

EaP News

Sixth Eastern Partnership Foreign Ministerial Meeting

On 20th of April the sixth Eastern Partnership Foreign Ministerial Meeting was held in Luxembourg. It was chaired by the European Council President, Donald Tusk, and attended by the High Representative of the European Union, Frederica Mogherini, the Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy, Johannes Hahn, and foreign ministers of the EU member states. The discussion focused on the expectations of the Eastern Partnership Summit, which will take place on 21st and 22nd of May in Riga, and as well as on the possibility to strengthen the EU Policy with respect to the Eastern Partnership countries.

Armenia

Are you up for news from Armenia, then wait for our next newsletter.

Stay tuned!

Azerbaijan

We are curious about what is going on in Azerbaijan and following news as well.

Stay tuned and wait for the next newsletter!

Belarus

Intense Push for Contact with Europe Continues

On 16-17 April, Johannes Hahn, the EU Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, paid his first visit to Minsk. He held talks with Alexander Lukashenka and Vladimir Makei but also met with Belarusian opposition activists

The parties focused their discussion on reforming the Eastern Partnership in the context of its forthcoming Riga summit. "We would like to see [the Eastern partnership] reformatted from its typical take on politics... to closer cooperation in specific areas based on solving economic problems", Alexander Lukashenka stressed.

The Belarusian leader pointed to the transfer of technology, trade, regional security and suppression of cross-border crime, such as illegal traffic in drugs and nuclear materials, as priority areas of cooperation between Belarus and the EU.

While Johannes Hahn's visit was the key event of Belarus' interaction with Europe in recent weeks, several other encounters have complemented the growing web of ties. On the days of Hahn's visit, Belarus hosted senior diplomats from the Weimar Triangle (France, Germany and Poland) and the Visegrad Four (Hungary, Poland,



The Project's News

EaP Locals' News

Happy Birthday, AEGEE-Tbilisi!

AEGEE-Tbilisi celebrated its 11th Birthday this month. The antenna in Georgia's capital was the first AEGEE local in the Caucasus region.



Slovakia and the Czech Republic). The foreign ministry also held consultations with Estonia, Lithuania, Romania and Slovakia. Click [here](#) to get more information!

Ferran H. Casamitjana

Georgia

Guide to Georgia's European future

On 25th of March the ambassador of the European Union to Georgia, Janos Herman, presented the progress report of 2014 on the implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy in Georgia.

Georgia made progress in various fields including media, the fight against corruption and the adoption of the anti-discrimination law. However it still needs to strengthen its judiciary institution and to improve the electoral system. The next steps should aim at improving democracy and focusing on the priorities such as economic development and social problems.

The Georgian Journal had an interview about the present state of the European Neighbourhood Policy and the Eastern Partnership with Ambassador Herman, which you can read [here](#).

Theresa Leppert

Ukraine

Merkel urges Russia cooperation after paying respects to WWII dead

German Chancellor Angela Merkel has attended a wreath-laying ceremony in Moscow to commemorate the Russians killed during World War Two. Mrs. Merkel and other Western leaders skipped a military parade in Red Square on Saturday over tensions with Ukraine. After ceremony Merkel mentioned that they had learned from bitter experience ,difficult situations-and now they have to overcome one by peaceful and diplomatic means.

Russian President Vladimir Putin said on Sunday that a Ukraine peace deal was progressing, in spite of problems.Ukraine government ,Western leaders and independent experts say there is clear evidence that Russia is helping rebels with heavy weapons and soldiers . Moscow denies it,insisting that any Russians serving with rebels are "volunteers".

During Merkel's speech she said that Russia's annexation of the Crimean peninsula had caused a serious setback in relations. So both countries must do anything possible to resolve conflicts,peacefully and through dialogue. However,Germany played a key role negotiating the Minsk ceasefire agreement,which stipulated an immediate and full bilateral ceasefire and the withdrawal of heavy weapons by both sides. Click [here](#) and [there](#) for more information!

Etibar Aliyev

Moldova

Massive Bank Scandal increases distrust in pro-EU course

During a series of questionable banking transactions in November, in total over 1 billion \$ vanished for unknown reason from Moldova's banks. The scandal took place only a few days before the parliamentary elections but still today it is not entirely clear what actually happened.

Three of Moldova's biggest banks, the Banca de

Economii, Banca Sociala, and Unibank, made bad loans that had to be covered by 16 billion Moldovan lei (\$870 million) from Moldova's central bank in order to not endanger the financial system. Despite investigations by the central bank, it is likely that these three banks will never repay the bailout and so Moldova's taxpayers will eventually have to bear the costs. With less than 4 million people, Moldova is a very small country and 1 billion \$ translates into approximately 16 percent of the country's annual GDP.

In times of economic problems, this scandal is one of the biggest in Moldova's history. Apart from negative economic consequences, such as a devaluation of the currency, the scandal also increases distrust towards pro-European parties and the current course of Moldova's minority government that wants to strengthen ties with the EU. A recent survey on public opinion shows that support for the Russia-led Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) is now stronger than for the European Union. That same poll found that most Moldovans regard Russian President Vladimir Putin as a trusted foreign leader. Click [it](#) for more!

Esther Hillmer

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