EaPies

Welcome to March edition of EaP Newsletter! You'll find valuable news related to each EaP countries and their sources below when more information is needed.

We continue as each month, we post a word or a phrase to increase your knowledge from the EaP region. This month's word is 'Europe'. See How Europe is shaped and sounded in EaP region!

Armenia (Հայաստան - Hayastan): Եվրոպա - Yevropa
Azerbaijan (Azərbaycan): Avropa
Belarus (Беларусь - Bielarus): Еўropa - Іёўropa
Georgia (საქართველო - Sakartvelo): ევროპის - Evropis
Ukraine (Україна - Ukrayina): Європа - Yevropa
Moldova:

Armenia

Euronest(European Union (EU) + Eastern Partnership Countries) parliamentary assembly in session in Yerevan

The Fourth Plenary Session of the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly took place in Yerevan between 17th and 18th March in Armenia’s National Assembly.

Euronest (European Union (EU) + Eastern Partnership Countries) is a parliamentary forum to promote political association and further economic integration between the European Union and the Eastern European Partners. The Euronest Parliamentary Assembly consists of the European Parliament delegation and delegations from the Eastern European Partners (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine).

The government of Armenia had been in negotiation with the European Union for almost three years to sign the Association Agreement, however, in September 2013, President Sargsyan unexpectedly decided that the country would instead join the Russian-led Customs Union following a trip to Moscow.

On January 2, 2015, Armenia became an official member-state of the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU), which includes the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan and Belarus with Kyrgyzstan expected to join in May.

On March 17, Armenia’s President Serzh Sargsyan addressed the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly. He stressed the importance of Armenia’s relationship with the European Union in a variety of sectors and said that although Armenia has joined the EEU, he felt it was possible to accommodate both foreign policy tracks.

Click here for more information!

Victoria Horiachko

Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan becomes EQAR member

Support for youth volunteering

In April, AEGEE-Chişinău will host the second
Azerbaijan has been elected a member of the General Assembly of the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) at the organization’s meeting in Riga, Latvia. EQAR president Andreas Orphanides hailed Azerbaijan’s rapid development and educational reforms conducted in the country. He also touched upon the first European Games to be held in Baku, describing it as a “manifestation of Azerbaijan’s increasing influence”.

Click [here](#) for more information!

Cracking Art Group and Semeni Int’l Art exhibition open at Heydar Aliyev Center

Artworks by Europe’s famous Cracking Art Group and Semeni International Art Exhibition have opened at the Heydar Aliyev Center. Vice-president of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation Leyla Aliyeva attended the opening of the exhibition. Cracking Art Group was established by six European painters Renzo Nucara, Marco Veronese, Ricco, French Alex Angi, Belgian Carlo Rizzetti and William Sweetlove in 1993. This movement is aimed at changing people’s imagination about the modern art and creating novelties in art by implementing innovative methods in social and environmental directions.

Check the news for more information!  

Cracking Art Group and Semeni Int'l Art exhibition open at Heydar Aliyev Center

Belarus

High-ranking EU official meets with Belarusian civil society activists

Helga Schmid, deputy secretary general at the European External Action Service, met with representatives of Belarus’ civil society in Minsk on Tuesday.

The meeting lasted only about 20 minutes, as Ms. Schmid’s talks with Belarusian Foreign Minister Uladzimir Makey and then Alyaksandr Lukashenka had taken longer than planned, Valyantsin Stefanovich, deputy chairman of the Vyasna Human Rights Center, told BelaPAN.

Ms. Schmid was accompanied by Gunnar Wiegand, director for Russia, Eastern Partnership, Central Asia, Regional Cooperation and the OSCE at the European External Action Service, and Maira Mora, head of the European Union’s Delegation to Belarus.

The meeting also featured representatives of the Belarusian Helsinki Committee, the Vyasna Human Rights Center, the Belarusian Institute for Strategic Studies, International Consortium EuroBelarus, a prisoner rights group called Platform Innovation, the Belarusian Association of Journalists, and the Assembly of Pro-Democratic Non-Governmental Organizations.

In her opening remarks, Ms. Schmid said that she had met with a number of Belarusian government officials. The subjects under discussion reportedly included the crisis in Ukraine, relations between the EU and Belarus and the human rights situation in Belarus.

More info needed, click [here](#).

Orkhan Babayev

Georgia

Summer University - Unlock Your Full Potential

Aegee-Tbilisi organizes a travelling summer university from the 11th until the 25th of July. You will meet in Tbilisi, the capital of Georgia and from there you will travel to Kazbegi, a small town of north-eastern Georgia. Afterwards you will visit Mestia, a highland small town in the northwest, and Batumi, a seaside city on the coast of the Black Sea. The trip will end in Uplistsikhe, one of the oldest urban settlements in Georgia.

