

Eastern Partnership Reflection Forum

**The Eastern Partnership
in the next ten years:**

**What Strategy for the European Union's
Eastern neighbourhood?**

21-23 October 2019, Chisinau, Moldova

The EaP Reflection Forum in Chişinău is organised by:

Austro-French Centre for Rapprochement in Europe (CFA), Vienna - <http://oefz.at/>
Institute for European Policies and Reforms (IPRE), Chisinau - <http://ipre.md/>
Expert-Grup, Chişinău - <http://expert-grup.org/>

With the support of:

Central European Initiative (CEI)
Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAS)
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)

In cooperation with:

EaP Think Tank Forum
French Institute for International Relations (Ifri), Paris
Centre international de formation européenne (CIFE), Nice/Berlin
Istituto affari internazionali (IAI), Rome
Estonian Center of Eastern Partnership (ECEAP), Tallinn
Slovak Foreign Policy Association (SFPA), Bratislava
German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP), Berlin
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Institut für Europäische Politik (IEP), Berlin
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Center for Security Studies (CSS), ETH Zurich
Central European Initiative (CEI), Trieste
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), Berne
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EASTERN PARTNERSHIP REFLECTION FORUM

The Eastern Partnership in the next ten years: What Strategy for the European Union's Eastern neighbourhood?

21-23 October 2019, Chisinau, Republic of Moldova
Radisson Blu Leograd, Chisinau, Mitropolit Varlaam St 77, Chisinau

PROGRAMME SUMMARY

20 – 21 OCT 2019

Arrival of participants

21 OCT 2019

17:00-19:00

Opening & Public Discussion
(Loft Hall)

19:20-21:00

Welcoming Reception offered by the HE Ms. Christine FREILINGER, Ambassador of Austria in the Republic of Moldova and HE Mr. Pascal LE DEUNFF, Ambassador of France in the Republic of Moldova
(Departure of the participants by Bus – at 19.20 from the entrance of the Hotel)

22 OCT 2019

09:00-12:15

Session 1 & 2 EaP Reflection Forum (closed sessions)
(Begonia Hall)

12:15-13:45

Networking Lunch

13:45-16:00

EaP Think-Tank Forum Session (public session)
(Begonia Hall)

16:30-21:00

Networking Session - What's Next for EaP?
Closing Reception at Asconi Winery
organized by IPRE in partnership and with the support of Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAS)
(Departure of the participants by Bus – at 16.30 from the entrance of the Hotel)

23 OCT 2019

Optional Side-Event in Tiraspol (organized by CFA)

23-24 OCT 2019

Departure of participants

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ABOUT THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP REFLECTION FORUM

The **Eastern Partnership Reflection Forum** is an initiative launched in Minsk in 2017. It builds on a similar initiative operated in the Western Balkans since 2015 in support of the Berlin process. Its aim is to encourage a **wider, inclusive strategic reflection** on regional cooperation in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus on the one side and the relations of the European Union (EU) and the Eastern partners on the other side. It is also to build bridges between the expert community and national and international administrations across wider Europe, and to encourage cooperation between European think tanks.

The value-added of the Eastern Partnership Reflection Forum initiative is its capacity to advance an **inclusive dialogue** on strategic issues **beyond established policy frameworks**, which includes views from all over Europe (from Portugal to Finland, from Switzerland to Russia, from Serbia to Georgia). The emphasis **on networking among participants** and support for cooperation projects at the intersection of research and diplomacy is also at the core of the forum.

