



AEF Association Exchange Forum

2nd Association Exchange Forum

19-21 September 2018

Kyiv, Aloft Hotel (Esplanadna Str., 17)

The 2nd Association Exchange Forum is an international gathering of practitioners and experts on Association Agreement implementation in Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. It is second in the series of international events aiming at providing a platform and encouraging cross-country and multi-stakeholder networking to:

- Overview achievements, share experience, good practices and lessons learned in the Association Agreements implementation in Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, in particular in the institutional set-up, implementation monitoring and civil society/stakeholder involvement;
- Elaborate ideas on how to improve the AA implementation performance and make the most out of this process, inter alia, through peer-to-peer learning and cooperation between the associated countries, finding joint solutions to common problems and defining shared expectations regarding the EU's involvement and support;
- Discuss common interests of the three countries in advancing their European integration by exploring the opportunities, options and prerequisites of de facto integration, using the potential of the Association Agreements' provisions on political association and economic integration, taking into account a broader context of the EU reform and future of Europe debate.

This-year Forum will focus on the progressive agenda for political association and economic integration of Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine with the EU on the basis of the Association Agreements (AAs). Participants will dwell upon reviewing the actual progress, achievements and shortcomings, and relevant expectations of the associated countries' governments regarding the sector-specific integration in the EU internal market and post-visa free agenda. Also, the instruments of the EU's involvement and support within the Eastern Partnership and Association Agreements frameworks will be analysed. The 2nd AEF discussions will take place in a broader context of policy thinking in various European capitals on the future of the EU, Brexit, EU enlargement in the Balkans and a further development of the European single market, and – last but by far not the least – the upcoming elections in all the three partner countries and in the EU itself.

Organisers: The Forum is organized by the Civic Synergy Project, funded by the EU and implemented by the International Renaissance Foundation, in partnership with the Lithuanian consultancy ESTEP and in cooperation with the Governmental Office for the Coordination of European and Euro-Atlantic Integration of Ukraine and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania.

Participants: The Forum participants include high governmental officials from Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine responsible for coordinating the implementation of the Association Agreements between the EU and the three countries, leading experts and civil society activists with an expertise on Association Agreements implementation – both from the region and the EU, Brussels and member states, and other European non-members, members of European and national parliaments, EEAS and European Commission officials, EU Delegations in Kyiv, Tbilisi and Chisinau, relevant EU technical assistance projects, donor organisations, think tanks and academic institutions.

Forum agenda

Day 1. 19 September 2018

Morning - arrival of participants

15:00 - 16:00 Registration of participants, welcome coffee

16:00 – 17:00 **Opening of the Forum**

Moderator: Zoriana MISHCHUK, Civic Synergy Project Team Leader and Key Expert (Ukraine)

Speakers:

- Ivanna KLYMPUSH-TSINTSADZE, Vice Prime Minister of Ukraine for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration
- Darius SKUSEVIČIUS, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania
- Daniela MORARI, State Secretary for European Integration of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of Moldova
- Archil KARaulashvili, Director General for European Integration, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia
- Oleksandr SUSHKO, Executive director, International Renaissance Foundation (Ukraine)

17:00 – 18:30 **Session I: STATE OF ASSOCIATION: PROGRESS, CHALLENGES AND PERSPECTIVES FOR THE ENHANCED DIALOGUE AMONG THE ASSOCIATION COUNTRIES AND THE EU**

What is the progress and effects of AA implementation in Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova? What impact do the AAs have on broader political and economic contexts of the associated countries? What are the main challenges and obstacles for moving forward more quickly? What are the expectations regarding the EU's further involvement and support? What are the priorities for sector-specific integration in the EU internal market and post-visa free agenda?

Moderator: Klaudijus MANIOKAS, Chairman of the Board, ESTEP consultancy (Lithuania)

Speakers:

- Olga STEFANISHYNA, Director of the Government Office for European and Euro-Atlantic integration, Secretariat of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine
- Daniela MORARI, State Secretary for European Integration of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of Moldova
- Archil KARaulashvili, Director General for European Integration, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia
- Dirk LORENZ, Acting Head of Division for relations with the Eastern Partnership countries, European External Action Service

Discussion

18:30 Snacks&Coffee

09:30 – 11:00

Session II: INTEGRATION WITHOUT MEMBERSHIP: ESTABLISHED MODELS AND NEW DYNAMICS

What are the lessons to be learned for Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine from the European Economic Area case and Western Balkans stabilization and association process? What are the prerequisites for joining EFTA and EEA? Is the idea of a Common Economic Space in the Western Balkans a step towards EU integration? How the perceptions about EU enlargement for Western Balkans have been changing both in the EU and in Western Balkans? What was the rationale behind the UK government's choice of the GE/MD/UA-type association agreement for the relations with the EU after Brexit? Where are GE, MD & UA in the actual EU debate on the future of Europe and its boundaries?

