

AEGEE Eastern Partnership Youth Convention

Kraków 2015

We, the European youth from both the EU Member States and the Eastern Partnership countries, support the EU's decision to rethink its policy towards the Eastern Partnership countries in response to the developments in the region. We were closely following the events of the Eastern Partnership Summit in Riga (21-22 May 2015), hoping for a decisive confirmation of the EU's intention to develop a consistent policy towards the Eastern Partnership. In spite of our support for some of the summit's provisions, such as developing "differentiated bilateral relations between the EU and each of its partners", the general outcome of the summit did not meet our expectations and, therefore, we feel responsible to voice the youth vision of the Eastern Partnership. We would like to present a list of recommendations that we hope will influence the change in the policy. We recommend the following:

General recommendations

1. To provide Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova with a clear EU membership perspective.
2. To constitute a unit, shaped according to the already existing Support Group for Ukraine, inside the European Commission, that will regularly advise on reforms necessary to fulfil requirements of the Association Agreement.
3. To introduce a year of joint cultural initiatives that aim at educating societies from both the EU and the Eastern Partnership which would be organised on a rotating basis.
4. To grant the visa free-regime to Ukraine and Georgia as soon as the required conditions are met.

Support for democracy and the rule of law

1. To increase transparency of the spending process of the EU's financial assistance programs by the Eastern Partnership countries via consistent supervision, monitoring and evaluation.
2. To encourage and assist the governments of partner countries to introduce education courses about the merits of democracy, the rule of law and anti-corruption practices in curricula of schools.

Trade and economic relations

1. To reinforce standardisation process within the programme countries in order to increase competitiveness of their economies in the EU common market.
2. To provide assistance in building trade partnerships between all the program countries by means of economic diplomacy.
3. To support young entrepreneurs by providing and facilitating business experts exchange programs, mentoring programs and traineeships.
4. To increase funding for exchange programs dedicated to small business owners in order to prepare the beneficiaries to compete within the EU common market thanks to experience and knowledge obtained.
5. To introduce temporary work permits for young workers from the Eastern Partnership countries in order to boost their competitiveness and enhance experience sharing.

Civil Society

1. To increase the level of participation of young people in the public sphere by encouraging and supporting youth-led NGOs and other initiatives run by young people in the Eastern Partnership countries.
2. To provide support for the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum by increasing financial assistance for projects related to its activity.
3. To create environment for debate and learning (e.g. round tables, exchange projects, simulations) for youth from the partner countries and the breakaway regions of these countries (Moldova-Transnistria, Ukraine-Donbass-Crimea, Georgia-South Ossetia-Abkhazia, Armenia-Nagorno Karabakh-Azerbaijan).

Youth Mobility

1. To increase the amount of exchange programs dedicated to high school students.
2. To expand already existing educational and mobility programs (such as Erasmus+) in order to reach equal participation of young people representing partner countries, reassuring the EU's continuous support of such programs.

3. To facilitate mobility of young people by providing them, if necessary, with visas; and by providing those who want to participate in exchanges, conferences and enjoy learning opportunities in the EU with financial and procedural assistance.

We, the youth of the Eastern Partnership countries and the EU member states, strongly believe that these recommendations will be taken into consideration by those who make decisions on reshaping the Eastern Partnership initiative. We feel responsible for our neighbourhood as we care about the future of Europe and express our will to be involved in shaping together better prospects for youth living in our common European home.

Best Regards,

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