



Key events of the EU-Ukraine cooperation. March, 2014

11 BLN: EUROPEAN COMMISSION AGREED A PACKAGE OF SUPPORT TO UKRAINE

On 5 March, the European Commission agreed a package of support identifying a number of concrete measures to assist economically and financially Ukraine.



These measures should be seen as the Commission's contribution to a European and international effort to support Ukraine's economic and political reforms, and will be presented to the EU Heads of State and Government ahead of their extraordinary meeting on Thursday 6 March.

"The most immediate priority for the EU is to contribute to a peaceful solution to the current crisis, in full respect of international law", said the European Commission President *Jose Manuel Barroso* said. "The European Commission is proposing today a package designed to assist a committed, inclusive and reforms oriented Government in rebuilding a stable and prosperous future for Ukraine. What we propose could bring overall support of at least **EUR 11 billion** over the

next couple of years from the EU budget and EU-based international financial institutions."

Key elements of the package agreed today:

- EUR 3 billion from the EU budget in the coming years, EUR 1.6 billion in macro financial assistance loans (MFA) and an assistance package of grants of EUR 1.4 billion;
- Up to EUR 8 billion from the European Investment Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development;
- Potential EUR 3.5 billion leveraged through the Neighbourhood Investment Facility;
- Setting up of a donor coordination platform;
- Provisional application of the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area when Association Agreement is signed and, if need be, by autonomous frontloading of trade measures;
- Organisation of a High Level Investment Forum/Task Force;
- Modernisation of the Ukraine Gas Transit System and work on reverse flows, notably via Slovakia;
- Acceleration of Visa Liberalisation Action Plan within the established framework; Offer of a Mobility Partnership;
- Technical assistance on a number of areas from constitutional to judicial reform and preparation of elections.

This document below sets out the main concrete measures that the Commission is proposing for the short and medium term to help stabilise the economic and financial situation in Ukraine, assist with the transition, encourage political and economic reforms and support inclusive development for the benefit of all Ukrainians. These measures combined could bring overall support of at least **€1 billion** over the coming years from the EU budget and EU based international financial institutions (IFIs) in addition to the significant funding being provided by the IMF and World Bank.

All these measures should be seen as the Commission's contribution to a European and international effort at providing a sustainable way out of Ukraine's difficult economic situation and to support its economic and political transition. The action of Member States in complementing and reinforcing what the Commission can mobilise on



its own is crucial. The participation of partner countries as well as of the international financial institutions, notably the IMF, the EIB, the EBRD and the World Bank, is essential to leverage what we can all offer, increase the visibility of our collective action and improve its impact. All elements and instruments need to be pulled together to ensure an effective and coherent European Union and international response.

Part of the EU's effort is to support Ukraine on its path towards political and economic reform, including those set out in the Association Agreement /Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (AA/DCFTA), which we stand ready to sign. It is essential to raise public awareness in Ukraine as well as in third countries on the benefits and opportunities that such reforms can offer both for Ukraine and the region as a whole.

Read the full text: <http://euukrainecoop.com/2014/03/07/11bln-european-commission-agreed-a-package-of-support-to-ukraine/>

STATEMENT OF THE EU HEADS OF STATE OR GOVERNMENT ON UKRAINE

Read below the statement of the EU heads of State or Government on Ukraine, adopted on March 6th.



Angela Merkel, German Federal Chancellor, Arseniy Yatsenyuk, acting Ukrainian Prime Minister, José Manuel Barroso and Andrus Ansip, Estonian Prime Minister (in the foreground, from right to left)

1. We met today with the Prime Minister of Ukraine Arseniy Yatseniuk who informed us about the situation in his country. We applaud the courage and resilience shown by the Ukrainian people these last months and weeks.
2. We endorse the conclusions adopted by the Council on 3 March. We strongly condemn the unprovoked violation of Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity by the Russian Federation and call on the Russian Federation to immediately withdraw its armed forces to the areas of their permanent stationing, in accordance with the relevant agreements. We call on the Russian Federation to enable immediate access for international monitors. The solution to the crisis in Ukraine must be based on the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Ukraine, as well as the strict adherence to international standards. We consider that the decision by the Supreme Council of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea to hold a referendum on the future status of the territory is contrary to the Ukrainian Constitution and therefore illegal.
3. The European Union has important relations with Ukraine and the Russian Federation and stands ready to engage in a frank and open dialogue with them. It has a special responsibility for peace, stability and prosperity in Europe. We will pursue these objectives using all available channels and ask the EU representatives to take all necessary initiatives. The European Union will also participate in the multilateral mechanism (contact/coordination group) being prepared to deescalate the situation which should have as its objectives inter alia to build confidence between the parties, watch over the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the country, protect all citizens against intimidations, watch over the rights of minorities, help to prepare free and fair elections, and monitor implementation of agreements and commitments.



