Earlier (and today in Iran) the Perso-Arabic script was used.

★ The majority of ethnic Azerbaijani people live in Iran (12 million ethnic Azerbaijani live there compared to around 7 million in Azerbaijan). another 18 states in the world.

## Special territory

Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic-landlocked enclave of Azerbaijan

Nagorno-Karabakh Republic - disputable territory lying within borders of Azerbaijan, but inhabited largely by ethnic Armenians. Azerbaijani side considers Nagorno-Karabakh and it surrounding territories, controlled also by the local Armenians, as an integral part of their state. Local Armenian side, however, claim their rights to the area. After failed attempts to make the region legally a part of Armenian state in 1980s, bloody conflict between the two sides followed as a result of the collapse of the Soviet Union. The initial ceasefire was established in May 1994, but so far the negotiation process, with the support of the OSCE Minsk Group, has not achieved a final solution. The relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan remain very tense and the situation in the region is unstable

*Territory: 86.600 km<sup>2</sup>  
Population: 9.686.210  
Capital: Baki*

### *President*

*Ilham Aliyev (2003)*

*He succeeded his father Heydar Aliyev. Any of the elections held met international democratic standards. Ilham Aliyev is serving second cadence now and is likely to prolong his rule as the law was passed that allows to candidate for the office of president for unlimited terms.*

### *EU progress*

*Apart from the cooperation in some fields (mostly energy sector) there is no plan for signing an Association Agreement. From the EU's side more democratic progress and especially improvements in the field of human rights is required for further cooperation, as it is claimed by the EU officially, but real pressure has not appeared yet. The visa facilitation agreement was signed in 2013 at the Summit in Vilnius.*





*Territory: 69.700 km<sup>2</sup>  
Population: 4.935.880  
Capital: Tbilisi*

*President  
Giorgi Margvelashvili (2013)*

*EU progress  
Georgia signed the Association Agreement in June 2014 and ratified it respectively in July 2014.*

Georgia is a state in the South Caucasus with a remarkably long and rich history, and distinguished cultural heritage. Georgia has stepped up on the way of modern reforms after the Rose Revolution in 2003 - social unrest that led to the resignation of president Eduard Shevardnadze, who was in office for more than ten years, and resulted in Mikheil Saakashvili coming to power. Since this political turn, the Caucasian country is committed to European integration and has undergone many changes in the last decades. Nowadays the biggest goal of Georgian foreign policy is the membership in the EU and NATO.

### Special territories

South Ossetia and Abkhazia - two breakaway regions on territory of Georgia with formal status of autonomic republics inhabited by ethnic Abkhazians and Ossetians. Georgian authorities lost control over those territories after their one-sided declaration of independence in respectively 1991 and 1992. As a result of five-days war between Georgia and Russian Federation, that was most focused around South Ossetia and Abkhazia, Moscow authorities officially recognised them as independent states. Most of international community (excluding Nicaragua, Venezuela, Nauru and Tuvalu) does not recognise statehood of those territories.



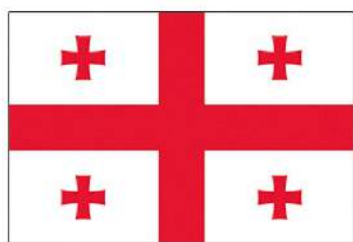
# GEORGIA

### Interesting Facts

★ Georgian language is the member of the South Caucasian language family, which consist of only 4 languages spoken in the Caucasian region. There are ancient Georgian written scripts that date back to the 5th AD.

★ Sakartvelo is used as a self-designation by Georgians to name their country.

★ Although Tbilisi is the capital city of Georgia, the national parliament is situated in Kutaisi (second-largest city in the country) and the Constitutional Court is located in Batumi.





Ukraine is a country with a rich, long and complex history. Its geopolitical location has always bore many implications. Currently situated between the EU and Russian Federation, the Ukrainian state became internally divided into a pro-European West and a pro-Russian East.

The most crucial event that determined Ukraine's future and its current situation was the so-called Revolution of Dignity – mass protests known as “Euromaidan” that were caused by a decision to withdraw from signing the Association Agreement with the EU, in November 2013, by then president Viktor Yanukovich and deep indignation at his corrupt rules and oligarch-based system of governance. The Revolution resulted in Yanukovich fleeing the country, the opposition parties forming a new government and calling for new presidential elections. The events also have had severe implications for the situation in the east of the country and relations with Russia. The Crimean peninsula has been annexed and there has been warfare against separatists supported by Russia in the region of Donbas.

Currently, Ukraine is faced with the challenge of improving its bad economic state and conducting a series of crucial reforms. However, with newly elected state authorities and a transformed civil society, the country has a chance to make sustainable changes.

### Special territories

Autonomous Republic of Crimea – an autonomous territory formerly belonging to Ukraine. It was annexed by Russian Federation along with the city of Sevastopol on March 21st 2014 after its authorities organized an illegal referendum and announced Crimean independence. The international community refused to recognise this act. Ukraine considers Crimea as occupied territory.

Donetsk and Luhansk – two oblasts (administrative areas) in the Eastern Ukraine. Pro-Russian separatist announced independence from Kiev authorities and called the territories respectively Donetsk (April 7th 2014) and Luhansk People's Republics (April 27th 2014) after illegal referenda. Those self-claimed republics have not been recognised by any foreign country. Ukrainian government has been conducting anti-terrorists operations in order to reclaim control over those territories.

