

Eastern Partnership

Platform 4 'Contacts between People'

Core objectives and proposed Work Programme 2009-2011

I. Core objectives

In accordance with the General guidelines and rules of procedure of the Eastern Partnership Multilateral Platforms (point 1.4), the participants of the first meeting of Eastern Partnership Platform 4 identified, on 10 June 2009, the following **core objectives**:

➤ Education and training:

- modernisation issues including **learning mobility** (of students, teachers, researchers, young people)
- language learning as a key tool to promote mobility
- possibility to open up the **E-twinning programme** for schools to the Eastern Partners

➤ Culture

- establish a **policy dialogue in culture**, using existing tools
- increase the participation of Eastern Partners in EU cultural programmes

➤ Youth

- support concrete initiatives and projects to the benefit of young people and youth workers, notably by highlighting and adding value to the existing opportunities offered by the **Youth in Action** Programme

➤ Information Society

- establish a **regional policy dialogue** on the development of the **Information Society**

➤ Research

- increase the participation of Eastern Partners in the opportunities for cooperative research, capacity building and researcher mobility, offered by the Seventh Framework Programme

The role of civil society in implementing these core objectives was emphasised: in addition to the usual stakeholders involved in education, research, youth and culture, **civil society** will be actively associated in the implementation of the work programme, in particular through the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum which will provide regular recommendations, input and feedback on the implementation of the Platform 4 work programme; and the Jean Monnet networks.

II. Work Programme 2010-2011

At its second meeting, on 26 November 2009, Platform 4 has adopted its Work Programme for 2010-2011, in accordance with the General guidelines and rules of procedure of the Eastern Partnership Multilateral Platforms (point 1.4). In developing its proposal for this Work Programme presented below, the European Commission has been guided by a number of considerations, including the recommendations of the Platform 4 participants at their first meeting. A limited number of actions is proposed, to ensure that the Work Programme is manageable. In the light of progress made in implementing this Work Programme, new objectives and initiatives may be added.

A decision on participation in these activities by *ad hoc* participants was taken in accordance with the Prague Declaration (point 12) and the General Guidelines and Rules of Procedure of the Platforms.

All the activities and events described in this work programme will be open to the Member States' participation and contribution. In the framework of the different activities, they are encouraged to bring forward any bilateral projects relevant to the work of this Platform.

The language dimension of activities under the work of this Platform will be duly taken into account. Complementarity with bilateral projects and projects implemented within other frameworks, in this area is recognised as being particularly important.

1) Education and training

In the education and training field and within a lifelong learning perspective emphasis should continue to be put on higher education, which plays an essential role in developing human capital, creating new knowledge for society, transferring it to students who are increasingly more mobile across Europe, and fostering innovation.

In implementing these actions consistency with the activities and policy dialogue carried out by the European Training Foundation will be sought.

1.1 International higher education cooperation programmes

With view to increased funding as of 2011, the Commission proposes to organise a **large scale information campaign on Tempus and Erasmus Mundus¹ for universities** in the Partner countries, to familiarise them with the novelties of the programmes, increase their participation and allow them to submit high quality project proposals.

1.2 Learning and research mobility

The issue of mobility was at the centre of the discussions which took place during the first meeting of Platform 4, and it plays a vital role in the training and career development of researchers, knowledge transfer and the creation of long lasting collaborations. The Commission would therefore recommend **organising an event** for the Eastern Partners where the Commission and the Member States could present the different instruments, programmes and policy initiatives² that have been developed to promote and increase the mobility of researchers as well as mobility related to learning.

1.3 The E-twinning programme

Several participants of Platform 4 meeting supported the idea of extending access to internal European programmes in education and training. This can not be done automatically as the legal basis for internal programmes does not always allow for this type of opening to non EU countries. However the Commission is considering opening the **e-Twinning** programme for schools, at least partially, to the Eastern Partners.

