



1st European People's Party Eastern Partnership Summit Batumi Declaration

10th July 2012

While the participants to the EPP Batumi Summit state that the Eastern Partnership (EaP) is an important platform for EU integration and regional development, and welcome the progresses made at the Prague Summit in 2009 and the Warsaw Summit in 2011, they believe, in order to develop both the political dimension and the concrete benefits of the Eastern Partnership, that:

- The Eastern Partnership should offer a clear perspective for EU-membership to the Eastern Partners who are willing and acting accordingly,
- The EU and the Eastern Partners should rapidly launch new concrete initiatives in the framework of the Eastern Partnership to develop its content,
- The EPP could be a major actor of this renewed interest and dynamics of the Eastern Partnership.

The Participants to the Batumi Summit express the wish that the EaP Vilnius Summit in 2013 will have the same importance and significance for the Eastern European Neighbours of the EU as the 2003 Thessaloniki Summit for the Western Balkan countries.

In order to achieve these objectives, the participants take the decision today to institutionalise the EPP Eastern Partnership Summit.

1/ A clear perspective for the EaP:

The participants of the Batumi Summit share the commitment to the main principles and norms of international law and to the fundamental values that constitute the basis of European construction, from democracy and rule of law to the respect and promotion of human rights and all fundamental freedoms, as well as the sovereign right of any country to join any international organisation or alliance and define its own future.

The participants emphasise the need for the recognition of the European perspective of the willing and prepared Eastern European Partners, being not just neighbours but the European neighbours of the European Union committed to promoting the values and principles on which the EU is based.

The participants share the importance of the Eastern Partnership for substantially enhancing the political and economic integration of the Eastern European Partners in the EU and reiterate their commitment to the key objectives of the Eastern Partnership.

The participants reiterate the importance of an effective implementation of the *Eastern Partnership: Roadmap 2012-13*, and particularly its bilateral dimension, based on the principles of differentiation and “more for more”.

The participants highlight the reforms implemented in the three EaP countries represented in Batumi and welcome their progresses in their bilateral cooperation with the EU, particularly in the negotiations of the respective Association Agreements and Deep Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements, as well as within the Visa Liberalisation Dialogues, leading to a visa free travel regime.

The participants' emphasise the need to continue the progress steadily so as to enable further advancement of the European agenda of the Eastern European Partners.

2/ More content for the EaP

The participants of the Summit share the importance of:

- increasing the effectiveness of the Eastern Partnership through concrete initiatives and projects with tangible results in priority fields of cooperation;
- improved synergy between the relevant reform agenda in the Partner Countries, including capacity and institution building and the fight against corruption and the assistance and support mechanisms provided by the Eastern Partnership;
- enhanced sector cooperation between the Eastern European Partners and the EU correlated to the jointly identified needs of the Partners;
- sharing the experience and best practices among the EU and Eastern European Partners;
- supporting the mobility of the Eastern Partners' citizens and the subsequent visa free regime, with a view of the significance it bears for facilitating people-to-people contacts;
- ongoing parallel processes of the visa liberalisation in the EU's neighbourhood, giving priority to the advanced EaP countries in granting visa free regime once all the benchmarks put forward for this purpose are met;
- increasing the EU's engagement and role in the peaceful conflict resolution in the region in support of existing agreed formats and processes of negotiation, inter alia, through the EU field-presence, when appropriate and when deemed necessary;
- the role of the Special Representative of the EU for the South Caucasus and the crisis in Georgia;
- enhancing energy cooperation, particularly by building and improving energy network interconnections, serving the strategic interest of both the European Union and the Eastern European Neighbourhood;
- facilitating people-to-people contacts, through enhancing cooperation in education and culture fields; inter alia by spreading all benefits of "Erasmus for all", including scholarships, on the Eastern European Partners in the same manner as for the EU Member States;
- establishing the Black Sea European College in Batumi, Georgia; and
- increasing the engagement of the civil society, media and think tanks in the cooperation of the EU and Eastern European Countries.

3/ An enhanced role for the EPP in the EaP

The participants to the Summit acknowledge the importance of political support for the EaP in the EU and welcome the EPP's commitment to develop the political dimension of the EaP.

The participants of the Summit welcome the creation of the EPP group in Euronest, which held its first meeting in Tbilisi in 2012 before the Euronest session in Baku. Such a meeting will take place again in October in Chisinau.

The participants agreed to organise an EPP Foreign Affairs Ministers meeting (EU and non EU) in Chisinau in September 2013 to prepare the Vilnius EaP Summit.

The participants affirm that the Batumi Summit marks the beginning of a sustainable initiative and intend to hold the next Summit in Yerevan by the end of the year 2012 and a subsequent one in Batumi in July 2013.

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