

WORK PROGRAMME 2012-13

PLATFORM 4 OF THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP

CONTACTS BETWEEN PEOPLE

At its meeting of 27 October 2011, Platform 4 adopted its Work Programme for the years 2012-2013, in accordance with the general guidelines and rules of procedure of the Eastern Partnership Multilateral Platforms (point 1.4). The European Commission was guided by a number of considerations, including the lessons learnt from the implementation of the first Platform 4 work programme (2010-11), and the recommendations made by Platform 4 participants at their meeting of 5 May 2011. A limited number of actions are proposed, to ensure that the Work Programme is focused and can therefore have a measurable impact. This work programme will remain flexible enough to allow new initiatives to be added at a later stage, if the need arises.

Actions under this work programme will expand cooperation in education, youth, research and innovation, culture, audio-visual sector and information society. In addition, in line with the recent joint Communication 'A New Response to a Changing Neighbourhood: a Review of European Neighbourhood Policy'¹ increased emphasis will be given to drawing together the strands of cooperation in research and innovation, including the mobility of students, researchers and academics, to build a Common Knowledge and Innovation Space with the Eastern Partnership countries.

In the first instance, the Commission will organise an information campaign to raise awareness on the new generation of international cooperation programmes (2014-20) in education, youth, culture, and research and innovation, and the new opportunities offered to EaP countries in this context.

The Commission proposes to implement a number of actions to reinforce the participation of EaP countries in EU international cooperation programmes and strengthen its dialogue on the policies covered by Platform 4:

1) Education

- **Tempus** is the international academic cooperation programme which promotes the modernisation of higher education in the countries surrounding the EU, and their close collaboration with EU universities. Following the publication of the Communication on "A new response to a changing Neighbourhood"², the budget allocated to Tempus in EaP countries may be significantly increased for the period 2012-13 (Tempus has an average annual budget of 19 M€ for EaP countries) so as to fund an increased number of cooperation projects between EU and EaP universities.
- **Erasmus Mundus** aims to enhance quality in higher education through scholarships and academic cooperation between Europe and the rest of the world. The programme offers financial support for institutions and scholarships for individuals. In line with the Communication on "A new response to a changing Neighbourhood, the budget allocated to Erasmus Mundus may be significantly increased for the period 2012-13, (Erasmus Mundus has an average annual budget of 15 M€ for EaP countries).

¹ COM(2011)303 of 25.5.2011

² COM(2011)303 – http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/com_11_303_en.pdf

- The **eTwinning** programme offers a portal which takes advantage of the possibilities offered by the Internet and digital media to promote European school cooperation, collaborative learning and project based pedagogy. The partial opening of the eTwinning programme to EaP countries will continue in 2012-13, with the organisation of staff training, the selection of schools, launching of an information campaign, the adaptation of the e-platform, and the start of partnerships between EaP and EU schools as of 2012.
- The Commission and interested Member States will participate **in students' fairs** in selected EaP countries, as part of the "Study in Europe" campaign, to promote study opportunities, student and academic staff exchanges between the EU and EaP countries.

2) Research and Innovation

- Awareness raising actions on the opportunities available through the **2012 and 2013 work programmes of the 7th Framework Programme (FP7)** will continue to be promoted, in particular through information sessions on the calls in the Cooperation, Capacities and People programmes; via information session and video conferences, to allow exchanges of ideas with local universities, research centres, companies and individual researchers.
- The Commission will continue to encourage an increase the numbers of researchers from the Eastern Partnership countries registered as FP7 evaluators.
- The Commission will continue to provide support to facilitate the attendance of the **FP Contact National Coordinators** at the annual meeting of the National Contact Point National Coordinators (NCP) from all EU Member States and FP7 associated countries.
- The Commission will continue to provide support to all legal and financial Contact Points from the Eastern Partnership countries to attend the regular information meetings organised for Member State and FP7 associated country legal and financial NCPs.
- It is proposed to organise a regional event on evaluation at programme and project level as well as evaluation of current national policies and foresight activities for new policies for research and innovation.