The Commission would therefore propose to organise a round table with the Eastern Partners, to present the e-Twinning programme, its objectives, implementation rules and related technical, organisational, and logistical requirements such as Internet safety, local support services or language issues. Should the Partner Countries be interested and able to become involved in the e-Twinning programme, the dialogue will continue after the round table to discuss the detailed implementation modalities.

1.4. The Jean Monnet programme and networks

An **information event** on the Jean Monnet programme (Jean Monnet European modules, Chairs, centres of excellence, support for associations of professors and researchers, and research

¹ See annex with Summary Guide on EU programmes and initiatives to know more about Tempus and Erasmus

² See annex with Summary Guide on EU programmes and initiatives to know more about programmes and instruments which promote learning and research mobility

activities) will be organised for Eastern Partnership universities to allow them to fully exploit the wide range of opportunities offered by the programme.

A project in the area of networking of European Studies centres could be presented by interested parties under the Jean Monnet or Tempus programmes.

2) Youth

2.1 Opening an Eastern Partnership window to the Youth in Action Programme

The participants in the first meeting of Platform 4 acknowledged the contribution of the Youth in Action³ Programme to enhancing mutual understanding and laying the basis for constructive dialogue and solid relationships among the young generations and recommended that the opportunities offered by the Programme to support cooperation with the Eastern Partners be further strengthened. In this perspective, the proposal to open up an **Eastern Partnership Window** to complement the Youth in Action Programme was widely supported and will also be developed in discussion with the Youth in Action Programme Committee.

Such a window would also contribute to reinforcing the opportunities provided by the Programme, to support the development of non-formal education and the youth sector in the six Eastern Partner Countries and increase the participation of young people and youth organisations from these countries in the Youth in Action Programme.

It will aim at promoting youth mobility, notably through intercultural exchanges and volunteering as well as enhancing capacity-building and supporting the role of youth NGOs and other actors to strengthen civil society in the Eastern Partner Countries.

The number of youth exchanges, of voluntary services, training and networking projects involving partners from both the Youth in Action Programme Countries⁴ and the Eastern Partner Countries will increase.

In this context, the SALTO Youth Resource Centre for Eastern Europe and Caucasus (EECA) will continue to play a key role notably to promote and to raise awareness on the Programme in the region, to facilitate contacts and support capacity and partnership building activities between organisations from Programme and Partner Countries. In view of these extended tasks, SALTO would be reinforced if necessary.

2.2 Policy dialogue in Youth issues

Participants to the first meeting of Platform 4 indicated their interest in a dialogue on youth policies and the exchange of practices between the EU and the Eastern neighbours. The need to further invest in youth and develop policies closer to them is a shared concern between the EU

³ See annex with Summary Guide on EU programmes and initiatives to know more about the Youth in Action Programme

⁴ The 27 EU Member States, the EFTA/EEA countries and Turkey.

and the Eastern Partner Countries. The Commission Communication “An EU Strategy for Youth – Investing and Empowering” of 27 April 2009 and the related Council Resolution of 27 November 2009 underline the need for a more strategic, cross-sectoral approach to youth issues, to invest more in policy areas that affect them as well as to promote their active participation and contribution to the renewal of society. Promoting dialogue and sharing experiences and practices on the approaches to achieve these goals can be of mutual benefit for the EU and the Eastern Partners.

As suggested by participants attending the first meeting of Platform 4, it is proposed to set up in 2010 a youth policy dialogue with the Eastern Partners with a focus on respective strategies on youth participation and volunteering.

The Commission would therefore recommend organising **an event** for the Eastern Partners on those strategies, involving decision-makers, youth workers, representatives of youth organisations in view of:

- promoting dialogue and exchange of practices with the Eastern partners in relation to youth strategies on youth participation and volunteering;
- marking the launch of the Eastern Partnership specific window and promoting the opportunities offered by Youth in Action Programme as a tool to support youth policy.

This event could also be an occasion to present some successful experiences of cooperation with the Eastern Partners previously supported by the Youth in Action Programme, thus contributing to highlighting and disseminating their results.

