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P R E S S R E L E A S E

Eastern Partnership: High Representative Ashton and Commissioner Füle with Foreign Ministers on preparations for Vilnius

High Representative/Vice President Catherine Ashton and Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy Štefan Füle together with the Lithuanian Foreign Minister Linas Linkevičius met with the Foreign Ministers of the six countries of the Eastern Partnership in New York today to discuss the state of play before the Eastern Partnership (EaP) summit in Vilnius.

High Representative Ashton and Commissioner Füle reassured their partners about the inclusivity of the EaP taking into account their commitment to shared values and necessary reforms. A concrete expression of this should be the EaP Vilnius summit in November with the possible signature of the EU Association Agreement with Ukraine and initialing Association Agreements with Georgia and Republic of Moldova. They also underlined EU's resolve to find ways to strengthen cooperation with other partners.

Today's meeting took place in the context of the intensified contacts in the run-up to the Vilnius summit, after the Informal Partnership Dialogue held in Yerevan at the beginning of the month and the EaP Ministerial meeting in Brussels in July.

High Representative Ashton and Commissioner Füle stressed that the EU policy towards neighbours is a dynamic one, based on the EU's values and norms, and adapts to the needs and ambitions of its partner countries. This policy aims to push forward EU-type transformative reforms and does not operate at the expense of anyone. They noted that the cooperation within the Eastern Partnership, including through the Association Agreements, can be beneficial also for the regional cooperation and for the neighbours of EU's neighbours.

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At the same time, High Representative Ashton and Commissioner Füle recalled that it was unacceptable to exercise pressure on partner countries willing to sign an Association Agreement with the EU.
