

EaP: Looking beyond the 2017 Summit

Athens_Panos Carvounis, Head of European Commission Representation in Greece
Welcome Remarks,
8th November 2017

- I want to welcome you all, and extend a special thank you to the co-organizers of this conference: the Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP), and the Embassies of Estonia, Lithuania, Sweden, Poland and Georgia.
- Today's conference will be an opportunity to take stock of the Eastern Partnership and its achievements so far, as leaders from the EU member states and the six Eastern partner countries prepare to meet in Brussels on the 24th November for the 5th Eastern Partnership Summit.
- Today is also an opportunity to exchange views on the future of the Eastern Partnership, and the opportunities that lie ahead.
- At the first panel this morning you will have the opportunity to hear the views of the European Commission from my colleague Vasilis MARAGOS who joins us from Brussels, representing the Directorate-General for the European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, where he is responsible for the Eastern Partnership and for cooperation with Armenia, Azerbaijan and Belarus.
- But let me just offer a few general remarks about the Eastern Partnership, which is a **joint** policy initiative aiming to deepen and strengthen relations between the EU and its six Eastern neighbours: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.
- The Eastern Partnership plays a crucial role in the **stability** and **prosperity** of the EU's Eastern Neighbourhood.
- There are many **tangible results** improving the lives of citizens across the region which include **fight against corruption, modernisation of public administrations, improved transport and support to SMEs**.
- All these confirm the **strength** and **depth** of the Eastern Partnership
- We are fully aware that each of our partners has their **different approaches and aspirations** vis-à-vis the EU, in view of their differing economic, political and security circumstances.
- Despite the diversity between our Eastern Partners and the EU's relationship with them, there are some **common regional challenges**, such as democratisation and reforms, economic development, energy security and protracted conflicts.

- We are committed to **move the Eastern Partnership forward** at both **bilateral** and **multilateral** levels, **respecting the individual needs** and circumstances of each partner.
- That's why the European Commission and the European External Action Service have put forward **20 concrete objectives to be achieved up to 2020** ["20 deliverables for 2020"].
- These actions are based on the **four priority areas** of cooperation that were agreed in the last Summit in Riga:
 - (i) Economic development and market opportunities;
 - (ii) Strengthening institutions and good governance;
 - (iii) Connectivity, energy efficiency, environment and climate change;
 - (iv) Mobility and people-to-people contacts.
- The upcoming Summit is an **opportunity to build on our achievements** and to **inject new dynamism** into our relations.
- I look forward to hearing your views on all the above and wish you fruitful discussions.