### Interesting Facts

★ Orange revolution - a revolution that preceded the happenings of Maydan in 2013/2014. The term stands for the mass Ukrainian protests that took place from November 2004 to January 2005 in the aftermath of presidential elections. People stood up against electoral fraud of Viktor Yanukovich, which led to the revote and victory of Viktor Yushchenko. The revolution was named after the colour of the Yushchenko's campaign that became a symbol of a wide support for him as a candidate who represented democratic values.

★ Maidan – a word that originates from Arabic and Turkish languages and initially was synonymous with the word „square” and stood for a form of direct democracy – the Cossack council. The institution that existed in 17th century can be regarded as a prototype for the Maidan as a form of political expression that is, specifically, Ukrainian type of resistance against the government.

*Territory: 603.628 km<sup>2</sup>  
Population: 44.291.413  
Capital: Kyiv*

*President  
Petro Poroshenko (2014)*

*EU progress  
Association Agreement signed in  
June 2014*

# UKRAINE





*Territory: 33.846 km<sup>2</sup>  
Population: 3.559.500  
Capital: Chişinău*

*President  
Nicolae Timofti (2012)*

*EU progress  
Association Agreement signed in  
June 2014 and ratified in July  
2014; entered visa-free regime in  
April 2014*

**Moldova** is one of the least known European countries. Due to various changes of borders and territorial belonging the country combines both Romanian heritage and Russian influences, as well as the local heritage.

The country made the biggest progress in term of commitment to European integration from all of the six EaP countries and is considered to be the frontrunner of the EaP programme. Despite the times of political instability (no president for 3 years, 2009-12) and considerable period of the communists party rule (2001-2009), under a new political leadership (Alliance for European Integration and then Pro-European Coalition) Moldova managed to become an EaP leader of reforms and innovations. However, it still remains the poorest country in Europe (2 229 US\$ GDP per capita). The living standard of the society is very low.

# MOLDOVA



## Special territories

★ Gagauzia – an autonomous region located in the southern Moldova (occupies 5% of its territory). It gained its status in 1994. The majority of its population consists of Gagauz people – an ethnic group of Turkic origin, speaking Gagauz language, and practicing Orthodox Christianity.

★ Transnistria – a break-away republic that announced its independence in 1990. It is not recognised by any country in the world. Its territory is basically a strip of land 200km long and 15 km wide with its capital in Tiraspol. Transnistria remains under extremely strong Russian influence and it is economically fully dependent on Russia. Also Russian troops still remain in the territory. Internationally, Transnistria is regarded as an area of a frozen conflict.

## Interesting Facts

★ The official language in Moldova is Romanian. Moldovan (name created under communist influence) is considered as a Romanian dialect instead. It remains in use as an official language only in Transnistria, written in Cyrillic alphabet.

★ Moldova has a long history of winemaking, going back 5,000 years. Almost half of the population is involved in the process of making wine and viticulture. The Milestii Mici has the world's largest wine cellars with 1.5 million bottles. Much of the wine is exported, making Moldova the 7th largest wine exporter worldwide.

★ Moldova was the only country among the former Soviet States, where Communist party was in power after the collapse of the Soviet Union. It came to power after parliamentary elections in 2011 and lost their position as a result of civic unrest that led to an early elections.





**Belarus** is often called the last dictatorship in Europe. Lukashenko's rule strongly influences the situation in the country. The president has the highest authority and ultimate power. Currently, there is no opposition in the parliament nor is there any independent judiciary. The nationwide elections are repeatedly forged. Independent politicians, activists and journalists face repressions and struggle with many obstacles posed by the authorities aimed at limiting their activity. After a protest that followed presidential elections in December 2010, many opposition leaders were prosecuted and sentenced for long imprisonment. Media freedom is also harshly restricted. The state has monopoly over most of TV channels which are the main source of information. Reporter Without Borders ranked Belarus 157th out of 179 countries in World Press Freedom Index (2014).

Belarus remains mostly politically and economically isolated on the international scene and dependent on the Russian Federation. Belarus is a member of Commonwealth of Independent States, the Customs Union and Eurasian Economic Union, to be officially launched in January 2015.

*Territory: 207. 595 km<sup>2</sup>*

*Population: 9. 468. 154*

*Capital: Minsk*

*President*

*Aleksandr Lukashenko (1994)*

*EU progress*

*Belarus participates only in multilateral level of the EaP (no bilateral cooperation), mutual relations are very difficult due to violations of democracy and human rights that made the EU impose sanctions against Belarus.*



# BELARUS



## Interesting Facts

- ★ Belarus is the only country in Europe that has legalised death penalty, so it is the only European state that is not a member of Council of Europe.
- ★ Only up to 30% of Belarusians speak Belarusian language. The dominant language remains Russian.
- ★ Belarusian opposition rejects official state symbols and advocates for return of white and red flag and "Pahonia" emblem of first independent Belarusian state in 1918 and then in 1991.



Project Manager  
**Adrian Browarczyk** - [adrian.browarczyk@aegee.org](mailto:adrian.browarczyk@aegee.org)

Content Manager  
**Marta Wnuk** - [marta.wnuk@aegee.poznan.pl](mailto:marta.wnuk@aegee.poznan.pl)

Content Manager  
**Jana Brovdij** - [yanabrovdiy@hotmail.com](mailto:yanabrovdiy@hotmail.com)

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