Synergies between the activities under this Platform and those undertaken in the framework of the partnership on Youth between the European Commission and the Council of Europe will be sought.

3) Culture

3.1 Policy dialogue in culture

One of the EU's objectives in its relations with third countries, next to cultural cooperation and capacity building, is to support cultural policy development. In this respect, the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions - which constitutes an integral element of the '*acquis communautaire*' - represents for the EU, the main framework of cooperation with third countries. In the context of cultural policy development it is also important to mention the set of Cultural Policy Reviews conducted under the aegis of the Council of Europe. This long-standing activity of the Council of Europe represents a unique opportunity for the monitoring of cultural policies, drawing important conclusions on needs for change, possible gaps and formulating recommendations.

Following a preliminary exchange of views on these topics at the first meeting of Platform 4, dialogue should continue on issues of common interest, including the implementation of the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions

as well as the follow up to the Cultural Policy Reviews. Exchanges in this context should be demand-driven, i.e. based on the interest and needs of the partner countries.

3.2 Fostering participation in EU cultural programmes – opening an Eastern Partnership Culture Programme

Given the importance of cultural cooperation as outlined in the Communication on the Eastern Partnership, the European Commission will launch a specific **Eastern Partnership Culture Programme** with the aim of strengthening the capacity of cultural operators, fostering regional links and contributing to the development of inclusive cultural policies in the partner countries as well as fostering cultural heritage within the context of the Kyiv Initiative. . The programme will be implemented in two phases: (1) the technical assistance phase will be launched in the second half of 2009 (2) and the call for proposals for projects will be published in 2010. As of 2011, the Commission proposes to complement this programme with further opportunities to engage in transnational cultural cooperation in the whole European Neighbourhood region (East and South) through a dedicated window under the EC Culture Programme. Until 2011, as an introductory phase, the European Commission will dedicate the 2009 and 2010 Special Action under the Culture Programme to those Neighbourhood countries which have ratified the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

In parallel to policy developments, it is also essential to strengthen the capacity of the cultural sector in the partner countries, including by building up networks both within the region and with Europe. EU instruments have to be complemented by national measures in the partner countries to 'prepare the ground' and ensure that cultural operators can fully benefit from EU programmes. In this context the European Commission proposes that an **exchange of views is organised on the preparatory measures** which are planned by the Partner Countries before the launching of the Eastern Partnership Culture Programme and the window under the EC Culture Programme as of 2011. The objective of these preparatory measures is to raise awareness and mobilise interested stakeholders from the public sector, and civil society organisations. These preparatory measures could be discussed during the enlarged meeting of Cultural Contact Points to be held in March 2010 (see below).

3.3 Meeting of Cultural Contact Points

One of the operational conclusions of the meeting of Platform 4 was the proposal put forward by the European Commission to organise an **enlarged meeting of Cultural Contact Points** of the Culture Programme from the EU Member States, which will be opened to the Eastern partners. This meeting would be useful to disseminate information on existing and upcoming funding opportunities.

Along these lines, part of the meeting of the Cultural Contact Points scheduled for March 2010 could be organised in such an enlarged format.

3.4 Audiovisual and media policies

As a complement to the EU audiovisual policies and instruments, the Commission is also engaged in actions aimed at promoting in relation to third countries, the principles underpinning the European audiovisual model, notably the promotion of cultural diversity in international forums, the negotiation of cooperation frameworks with international partners, and the promotion of European standards on media policy with candidate countries. With the EU's Eastern and Southern neighbours, the setting up of a dialogue on audiovisual policy and a better mutual understanding are among the main goals of the Action Plans agreed with these countries.

In parallel, promoting an exchange of information on best practices within the framework of the meetings of Platform 4 could be of mutual benefit. This exchange would address the specific interests and needs of the Eastern Partners.