The 2019 event in Chisinau will follow up on the **Eastern Partnership Reflection Forum organised in Vienna in November 2018** in the framework of the Austrian Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

OBJECTIVES OF THE CHISINAU EASTERN PARTNERSHIP REFLECTION FORUM

The **Eastern Partnership** (EaP) was launched ten years ago with the aim of supporting political association and further economic integration between the EU and interested partner countries. While recording important achievements, e.g. in the framework of the 20 Deliverables for 2020 and EaP framework, this key component of the EU's foreign policy toward East has nonetheless been put to the test, with challenges straining the EaP's capacity to effectively promote stability, democracy and prosperity across Eastern Europe and the Caucasus. Internally, the EU's focus on its Eastern neighbourhood has been hindered by a series of crises, best epitomised by Brexit, which have shaken the confidence of the Union on the world stage. National interests and national politics have made a momentous come back in the EU and deepened the need for more strategic approaches. Externally, the EU has moreover faced security challenges from Ukraine to Syria, with dramatic consequences for the regional stability. With geopolitics gaining ground at the international level, the EU must now contend with changing settings and higher stakes.

What should the strategic vision of the EU be for its Eastern neighbourhoods beyond the 20 Deliverables for 2020 and the EaP framework? What are the strategic approaches pursued by the Member States of the EU towards the countries of the region and how do they relate to one another? How to respond to the outbreak of social unrests in the region and establish stronger connexions with citizens? How to increase the joint ownership of the strategic goals pursued by the EU and its Eastern partners and rightly balance inclusivity and differentiation between AA/DCFTA countries and the others? How to raise the strategic interest of EU member states towards the countries of the region and how more "more for more" would they be ready to offer to EaP countries? How open should the EU and the EaP be to third countries and third parties active in the region? How to address the Russian factor in the region? How to intensify inter-organisational relations between the EU, the OSCE and other actors? What future for the existing security architecture in Europe? What role can countries like Switzerland or Norway play in advancing regional cooperation?

These questions are very relevant in consideration of the **Republic of Moldova**. The landlocked country counts among the poorest nations in Europe. One third of its citizens in age of working have already emigrated. But while remaining vulnerable to internal and external threats (corruption, weak administrative capacity, fragile energy security, Russian political and economic pressure and unresolved separatism in the Transnistrian region), Moldova has been looking up to the EU in the past ten years, just as Georgia and Ukraine, in the hope that reforms would one day open the door of accession. But internal divisions in society with regards to geostrategic orientations, inconsistent

reforms and serious backslidings in democracy and rule of law, have put these hopes under dramatic strain and kept the EU's enlargement plans solely open to the Western Balkans. What perspectives can these countries strive for, considering the more positive and most recent developments?

It is in order to reflect on these questions and many others that a third Eastern Partnership Reflection Forum is organised in **Chişinău**, a few months after the Brussels' EaP high-level conference of May 2019 marking the 10 years of the EaP.

The event will also include a separate session in the format of the **EaP Think-Tank Forum** lunched in Chişinău in 2017 and will build-on the discussions of the Second Meeting of the 2018 EaP Think Tank Forum in Bucharest. The session will focus mainly on the current challenges and future of the three Associated EaP partners (Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine). At the same time, the key findings and recommendations of the EUISS Chaillot Paper „Eastern Partnership a Decade on: Looking back, Thinking Ahead” will be introduced¹.

THE FORMAT AND OUTPUTS

The Eastern Partnership Reflection Forum in Chişinău will convene over 50 carefully selected researchers and policy analysts from all over the EU member states, the EaP region, Switzerland and Russia as well as representatives and policy advisors from key regional institutions and national administrations.

The Forum will include **two public sessions** the Opening Session on 21 October 2019, (17.00) and the EaP Think Tank Forum Session on 22 October (13.45-15.45). The main reflections during the main event will be conducted in **two closed sessions** that will abide by the Chatham House Rule and will only be accessible **upon invitation**. Instead of delivering formal presentations *ex cathedra*, the participants, seated around a large hollow-square table, are invited to be engaged in an **interactive roundtable discussion** moderated by experienced facilitators (Geneva conference format). The possibility to act as panellist will thus be offered to all participants willing to take the floor. A separate side-event will be organised on 23 October 2019 by the Centre for Rapprochement in Europe in Tiraspol (optional, upon registration).