4. The European Union's and the Russian Federation's common objective of a relationship based on mutual interest and respect of international obligations needs to be promptly restored. It would be a matter of great regret if the Russian Federation failed to work in that direction, and in particular if it continued to refuse to participate in a productive dialogue with the Government of Ukraine. We have today decided to take actions, including those envisaged by the Council on 3 March, notably to suspend bilateral talks with the Russian Federation on visa matters as well as talks with the Russian Federation on the New Agreement. We support the decision of the European Members of the G8 and the EU institutions to suspend their participation in G8 Summit preparations until further notice.

5. The solution to the crisis should be found through negotiations between the Governments of Ukraine and the Russian Federation, including through potential multilateral mechanisms. Such negotiations need to start within the next few days and produce results within a limited timeframe. In the absence of such results the European Union will decide on additional measures, such as travel bans, asset freezes and the cancellation of the EU-Russia summit. The Commission and the EEAS will take forward preparatory work on these measures. Any further steps by the Russian Federation to destabilise the situation in Ukraine would lead to severe and far reaching consequences for relations between the European Union and its MemberStates, on the one hand, and the Russian Federation, on the other hand, which will include a broad range of economic areas.

Read the full text: <http://euukrainecoop.com/2014/03/07/eusummit/>

"MOTIVATION FOR VOLUNTEERING IS QUITE SIMPLE: WE LIVE HERE"



In our interview, Volodymyr Kuznietsov (on photo), communications expert with the EU-funded Programme for the Prevention, Preparedness and Response to Man-made and Natural Disasters in the ENPI East region (PPRD East) speaks about the European experience of volunteerism for the safety of the community in times of big natural catastrophes and man-made disasters.

- Let's talk about the social role of volunteerism. If services and specialists exist for solving all kinds of problems, why involve citizens?

The number of serious incidents and catastrophes – both man-made and natural – is increasing in Ukraine. Usually disaster relief workers see the population either as victims or as a factor that only hinders and complicates their work. Meanwhile, European experience has proven that the population is a huge resource that should not be ignored. In EU member states, hundreds of thousands of people work as volunteers in addition to their everyday jobs as teachers, doctors, etc. These people are sufficient in number to provide significant support to relief services if needed. Trained volunteers can detect early signs of danger in time to possibly prevent it. They can participate in rescue activities and independently organise to mitigate damage. In addition to the direct benefit to the local community, social volunteerism is advantageous for volunteers themselves and the country as a whole.

From this point of view, the Austrian experience is especially interesting. An ordinary Austrian can undertake the role of fireman, for example, in addition to his or her regular job. In a small town, there might be no fire station, but there is a fully-equipped fire fighting vehicle and specially trained team of volunteers that, in case of emergency, could use it properly. In this case, the citizens can choose to fight the fire themselves, rather than wait for help while incurring more losses and damage. Moreover, this system helps by saving significant financial resources on the salaries of firemen. Such a system works efficiently without excessive expenditures and with minimal waste.

Read the full interview: <http://euukrainecoop.com/2014/03/06/volunteering/>



ELDERLY UKRAINIANS ARE GETTING PROTECTION FROM ABUSE



Final conference of the "Elder Abuse Prevention in Ukraine" project,
18 February, Kyiv

On February 18, an international conference took place in Kyiv summing up the results of the "Elder Abuse Prevention in Ukraine" project. Experts associated with the project noted that elderly people in Ukraine often suffer from financial injustices, neglect, or even physical abuse.

These members of society may, for example, be faced with situations where someone is trying to steal from them or deprive them of property. There are occasionally even cases of physical violence against elderly people.

The "Elder Abuse Prevention in Ukraine" project was implemented by the Ukrainian Charitable Organization, "Turbota pro Litnih v Ukraini" (Age Concern Ukraine) (ACU), and the British organization, "Age UK". The project was supported by the European Commission through the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) programme.

"Unfortunately the problems of elder abuse in Ukraine are not investigated, not properly analysed and are considered inexistent. But ACU volunteers often come across such cases. The main problem is that older people are often hurt by their relatives," said Galyna Polyakova, CEO of the all-Ukrainian charitable organisation, 'Age Concern Ukraine.'