During your adventure you will see breath-taking sights and the wild nature, you will experience an exotic culture, you will eat delicious food and many more great things!

Check [here](#) for more info about the SU!

Ferran H. Casamitjana
Evaluating EU Policies in South Caucasus

The European Commission has launched a consultation to review its European Neighbourhood Policy, including its policy towards the Eastern Partnership countries. The aim is to review the principles on which the policy is based as well as its scope and how its instruments should be used.

The article focuses on the three South Caucasus countries Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia.

The main accomplishment has been the conclusion of the Association Agreement including the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas.

Although the EU wants the Caucasus to be stable and democratic, it’s influence is quite little since a much more substantial engagement on security challenges and a clear determination for these countries is missing.

Therefore the EU could support reforming the security sector of those countries for instance the police or border guards or the judicial system. Moreover the link between the societies of the EU and the South Caucasus should be increased by a broader societal integration.

Click here for more information!

EU: Moscow’s Treaty with Tskhinvali ‘Goes Against Efforts to Strengthen Stability’

On the 18th of March Russia and Georgia’s breakaway region South Ossetia signed a treaty on alliance and integration (more about the treaty: http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=28143). On the same day the 31st round of the Geneva International Discussions took place, which involve delegates from Georgia, Russia, the United States, Tskhinvali and Sokhumi and which are chaired by envoys of the EU, UN and OSCE. The talks were launched after the war in 2008 and involve the discussion of security and humanitarian issues.

EU foreign policy chief, Federica Mogherini, stated that “like previous agreements signed between the Russian Federation and the two Georgian breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, this ‘treaty’ clearly violates Georgia’s sovereignty and territorial integrity, principles of international law and the international commitments taken by the Russian Federation and has no legal standing”. Tbilisi condemned the treaty as an actual annexation of the occupied region of South Ossetia.

Click for more information!  

Theresa Leppert

Ukraine

U.S. paratroopers to train 900 Ukrainian soldiers starting April 20

Interior Minister Arsen Avakov has announced American paratroopers will train some 900 Ukrainian servicemen in a series of training sessions that will kick off on April 20. The training will take place at Yavoriv military base in Lviv Oblast in western Ukraine.

Ukrainian troops will be trained by the 173rd Airborne brigade, a military unit that is part of U.S. European troops and is based in Italy. Also known as Sky Soldiers, the brigade has taken part in many operations in Afghanistan and Iraq in recent years, according to its
Cabinet and the National Guard have “finished all preparatory work” for the three waves of trainings each lasting eight weeks. Some 300 Ukrainian soldiers will be taking part in each of the waves, and they will be followed by joint war games. Azov, Kulchytsky, Jaguar, and Omega Battalions will be taking part in these exercises, as well as “other units from Kyiv, Kharkiv, Zaporizhya, Odesa, Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk and Vinnytsia.”

The U.S. pledged $200 million worth of non-lethal aid for Ukraine, which will be used to provide radios, anti-mortar radars, night vision devices, military ambulances and medical supplies. The first batch of American four-wheel-drive military vehicles called Humvees arrived to Ukraine last week. U.S. President Barack Obama has resisted increasing calls from both parties in Congress to provide lethal aid for Ukraine, though.

Click for info-1 and info-2!

Etibar Aliyev

Moldova

Gagauzia: Elections cause for new concerns

Moldova’s autonomous region Gagauzia has voted for a new governor: Irina Vlah, pro-Russian candidate, won with 51 percent of the vote.

Gagauzia, which is populated mostly by ethnic Turk Christians, is known to maintain close relations with Russia. In a referendum last year, an overwhelming majority of Gagauz people chose to strengthen ties with Moscow. This outcome caused conflicts with the pro-European government in Chişinău. Many people fear, Gagauzia could follow the example of Transnistria and break away from Moldova.

Surprisingly, new governor Irina Vlah said right after the election: “We see our future in the Republic of Moldova.”. But this statement should not give too much hope for political stability. Vlah demands more financial support from Chişinău, which is unlikely to happen regarding the fact that Moldova is one of the poorest countries in Europe. “Her proposal sounds more like blackmail than genuine political dialogue”, says journalist Robin Schwartz. One can expect that Moscow will keep on supporting Gagauzia. If Russia strengthens the separatist ideas in the autonomous region, will Gagauzia be the next Transnistria or even the next Crimea?

Click for info-1 and info-2!

Esther Hillmer