4. Information Society

The EU initiatives for international cooperation support economic growth by encouraging the use of Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) and by supporting regulatory policies based on the EU model. These programmes for the promotion of the Information Society are already financed with the Southern Mediterranean Partners, Latin America, Africa and Asia. Based on the experience gained with these initiatives and with the bilateral cooperation with Ukraine and Moldova, it is proposed to set up a **dialogue on the development of the Information Society** with all the Eastern Partners. Such a dialogue could include promoting the EU regulatory approach, international cooperative research in ICT, closing the digital divide and managing global ICT issues, e.g. Internet governance.

At an initial stage, it is recommended to organize **an event for the regulators** on electronic communications in the EaP countries, in order to inform them about the review of the EU framework and to explore the benefits of regional regulatory cooperation. The experience within the EU and with neighbouring countries has shown that the economic benefits, which the regulations for electronic communications have yielded for business and citizens, can only be achieved through the activities of strong regulators. It has also demonstrated that cooperation between these regulators is an essential tool to improve their independence and efficiency. In view of the growing importance of such networks in Europe (ERG) and other regions such as Latin America (REGULATEL), it is not surprising that several Eastern regulators have requested EU support for regulatory cooperation in their region.

5. Research

The **7th Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development** (FP7) is the EC's **main instrument for funding research**. FP7 is fully open to the participation of research entities from the Eastern Partners. As International Cooperation Partner Countries, all research entities from the Eastern Partners are eligible for EC funding for their participation in projects. This Work Programme will aim to encourage the increased participation of Eastern Partners in FP7 activities. A summary guide to the opportunities available for Eastern Partners in FP7 is given in Annex A.

As set out in section 1.2, the Commission would foresee organising an event on learning and

research mobility for the Eastern Partners where the Commission and Member States could present the different instruments, programmes and initiatives to promote and increase the mobility of researchers, such as the FP7 Marie Curie Actions and the EURAXESS support measures.

Annex: A summary guide to relevant Community Programmes and initiatives

1) Education

International higher education cooperation programmes

The European Commission funds two major international university cooperation programmes accessible to the Eastern Partners, for which the Commission proposes to increase funding substantially as of 2011 (+ 25% for Tempus and + 16% for Erasmus Mundus):

- The **Tempus** programme covers 27 countries in the Western Balkans, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, North Africa and the Middle East. Tempus supports the modernisation of higher education and creates an area of co-operation between countries surrounding the EU and the EU Member States. It has helped to train a new generation of academics and managers, and to support the reforms necessary for the modernisation of higher education systems. Tempus has supported the development of new curricula at Bachelors and Masters levels in a wide range of disciplines, modern teaching and learning methodologies in line with the principles of the Bologna process. It has systematically introduced quality assurance measures to ensure that these curricula are relevant and in line with the labour market needs. Tempus has contributed to the modernisation of university governance and the creation of new partnerships with the labour market.
- **Erasmus Mundus** is a worldwide cooperation and mobility programme that aims to enhance quality in higher education and promote intercultural understanding. In 2006, the Commission launched the Erasmus Mundus External Cooperation Window (EMECW). This initiative complemented the Erasmus Mundus programme by offering scholarships for students (from undergraduate to post-doctorate level) and academics, to encourage mobility between European higher education institutions and institutions from a number of non-European countries. EMECW has been subsumed and integrated into the second phase of Erasmus Mundus (2009-2013) as Action 2 of the programme since the academic year 2009-2010.

Promotion of learning and research mobility

A number of instruments and programmes are already in place to support European citizens, learning providers, companies, researchers and educational authorities and allow them to fully exploit the potential of the European lifelong learning area and the EU-wide labour market.

These include the European Qualification Framework, which relate different countries' national qualifications systems to a common European reference framework; the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) which makes teaching and learning more transparent and facilitates the recognition of studies; the NARIC network (National Academic Recognition Information Centres), to improve the academic recognition of diplomas and periods of study in the Member States.

