

Press Release

Association Agreements bring about continued progress in integration with the EU, but state capture holds back further advances – Eastern Partnership Index

BRUSSELS | 25/01/2018

The latest report suggests that the entry into force of the Association Agreements brought about considerable headway in integration with the EU in the case of Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine within the period covered by the Eastern Partnership Index 2015-2016.

The Civil Society Forum, mobilising NGOs, think tanks and grassroots movements from all over the Eastern Partnership region and the EU, has just released the latest edition of the Eastern Partnership Index.

"The three Association Agreement signatories are joined by Armenia as the leaders in approximation to EU standards and international norms, a reflection of the progress that has continued in Armenia despite its government's U-turn from signing an Association Agreement in 2014," says the **Index's Editor in Chief, Jeff Lovitt**. He added that in all six countries the EU needs to tailor its support to strengthening democracy and the rule of law, and to supporting civil society. "The Index reflects the need to fight state capture is a top priority where the EU and civil society can come together in Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine. In Azerbaijan and Belarus, the EU must work for a place at the table for civil society, and apply diplomatic efforts to free political prisoners and foster an independent media. In Armenia, civil society has been vocal in its orientation towards the EU, and strengthened support from the side of the EU is key to the country's longer-term direction."

Starting with the launch of the EU's eastward policy, the respective national governments in the Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries have expressed clear differences in aspirations concerning closer integration with the EU. While some aspire for membership, others see a turn to the west as a challenge to long-lasting ties with Russia, and others wanted to pursue a more multipolar approach.

The Index is designed to chart progress and setbacks in reforms, also to guide countries along the reform process and to signal concerns when progress is flagging or even reversed. Data, combining independent analysis with annual quantitative data, distinguishes between two dimensions of European integration and sustainable democratic development: approximation and linkage. It is an important monitoring tool for policymakers, independent researchers, think tanks and civil society actors, and holds the ambition to be instrumental in facilitating the EaP policy process.

The project is funded by the European Union, Open Society Foundations, the International Renaissance Foundation, Ukraine (IRF), and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic.

[Eastern Partnership Index – report](#)

[Eastern Partnership Index – infographics](#)

-- ENDS --

Notes to editors:

About the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum

The Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum (EaP CSF) is a unique multi-layered regional civil society platform aimed at promoting European integration, facilitating reforms and democratic transformations in the six Eastern Partnership countries - Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. Serving as the civil society and people-to-people dimension of the Eastern Partnership, the EaP CSF strives to strengthen civil society in the region, boost pluralism in public discourse and policy making by promoting participatory democracy and fundamental freedoms. For more information, please visit [the EaP CSF website](#).

For further information about the event and the EaP CSF, please contact:

Darya Mustafayeva

EaP CSF Communications Manager

Email: darya.mustafayeva@eap-csf.eu

Phone: [+32 486 27 49 47](tel:+32486274947); [+32 2893 2585](tel:+3228932585)