Moderator: Taras KACHKA, Strategic Advisor, International Renaissance Foundation, former negotiator on Ukraine-EU Association Agreement (Ukraine)

Speakers:

- Michael EMERSON, Associate Senior Research Fellow, Centre for European Policy Studies (Brussels)
- Kristof BENDER, Deputy Chairman, European Stability Initiative (Austria)
- Adam LAZOWSKI, Professor of EU Law, University of Westminster, London, Short term expert of the Association4U project (UK/Poland)
- Nicolas TENZER, President, Centre d'étude et de réflexion pour l'action politique (France)

Discussion

11:00 – 11:30

Coffee break

11:30 – 13:00

Session III: THE RIGHT FORMULA FOR EU SUPPORT FOR ASSOCIATION AGREEMENT IMPLEMENTATION: #GUIDANCE + #CONDITIONALITY + #ASSISTANCE = #INSTITUTIONS + #REFORMS + #DEVELOPMENT?

How much EU guidance is and should be applied for AA implementation? Should the annual Association Implementation Reports' methodology be reviewed, i. a. to contain the guiding benchmarks as in the annual progress reports for the candidate countries? What sort of EU feedback is needed and provided for the national legislative drafts? Structural reforms and institutional upgrade or acquis implementation – what should go first? What are the models and preconditions for the most effective use of financial aid as an instrument? More sticks or more carrots needed? What is needed for the governments to raise their own expert capacities?

Moderator: Balazs JARABIK, non-resident scholar, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Short term expert of the Association4U project

Speakers:

- Katarina WOLCZUK, Associate Fellow at Russia and Eurasia Programme, Chatham House (UK/Poland)
- Darius ŽERUOLIS, independent expert (Lithuania)
- Peter WAGNER, Head of the Support Group for Ukraine, European Commission

- Anatolii KUTSEVOL, Director of the Reform Support Team, Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of Ukraine

Discussion

13:00 – 14:30

Lunch

14:30 – 16:00

Session IV: THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP'S KEY DELIVERABLES AS A NEW COMPREHENSIVE AGENDA: THE VALUE ADDED AND SYNERGY WITH THE ASSOCIATION AGREEMENTS IMPLEMENTATION

What is the EaP's 20 deliverables till 2020 value added compared with the AA provisions? Are they ambitious enough? Are they comprehensive enough (what is missing)? Do they meet the expectations of the partner countries? What is the real scope for differentiation and an enhanced engagement format with GE, MD & UA ("A3" or "Associated Trio") as a group within EaP framework?

Moderator: Hennadiy MAKSAK, National coordinator of the Ukrainian national platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum

Speakers:

- Viktor BOJKOV, Advisor to Director Neighbourhood East, DG for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations, European Commission
- Krszysztof BOBINSKI, Co-Chair of the Steering Committee, Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum (Poland)
- Kakha GOGOLASHVILI, Co-Chair of the Georgia-EU Civil Society Platform, Senior Fellow, Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies
- Iulian GROZA, Executive Director of the Institute for European Policies and Reforms (Moldova)

Discussion

16:00 – 16:30

Coffee break

16:30 – 18:30

Session V: POLITICAL DYNAMICS IN THE ASSOCIATED COUNTRIES AND RELATIONS WITH THE EU: MUTUAL IMPLICATIONS

What to expect from the forthcoming elections in all three partner countries and the EU itself? What is the EU relevance and place in the national political discourses in GE, MD & UA ahead of the elections? How much leverage does the EU indeed have on the political trajectory of the partner countries? Is de-oligarchisation feasible? Is the EU-skepticism and nationalism on the rise? Is the EU losing its soft power? How special these countries are – or do their political developments fit into larger regional, whole-European, global contexts and trends?

Moderator: Volodymyr YERMOLENKO, Internews Ukraine

Speakers:

- Rebecca HARMS, MEP, the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly Co-President
- Petras AUŠTREVICIUS, MEP, AFET rapporteur on Moldova
- Michael GAHLER, MEP, AFET rapporteur on Ukraine
- Victoria BUCATARU, Executive Director of the Foreign Policy Association

of Moldova

- Ghia NODIA, Caucasus Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development (Georgia)

Discussion

18:30

Snacks&Coffee

Day 3.