3) Youth

- The regional **EaP Youth Programme** will be launched in 2012. It will be delivered through a combination of two components: capacity development and a grants scheme. The programme will provide a holistic coverage of the youth sphere – from capacity-building in the policy domain, to the support to practical projects involving young people, which should be channelled through the "EaP Youth in Action Window" proposed below.
- The Commission will continue to support concrete initiatives and projects to the benefit of young people and youth workers from the EaP partner countries through the available opportunities offered by the **Youth in Action** Programme, notably youth exchanges, European Voluntary Service and training and networking opportunities for youth workers and youth organisations from the EaP region and from the EU. Following the ENP Joint Communication "A new response to a changing Neighbourhood", additional resources from ENPI funding instruments are expected to complement the current Youth in Action budget

allocated to EaP countries for the period 2012-13. This will take the form of an "EaP Youth in Action Window", which will allow supporting an additional number of Youth in Action projects involving EaP countries based on the existing criteria and procedures of the Youth in Action Programme. In addition, priority under this "Window" will also be awarded to projects: i) that demonstrate a clear commitment to provide support to disadvantaged young people living in rural or deprived urban areas ii) that contribute to raising awareness of the nature of youth work or iii) that promote sharing of best practices in the sphere of youth work. Under this "Window", youth organisations from the EaP countries would be given, for the first time, the opportunity to directly apply for funding to the Executive, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency, as a means to strengthen their participation in the Programme and their capacity in project management. With a view to supporting the implementation of the Window, it is also expected to reinforce the SALTO Eastern Europe and Caucasus Resource Centre, in particular so as to include in its activities an additional focus on the needs of disadvantaged young people living in rural or deprived urban areas in EaP Countries.

- In order to mark the launch of the new instruments in favour of youth in the EaP region, i.e. the regional EaP Youth Programme and the EaP Youth in Action Window, it is proposed to organise a youth event as soon as the implementation modalities will have been finalised. This event should be an occasion to explain the objectives of the two instruments, the modalities of participation as well as to encourage partnership-building and the development of project ideas. The 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.

4) Culture

- The Commission will continue implementing the **regional EaP Culture Programme**, which aims at assisting EaP countries in their cultural policy reform at government level, as well as capacity building and improving the professionalism of cultural operators in the region. It contributes to exchange of information and experience among cultural operators at regional level and with the EU and supports regional initiatives which demonstrate positive cultural contributions to economic development, social inclusion, conflict resolution and intercultural dialogue.
- A **policy dialogue on culture**, based on the needs expressed at the regional cultural seminar organised in Tbilisi in April 2011 will be set up around the following topics:
 - The impact of investment in culture on economic and social development, ("smart, sustainable and inclusive growth"); how to reach out to stakeholders in the partner countries, both within and beyond the cultural sector;
 - How to assist EaP countries in policy formulation by, inter alia, identifying tools and mechanisms at regional level;
 - Support EaP countries in gathering data on existing instruments and tools (national, bilateral, international, EC, other donor activities) to maximise their use and foster complementarities at regional level.
- To implement the policy dialogue, an expert meeting will be held in Brussels in the second half of 2012, and a public seminar gathering policy makers, personalities and actors from the cultural scene will be organised in 2013 in one of the EaP countries.

5) Audiovisual sector

- A number of **conferences, seminars** and **peer-learning events** involving policy makers and audiovisual professionals will be organised to exchange information and identify needs with view to initiating pilot cooperation activities
- The Commission also intends to organise **seminars** and **workshops for universities, technical film institutions** or other film training organisations of the region and EU Member States to foster cooperation and build up capacity for initial and continuous training in the audiovisual field.
- Studies to analyse the situation of the film industry in EaP countries might also be launched, with a particular focus on the needs of the independent audiovisual producers and actors.
- The Commission will disseminate information on the funding opportunities offered through the MEDIA Mundus programme. It is a broad international cooperation programme for the audiovisual industry to strengthen cultural and commercial relations between Europe's film industry and film-makers of non EU countries. The EU provides funding from 2011-2013 for projects submitted by audiovisual professionals from EU and non EU countries. MEDIA Mundus focuses on training, market access (the search for partners for co-productions and distribution), and aims at encouraging international sales, promotion, circulation and exposure of audiovisual works worldwide on all possible distribution platforms.

6) Information Society

- The **EaP network of regulators for electronic communications** will be set up, as a follow up of the workshops organised in Vienna in 2010, Vilnius and Barcelona in 2011.
- The European Commission has launched an action for the provision of **technical assistance for electronic communications regulators of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries**. The action aims to support partners in gaining a better understanding and making better decisions regarding various complex regulatory issues in the area of electronic communications and information society
- A series of **conferences and workshops** will be organised, on matters of common interest linked to the approximation of the regulatory framework for electronic communications and the ICT priorities of the European Digital Agenda.
- The Commission will maintain its support to **e-infrastructures for the education and research** sectors, which includes continued linking of the National Research and Education Networks to GÉANT, continued provision of computing services and access to education and research resources, as well as continued integration into the European governance structures.