



**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**

**PRESS RELEASE**

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## **Eastern Partnership: progress in deep democracy and human rights rewarded with additional funding**

The European Commission has announced the 2013 allocations under the 'Eastern Partnership integration and cooperation' (EaPIC) programme, which will go towards projects to boost economic opportunities in rural areas, advance reforms in the energy sector, improve job market management, offer vocational education and training and others. The total funding granted in 2013 amounts to €87 million, distributed among three countries: Moldova (€35 million), Georgia (€27 million), and Armenia (€25 million).

*"This year three Eastern partners were rewarded for their efforts in democratic transition and their commitment to fundamental values. We hope that this group will grow bigger in the future. Additional funding means more support for national reforms and joint projects that bring concrete benefits to citizens' lives"* - announced Štefan Füle, Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy.

The EaPIC programme provides additional funding to countries in the Eastern Partnership that make progress in reforms for deep democracy and human rights. It complements the annual bilateral support for the three countries concerned, either through new projects or by expanding the scope and duration of existing projects.

In Georgia, new funds will be used for improving management of the job market, with better linkage between education, skills and market needs. In Moldova, new funds will contribute to boosting economic opportunities in rural areas. In Armenia, additional funding will help bring forward the national agenda for fight against corruption and reform of the civil service.

In Armenia direct support for civil society has also been increased, in addition to EaPIC funding.

### **Background**

Launched in 2012, the 'Eastern Partnership integration and cooperation' (EaPIC) programme provides additional financial assistance to Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries that deliver on reforms for deep democracy and respect of human rights. In practice, the programme functions as a positive incentive for continued efforts in democratic transformation. Additional funds are used for new projects or for scaling-up existing projects.

The 2013 EaPIC allocations are based on the key findings and recommendations of the latest progress reports on the implementation of the Neighbourhood Policy ('ENP package' of March 2013).

This rewarding mechanism is in line with the principles of mutual accountability and differentiation introduced in the 2011 review of the European Neighbourhood Policy: *"Increased EU support to its neighbours is conditional. It will depend on progress in building and consolidating democracy and respect for the rule of law. The more and the faster a country progresses in its internal reforms, the more support it will get from the EU"* ('A new response to a changing Neighbourhood').

The 'more for more' principle is not limited to financial assistance. In the Eastern Partnership, partners most engaged in reforms benefit more from their relationship with the EU, including closer political association, deeper gradual economic integration in the EU internal market and increased EU assistance.

The EaPIC programme is a twin initiative to the SPRING (Support for Partnership, Reforms and Inclusive Growth) programme (supports partner countries on the path towards democratic transition and address their needs in view of economic recovery and efforts undertaken to reduce inequality) for southern neighbours.

The Eastern Partnership countries are Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine.

## **The funding**

Funding for the EaPIC programme comes from the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI). This is the main financial and cooperation instrument through which EU assistance is given to the Eastern and Southern Neighbourhood countries and Russia in the period 2007-2013.

The total funding of EaPIC (2012-2013) amounts to €152 million.

In 2012, €65 million were granted to Moldova (€28 million), Georgia (€22 million) and Armenia (€15 million). Additional 2012 EaPIC funding has been used to increase support for reforms in the justice sector (Moldova, Georgia and Armenia); to expand the offer of vocational education and training (Armenia), access to health services (Moldova), and economic stimulation in rural areas (Moldova); to improve migration and border management in view of the visa liberalisation dialogue (Georgia).

In 2013, €87 million are granted to Moldova (€35 million), Georgia (€27 million) and Armenia (€25 million). Additional 2013 EaPIC funding will be used to improve job market management and the offer of vocational education and training (Georgia); to boost economic opportunities in rural areas, advance reforms in the energy sector (including access to renewable energy), and increase cooperation with the Council of Europe (Moldova); to enhance national capacities for migration and mobility management, and support civil service reform and the fight against corruption (Armenia).

## **For more information**

Eastern Partnership and regional cooperation in the East:

<http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/easternpartnership>

ENP Progress Reports:

[http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/documents/progress-reports/index\\_en.htm](http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/documents/progress-reports/index_en.htm)

EU Neighbourhood Info Centre: <http://www.enpi-info.eu/indexeast.php>

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