The Commission started to promote student and teacher mobility as early as 1987, through the well-known Erasmus programme. The Erasmus Mundus programme which was launched in 2004, promotes mobility beyond the EU borders as well as the process of convergence of degree structures. The Jean Monnet Programme, which is designed to increase knowledge and awareness about European integration, also supports the mobility of researchers specialising in this field, on a world-wide basis.

The E-twinning Programme

The **e-Twinning** programme aims at strengthening and developing networking among schools. It is about using the Internet for pedagogical collaboration and has a strong professional dimension (around 20.000 teachers take part in training sessions every year). All young Europeans, during their time at secondary school, should have the opportunity to participate, together with their teachers, in an educational project with their counterparts in other European countries. The action seeks to improve the quality and the quantity of exchange of experiences through e-cooperation. An e-Twinning project can be carried out by two or more teachers, teams of teachers or subject departments, librarians, head-teachers and pupils from schools across Europe. Collaboration can be within the same subject or cross-curricular through the use of information and communication technology. Pre-school, primary, secondary and upper secondary schools can all participate (age range of pupils from 3 to 19).

The Jean Monnet Programme and networks

The Jean Monnet Programme is designed to increase knowledge and awareness about European integration by promoting teaching, research and debate on European Union matters (including the EU's relations with other regions in the world and the dialogue between peoples and cultures). The Programme is aimed exclusively at higher education institutions and since 2001, has operated on a world-wide basis. The network is currently active in 62 countries on the five continents. Universities from all countries in the world are eligible and encouraged to apply for Jean Monnet projects.

2) Youth

The Youth in Action Programme (2007-2013) enables around 110.000 young people and youth workers every year to be involved in intercultural exchanges, voluntary projects and other non-formal education activities across Europe. With a total budget of 885 million Euros, the programme promotes mobility within and beyond the EU borders, non-formal learning and intercultural dialogue, and encourages the inclusion of all young people, regardless of their educational, social and cultural background.

3) Culture

The EU's Culture programme (2007-2013) has a budget of €400 million for projects and initiatives to celebrate Europe's cultural diversity and enhance our shared cultural heritage through the development of cross-border co-operation between cultural operators and institutions. The Culture programme aims to achieve three main objectives: to promote cross-border mobility of those working in the cultural sector; to encourage the transnational circulation of cultural and artistic output; and to foster intercultural dialogue.

The European Commission will launch a specific Eastern Partnership Culture Programme with the aim of strengthening the capacity of cultural operators, fostering regional links and contributing to the development of inclusive cultural policies in the partner countries.

4) Research

The principal objective of the research part of the work programme is to assist the greater integration of the Eastern Partners in the 7th Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP7).

FP7 is the EC's main instrument for funding research. The programme funds research in key thematic areas as well as a range of other actions in order to promote scientific excellence, strengthen the European science and technology base, stimulate the competitiveness of European industry, and promote research that supports EU policies.

FP7 is fully open to the participation of research entities from the Eastern Partners and indeed in all other non-EU countries. As International Cooperation Partner Countries (ICPC), **all research entities from the Eastern Partners are eligible** for EC funding for their participation in projects.

Individual work programmes in the thematic parts of FP7 may also include **Specific International Cooperation Actions** (SICA) focused on research topics of particular interest to the Eastern Partners. In all FP7 work programmes there are several topics which are specifically targeted at the Eastern Partners and/or where the participation of ICPC partners is encouraged.

Increased and strengthened regional and bilateral S&T dialogue

FP7 has already provided support for the establishment of key networks to facilitate S&T dialogue between stakeholders from the EU Member States and FP7 Associated Countries and the Eastern Partners. The **IncoNet.EECA** project includes participants from all countries of the Eastern Partnership, as well from the broader region of Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Equally, the recently established **Black Sea ERA-NET** is a network, involving partners from five of the six Eastern Partners, which is designed to develop and strengthen the coordination of public research (funding) programmes conducted at national and regional level between EU Member States, FP7 Associated Countries and countries of the Black Sea region.