Hundreds ACU volunteers aged over 60 years took an active part in the project's activities. They interviewed almost 1,500 seniors and found out that 15% of respondents complained of injustice at the hands of their own family members, and over 40% said that they faced injustice from government officials. Based on these findings, volunteers launched the ACU group, which is devoted to detecting incidences of elder abuse and providing assistance to victims.

According to Polyakova, the survey also reveals that older people in Ukraine trust the police more than other officials. The police are more able to protect an elderly person than social workers who do not have the necessary tools.

"Over 100 participants took part in our conference. Representatives of public administrations from different regions of Ukraine, social security authorities, and international organisations accepted our invitation. Representatives from six different countries attended the conference. We are pleased that there is such a large number of stakeholders working to solve this problem, because it does require a collaborative approach," – Polyakova noted.

One of the results of the project was that local authorities established executive committees devoted to helping older people who are suffering various kinds of harm. This model was borrowed from the UK. Executive committees combine the efforts of different professional groups, including doctors, social workers, police and local authorities, and have no cost to government. They work together on a weekly basis when required. The experience gained has been analysed by experts from the Ministry of Social Affairs, which recommended this model be used in Ukraine. So far, these committees have been established in Mykolayiv, Khmelnytsky, Glukhiv, and several regions of Crimea.

WHAT CAN THE EU AGRICULTURAL LAND MARKET PRACTICE OFFER?

In his interview Stefan Verbunt (on photo below), Resident Twinning Advisor of the EU-funded project "Assistance in the development of an open and transparent agricultural land market in Ukraine" shares the challenges of his recently launched project and views on what could be done to ensure transparent agricultural land market operations in the future.



- *What makes the nonexistent agricultural land market in Ukraine nontransparent and what are the main challenges of your project in view of this?*

Indeed, there is currently a moratorium on agricultural land sales. So in fact there is no market, because there are no transactions. As a result there are not a lot of incentives for farmers to invest and this really handicaps the development of the agricultural sector.



A lot need to be done. Basically there are two central requirements in order to open up the agricultural land market: the administrative side and the legal systems. If you want to have a functioning land market, you need a proper cadastre. In the recent past Ukraine has developed a Land Information System (National Cadastre System) supported by the World Bank aimed at registering the data on the land plots. On the legal side, the land must be legally registered. When buying land one needs to be certain that the seller has legitimate right to do this and that there are no other obligations on the land. A lot of work has already been done in Ukraine but system still needs improvements. Our project will assist to get these systems and institutions functioning in line with EU best practices.

In Ukraine there are about 7 million individuals (farmers, retired people and others) with land shares, who were given these shares when Ukraine became independent. Of course, after 20 years of independence landowners are really becoming impatient, because some of them want to sell, some want to buy more. This resulted in vast amounts of land (shares) being leased to big companies. These large companies starting from 10.000ha and much more, have an enormous impact on the social structure of the Rural areas. This is of course a political issue.

Another issue is the productivity of land (not to be confused with fertility) which is far below its potential. No one is willing to make long-term investment to increase productivity, when there is not sufficient legal certainty. Foreign investors, companies with the necessary knowledge and equipment, could assist in developing the agricultural sector if only the legal system would allow it.

Read the full interview: <http://euukrainecoop.com/2014/03/06/land-market/>

ARE CULTURAL PROJECTS A “NICE TO HAVE” OR A MUST? – INTERVIEW



Culture is an underestimated tool for creating improved life conditions and boost development. Although culture does contribute remarkably to economic growth, too, cultural projects are regularly struggling with scarce financial funds. We spoke with Luciano GLOOR (on photo), Team Leader of the supporting unit RMCBU of the Programme, about the achievements so far.

The Eastern Partnership Culture Programme of the EU seeks to support the capacity building and the professionalization of cultural actors in all subsectors (museums, heritage crafts, publishing, film, etc.) in the region.

- *You are working with the Eastern Partnership (EaP) region for some time already. In your opinion, what are the main cultural needs of the region?*



This is a huge and very open question. To answer it would go far beyond the scope of this interview. But fortunately, our task is pretty well defined: in addition to supporting the 15 projects that got awarded grants under the Eastern Partnership Culture Programme, we are in charge of providing capacity building assistance related to cultural laws and policies to authorities and other cultural organisations in the Eastern Partnership countries and to promote cultural policy reforms.

In this regard, the RMCBU, together with the support of external experts, developed an “Analytical Baseline Report on the Cultural Sector and Policies” for each of the six partner countries plus a “Regional Research Report on Cultural Policies and Trends of the Eastern Partnership Countries”. Based on the findings and recommendations of these reports, we implemented the first of three sets of workshops in 2013 and we will run a second workshop cycle in 2014 under the title “Culture Policy Exchange Workshops”. While the six countries have very diverse cultural needs, when it comes to requirements for cultural policy reforms, there are a number of common needs that we try to address through our workshops.