¹ EUISS, Chaillot Paper no 153 „Eastern Partnership a Decade on: Looking back, Thinking Ahead”, July 2019, available at: <https://www.iss.europa.eu/content/eastern-partnership-decade-looking-back-thinking-ahead>

PROGRAMME

DAY 1, MONDAY, 21 OCTOBER 2019

OPENING AND PUBLIC DISCUSSION

*Venue: LOFT Hall, Radisson Blu Leograd, Chisinau,
Mitropolit Varlaam St 77, Chisinau (theater setting)*

16.30 – 17.00 Registration of participants

17.00 – 17.20 Official opening of the Eastern Partnership Reflection Forum

HE Dietmar Schweisgut, Secretary General, Austro-French Centre for Rapprochement in Europe, Vienna

Vassilis Maragos, Head of Unit, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus and Eastern Partnership, DG NEAR, European Commission

Polina Ojog, Programme Coordinator, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Chişinau

Caroline Tissot, Director of Cooperation, Swiss Cooperation Office SDC

17.20 – 17.40 Keynote Opening speech

HE Maia Sandu, Prime Minister of the Republic of Moldova

*Moderation: **Iulian Groza**, Executive Director, IPRE, Chisinau*

17.40 – 19.00 Public Discussion: The Eastern Partnership in the next ten years, why bother? EU and non-EU views on the future of the initiative

This public discussion will explore the future of the Eastern Partnership in the next ten years from different perspectives. How important will the Eastern Partnership be for the EU and its member states against the backdrop of competing priorities within the EU? What expectations will they raise in the EU's Eastern neighbourhood and how to address them appropriately? In this context, how do internal debates about the future of Europe affect the advancement of the EaP? What are tomorrow's challenges in wider Europe and what should be the Eastern Partnership's contribution to addressing them? How is the initiative viewed from outside and what can the EU learn from a measure of extrospection?

Speakers:

Peter Balazs, Director of the Centre for European Neighbourhood Studies, CEU, Budapest

Natalia Yerashevich, Director of the EaP Civil Society Forum Secretariat, Brussels

Benno Zogg, Senior Researcher, Center for Security Studies, Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, Zurich

*Moderation: **Florent Marciacq**, Deputy Secretary General, Austro-French Centre for Rapprochement in Europe and Research Fellow, Centre international de formation européenne*

19.00 End of the session

19.20 Transfer by bus to the Welcoming Reception at the Residence of the Austrian Ambassador offered by the HE Ms. Christine FREILINGER, Ambassador of Austria in the Republic of Moldova and HE Mr. Pascal LE DEUNFF, Ambassador of France in the Republic of Moldova

PROGRAMME

DAY 2, TUESDAY, 22 OCTOBER 2019

EAP REFLECTION FORUM WORKING SESSIONS

Venue: Begonia Hall, Radisson Blu Leograd, Chisinau,
Mitropolit Varlaam St 77, Chisinau (roundtable setting)

09.00 – 10.30 Working Session 1: More than good neighbours? Inclusivity and differentiation for want of shared strategic visions?

This discussion round will focus on the strategic character of the EU's approach towards its Eastern partners. Building on an assessment of the EaP in the past 10 years and the EU's broader institutional, geopolitical and policy environment, it will discuss the following points: What is good for the EU is it also always good for EaP countries? What is the strategic value of the EU's emphasis on resilience and how does it intersect with EaP countries' strategic interests? What are the strategic approaches pursued by the Member States and how to increase their strategic interest towards the countries of the region? What should the strategic vision of the EU be for its Eastern neighbourhood beyond its promotion of the 20 Deliverables for 2020, AA/DCFTA reforms and EaP framework? How much "more for more" would the EU be ready to offer to EaP?

