



EU-UKRAINE

EASTERN PARTNERSHIP: SUPPORTING REFORMS, PROMOTING CHANGE



Fundamentals of the relationship

Since early 1990s, the EU and Ukraine have developed an increasingly dynamic relationship. The EU is committed to a policy of close relationship that encompasses political association and economic integration. In June 2014, the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement was signed by EU Heads of State and Government and Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko. On 16 September 2014, the Association Agreement was ratified by the Ukrainian Parliament and consent was given by the European Parliament, enabling the provisional application of the relevant provisions of the Association Agreement from 1 November 2014, and the parts related to the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area from 1 January 2016.

EU support for a peaceful settlement of the conflict

Against the background of the conflict in eastern Ukraine, the EU supports all efforts for a lasting peaceful solution respecting the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country and aimed at a stable, prosperous and democratic future for all Ukrainian citizens. The EU fully backs the ongoing diplomatic efforts through the full implementation of the Minsk Agreements and has stepped up its support to



the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission, to which the EU and its Member States have been the biggest contributors with about 70% of the mission's budget.

EU support for reforms and development

Since March 2014 and the announcement of a €11 billion support package to Ukraine, the EU and European Financial Institutions delivered €6 billion, including the additional macro-financial assistance package of €1.8 billion. EU support to Ukraine focuses on supporting the stabilisation of Ukraine and its modernisation to

help improve the living conditions of Ukrainian citizens. Furthermore, the EU has deployed an EU Advisory Mission to assist Ukraine in reforming its civilian security sector.

As part of the EU's financial and technical support to Ukraine's ambitious reform agenda, more than 250 projects are currently being carried out across a wide-range of sectors, regions and cities in Ukraine. EU assistance focuses in particular on support for democratic development and good governance, regulatory reform and administrative capacity building, infrastructure development and nuclear safety. For instance, in 2014 the EU committed €10 million in a programme to support civil society, which accompanied the 'State Building Contract' programme worth €355 million.

In mid-2014 the Commission established the Support Group for Ukraine. It concentrates and coordinates the resources and expertise of the European Commission in order to assist Ukraine in the implementation of the Association Agreement and, crucially, in undertaking the deep and systemic reforms that will be necessary if the country is to draw maximum benefit from a closer relationship with the European Union. This is the first time such a Support Group has been established for any country outside the borders of the EU.

Public administration and judiciary

In the context of the ongoing public administration reform, new draft laws on the civil service and on administrative procedure were prepared in 2014. The drafts were assessed positively by SIGMA (a joint EU-OECD initiative on Support for Improvement in Governance and Management). In addition, a draft justice sector reform strategy was developed in 2014, with EU support.

In April 2014 Ukrainian Parliament adopted a law on restoring trust in the judiciary, changing the process whereby judges were excessively subordinate to court presidents, and making court presidents and judges independent from political authorities. It also adopted a new law on public prosecution, which largely took account of the Venice Commission's recommendations.

The state strategy for regional development

until 2020, prepared with support of EU technical assistance, was adopted in August 2014 and a financing agreement on EU budget support to Ukraine's regional policy worth €55 million was signed in December 2014.

Closer people-to-people contacts

Additionally, last year Ukraine participated in the Tempus programme with 60 on-going projects. 786 students and staff were selected for mobility within the partnership supported by Erasmus Mundus and 31 Masters students and 6 PhD candidates were selected for joint master's degrees or joint doctoral programme. 11 applications were selected for funding under the Marie Skłodowska Curie actions (MSCA) under 'Horizon 2020'. Ukraine also participated in the eTwinning plus project with 86 schools. Young people and youth organisations benefited from the Youth in Action programme, with 2 349 people taking part in mobility projects and 264 in the project for young people and decision-makers in this field.

Visa liberalisation

EU-Ukraine Visa Facilitation and Readmission Agreements are in force since January 2008. The EU launched visa liberalisation dialogue with Ukraine in 2010. Ukraine's progress so far has been significant and broadly in line with most benchmarks.