These projects will allow for new opportunities and fora to link the scientific potential and resources of the countries of the EU and the Eastern Partners and other EECA countries, to make optimal use of academic strengths, share respective resources and to foster the transfer of scientific knowledge into political, economic and social development. One of the important

aspects of the projects is the **training and exchange of best practices**, at both project and programme level, for researchers and programme managers in managing research funding and in writing competitive applications. These projects also provide a forum for stakeholders to provide input to the European Commission to **shape SICA topics** and other initiatives targeted at countries in the region, for inclusion in future FP7 work programmes.

The 2010 FP7 International Cooperation work programme also offers new opportunities to reinforce the cooperation capacities of research centres in the Eastern Partners, through the **ERA-WIDE** call for proposals. It is expected that at least one project per Eastern Partner will be funded. The activities covered by the call include:

- Networking with research centres in EU Member States and/or FP7 associated countries in view of disseminating scientific information, identifying partners, and setting up joint experiments;
- Developing training modules to build competency, and to facilitate the participation in FP7 of the research centres located in the Eastern Partners; and
- Developing the research centres' strategy to increase their scope, regional coverage and improve their responses to regional and national socio-economic needs.

Finally, given the status as European Neighbourhood Partner countries, all Eastern Partnership countries will be offered **the possibility of requesting association to the FP**, provided the necessary Protocols to the Partnership and Cooperation agreements have been signed⁵. Requests for association have already been received from Moldova and Ukraine; formal negotiations are expected to start shortly.

Information Dissemination

National Contact Points (NCPs) in Member States and FP7 Associated countries and 'FP7 contacts' in third countries play a critical role in informing researchers of the opportunities available through FP7 and providing specific advice, assistance and training to researchers on making successful applications to FP7 and in managing FP7 grants effectively.

All Eastern Partners have established **FP7 contact networks**. In order to increase information flow to researchers and the involvement of researchers from the Eastern Partners in FP7 applications and successful projects, all Eastern Partners are encouraged to expand the support offered by these contacts and/or increase the level of regional cooperation between networks within the Eastern Partners, to share best practice and knowledge, as well as increasing networking with NCPs from the Member States and FP7 Associated countries. All Eastern Partners are also encouraged to attend relevant thematic NCP events, as well as the annual meeting of national NCP coordinators.

⁵ COM (2006) 724 final of 4 December 2006 on the general approach to enable ENP partners to participate in the Community agencies and programmes
Council Conclusions on the participation of ENP partners in Community agencies and programmes of 5 March 2007, GAERC, 6755/07 (Press 38)

Mobility of Researchers

The issue of mobility was at the centre of the discussions which took place during the first meeting of Platform 4. As set out in section 1.2 of this work programme, the Commission would recommend organising an event on mobility, for research and for learning, for the Eastern Partners where the European Commission and Member States could present the different instruments, programmes and policy initiatives that have been developed to promote and increase the mobility of researchers. In FP7, the **Marie Curie Actions** are a range of mobility-based actions, the majority of which are open to the participation of researchers and research organisations from the Eastern Partners.

For example, the Marie Curie '**World Fellowships**', by design go beyond European frontiers. They reinforce research cooperation with third countries, through the mobility of researchers. In this category are: the International Incoming Fellowships (IIF) which allow researchers from the Eastern Partners to work in the EU Member States and FP7 Associated countries, as well as support for return to their countries; the International Outgoing Fellowships (IOF) which offer support for European researchers to move to third countries, including the Eastern Partners; and the International Research Staff Exchange scheme (IRSES) which offers support for establishing or reinforcing long-term research cooperation through coordinated joint programmes for the exchange of researchers between research organisations in EU Member States/FP7 Associated countries and the Eastern Partners.

The **Initial Training Networks** (ITN) provide support for the recruitment of international researchers at the doctoral and early post-doctoral level through a network of research organisations which have established common research and training programmes. Research organisations from the Eastern Partners have only had very limited involvement in ITN networks, and are strongly encouraged to increase their participation.