- *What are these needs for EaP countries?*

These needs include once and for all overcome the persistent quasi-soviet understanding of culture by redefining the notion of culture and the role and tasks of the Ministries of Culture. These bodies should see themselves more like ministries “for culture” instead of ministries “of culture.” On the other hand, civil society and independent cultural actors must be supported and strengthened to allow them to fulfil their role. Another challenge is that the administrative and legal frameworks of all six countries are far from being culture-friendly. Their reform should create a context that is supportive of a strong and dynamic culture sector that contributes to the sustainable social, human and economic development of society.

Considering all the above-mentioned needs, we have identified a particular need with regard to capacity building: in light of the envisioned cultural policy reforms, it is important to strengthen the analytical skills of culture stakeholders and their knowledge and ability related to strategic policy development and implementation. However, this is not just a question of skills and knowledge. Reforms and improvements are as much connected to the general cultural setting and the overall political situation. The culture sectors of the EaP countries are in the midst of a complex transformation and this requires new skills as well as new democratic, inclusive and participatory decision-making processes that will lead to the elaboration of new strategies and policies.

Read the full interview: <http://euukrainecoop.com/2014/03/06/culture/>

“A LOT OF LAWYERS ARE HELPING PEOPLE FOR FREE” – INTERVIEW

Over the last few weeks, the community liaison offices of the Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union (UHHRU) have been overworked. These offices are supported by the EU project, “Enhancing Legal Opportunities for Vulnerable Groups to Defend Their Rights,” and are providing free legal advice on ways to protect against rights violations.

Our conversation with Maksym Shcherbatyuk, the program director of UHHRU, highlights recent developments in human rights protection in Ukraine.

- **Demands for justice in Ukraine are especially high right now. In view of the recent developments in our country, are there any changes in the work of the community liaison offices of UHHRU?**

These days all our community liaison offices, which include a network of 13 offices all over Ukraine, are overloaded with work. The events of the last month have increased the number of applications we receive, especially concerning violations of civil and political rights, including the right to peaceful demonstrations. Most of these applications concern the criminal charges against Euromaidan participants. We have been approached by people who suffered on November 29-30, 2013 as well by the so-called ‘Bankova prisoners,’ who were imprisoned after the events of December 1, 2013. With each new stage of Euromaidan, the number of people we see is increasing, and with similar protests taking place in Symu, Kharkiv, and Cherkasy, the number of applications from the regions has grown as well.



Due to the need for more intensive work, we have attracted a large number of lawyers and they are all putting their best foot forward. Many lawyers have joined in the effort to support human rights. Our offices are offering consultations, but quite often the attorney must get directly involved in the case. We offered special training for lawyers to agree on approaches to these issues, because in many cases things were written 'as a copy paste'. This is especially true for accusations of being involved in the riots. Therefore, it was important to have a single position to which all the lawyers adhere. The European Court of Human Rights is an important tool for us, and we are now preparing many applications.

Read the full interview: <http://euukrainecoop.com/2014/03/07/lawyers/>

CUSTOMS AUTHORITIES FIGHT CIGARETTE SMUGGLING



EU Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine, Basarabeasca, Ukraine, 1
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Smuggling of cigarettes through the central sector of Moldovan – Ukrainian border was the most serious risks to border security on the Ukrainian-Moldovan border in 2013. To tackle this risk, representatives from customs and law enforcement agencies of Moldova and Ukraine got together at EUBAM headquarters for a Task Force Tobacco meeting.

The aim of the meeting was to plan cooperative measures in fighting and preventing the illegal activity in the area of tobacco product smuggling. The participants discussed proposals concerning operational aspects of counteracting cigarettes smuggling in the region. EUBAM used the opportunity to present to the Moldovan and Ukrainian partners the EU multi-

level approach.

The Mission prepared the ground for further cooperation of Moldovan and Ukrainian colleagues with their international partners. This time the Ukrainian and Moldovan customs officers were joined by their EU colleagues from European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) and HM Revenue and Customs (UK).

The Task Force Tobacco was established in 2010 and since then it has coordinated the joint efforts of Ukrainian and Moldovan customs agencies in combating the smuggling of tobacco products from Moldova and Ukraine into the European Union.

Useful links:

For more information on EU-Ukraine relations, consult the following resources
<http://euukrainecoop.com/useful-links/>

Calendar of past and future events: <http://euukrainecoop.com/calendar/>