Facilitators:

Paul Ivan, Senior Policy Analyst, European Policy Center, Brussels

Magda Stumvoll, Research fellow, Austro-French Centre for Rapprochement in Europe

10h30 – 11.00 Networking Coffee Break

11.00 – 12.15 Working Session 2: The more the merrier? Intertwined cooperation between the EU and "the others" in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus

This discussion round will focus on the different formats of cooperation at play in the region and their intersection with the EU's strategic approach to its Eastern neighbourhoods. Building on an assessment of the other stakeholders' contribution to regional cooperation in the EaP area, it will discuss the following points: How open should the EU and the EaP countries be to third countries and third parties active in the region? How to intensify inter-organisational cooperation between the EU and the OSCE, Council of Europe, BSEC and others on issues relevant to the region? How to make relations between the Normandy Format and the Trilateral Contact Group more effective in the crisis management in Donbas region of Ukraine? What relations should the EU pursue with the EEU and NATO in the region? What future for the existing security architecture in Europe? What role can countries like Switzerland or Norway play in advancing regional cooperation?

Facilitators:

Nona Mikhelidze, Head of the Eastern Europe and Eurasia Program, Istituto Affari Internazionali, Rome

Denis Cenusa, Associated Expert, Expert Grup and Researcher, Justus-Liebig-University, Giessen

12.15 – 13.30 Networking Lunch

PROGRAMME

DAY 2, TUESDAY, 22 OCTOBER 2019 (CONTINUATION)

EAP THINK TANK FORUM SESSION

*Venue: Begonia Hall, Radisson Blu Leograd, Chisinau,
Mitropolit Varlaam St 77, Chisinau (theater setting)*

13.30 – 13.45 Registration of participants

13.45 – 15.45 Public Session: “Frontrunners”? Current and future challenges in Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine

This panel, organised as part of EaP Think Tank Forum, will foster active interaction between the speakers and the public, including representatives of the state authorities, civil society organizations, academia and international bodies. It will focus on the achievements and challenges of the EaP Associated partners (Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine) in the light of the implementation of the 2020 Deliverables and the Association Agendas with the EU. During the session the key findings and recommendations of the EUISS Chaillot Paper „Eastern Partnership a Decade on: Looking back, Thinking Ahead” will be introduced². What implications could the parliamentary and/or presidential elections of 2019/2020 have in those three countries? What is at stake for them and the EU? What are the most resilient pitfalls the EU faces in relation to these countries and how effective has the EaP proved to handle them? For instance, how can the EU better counter oligarchisation in those countries, e.g. based on its experience in Moldova? How can it better contribute to consolidate their multi-layered transformation, while taking into consideration the geopolitical context in which they are embedded?

Speakers:

Sinikukka Saari, Senior Associate Analyst, European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS), Paris

Iulian Groza, Executive Director, Institute for European Policies and Reforms (IPRE), Chişinău

Leo Litra, Senior Research Fellow, New Europe Centre, Kiev

Vano Chkhikvadze, EU Integration Program Manager, Open Society Foundation, Tbilisi

Discussants:

HE Nicu Popescu, Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of the Republic of Moldova

HE Peter Michalko, Ambassador, Head of the EU Delegation to the Republic of Moldova (tbc)

Moderation: Stanislav Secrieru, Senior Policy Analyst, European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS), Paris

15.45 – 16.00 Concluding Remarks

Vassilis Maragos, Head of Unit for Eastern Partnership, DG NEAR, European Commission

16.00 End of the Event

16.30 Transfer by bus Asconi Winery

18.30 – 21.00 Networking Session - What's Next for EaP?

Closing Reception at Asconi Winery

organized by IPRE in partnership and with the support of Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAS)

21.00 End of the Core programme

² EUISS, Chaillot Paper no 153 „Eastern Partnership a Decade on: Looking back, Thinking Ahead”, July 2019, available at: <https://www.iss.europa.eu/content/eastern-partnership-decade-looking-back-thinking-ahead>



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