21 September 2018

09:30 – 11:00

Parallel Session VI.1: FAST-TRACK VS. ROOM FOR DEBATE: MODELS AND PRACTICES OF NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS' WORK ON EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

Do the Parliaments have plans of their legislative work on the AAs? How much do the plans really influence the parliamentary practice of agenda-setting? How influential are the European integration committees and is there a need to boost their profile? What is the procedure for AA-related drafts - is there a special fast track? Is it actually needed – or should the general legislative procedure with enough room for proper parliamentary debate apply? How is the cooperation with the government organised? Who is providing the conformity assessments with the AA: secretariats of the Parliament or the executives? Do the Parliaments use their other powers beyond legislative approximation? What are the recipes for the successful parliamentary work on legal approximation from the Polish experience?

Moderator: Igor KOGUT, USAID RADA program director (Ukraine)

Speakers:

- Maria IONOVA, Deputy Chairperson of the Committee for European Integration, Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine
- Tamar KHULORDAVA, Chairperson of the Committee on European integration, Parliament of Georgia
- Agnieszka GRZELAK, Professor, European and International Law Chair, Kozminski University (Poland)

Discussion

Parallel Session VI.2: TRADE AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION DYNAMICS OF THE ASSOCIATED COUNTRIES: RESULTS, TRENDS AND OUTLOOK

What are the actual macro-economic and international trade developments and trends in GE, MD & UA? How much has the trade with the EU increased with DCFTAs in place? What is the current and perspective role of EU internal market for national economies? What is the role of non-EU and non-post-Soviet partners in trade and investment? What is the economic importance of the cooperation between GE, MD & UA themselves? Is there a need for a common economic space of the three countries?

Moderator: Veronika MOVCHAN, Academic Director, Institute for Economic Research and Political Consultations (Ukraine)

Speakers:

- Iuliana DRĂGĂLIN, State Secretary, Ministry of Economy and Infrastructure of the Republic of Moldova
- Yuriy VDOVENKO, Chairman, Centre for Cross-Border Cooperation (Ukraine)

- Peter HAVLIK, Senior Economist, Vienna Institute for International Economic Studies (Austria)
- Ramūnas VILPIŠAUSKAS, Director of the Institute of International Relations and Political Science, Vilnius University (Lithuania)

Discussion

11:00 – 11:30 Coffee break

11:30 – 13:00 **Parallel Session VII.1: POST-VISA FREE AGENDA FOR POLITICAL ASSOCIATION AND COOPERATION ON JUSTICE, FREEDOM AND SECURITY**

How broad should be the agenda after visa-free regime has been received and what new incentives the EU could offer? A post-VLAP action plan to secure post-monitoring visa-free benchmarks? An integrated border management roadmap to facilitate cross-border movement? Mutual non-discriminatory treatment for migrants? A roadmap to implement the Title III of the AA to get access to EU JFS cooperation systems, policies, agencies? A political association roadmap with benchmarks to strengthen democracy, the rule of law, human rights in accordance with the EU political criteria?

Moderator: Iryna SUSHKO, Executive Director, Europe Without Barriers NGO (Ukraine)

Speakers:

- Sergiy PETUKHOV, Deputy Minister of Justice for European integration issues (Ukraine)
- Elena CECCEEVA, expert, Ministry of Internal Affairs of Moldova
- Gogita GVEDASHVILI, EU Program Director, Georgian Centre for Security and Development (Georgia)

Discussion

Parallel Session VII.2: BETTER ACCESS TO THE EU INTERNAL MARKET THROUGH ENHANCED CUSTOMS COOPERATION AND STANDARDISATION APPROXIMATION

What are the expectations of the associated countries for customs cooperation with the EU? Can a “visa-free movement of goods” become a new goal and what are the prerequisites/homework milestones? How difficult has phytosanitary approximation proven to be, and what are the good practices? Is signing of ACAA agreements foreseeable any time soon and what would be its effects? What steps are needed to make it happen?

Moderator: Taras KACHKA, Strategic Advisor, International Renaissance Foundation, former negotiator on Ukraine-EU Association Agreement

Speakers:

- Denis CENUȘĂ, Program Director, Expert-Grup (Moldova)
- Lasha INAURI, Head of the European Integration Department of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia
- Robert ZELDI, Expert of the Committee on Customs Policy of the American Chamber of Commerce; Manager of Customs Group, Ernst & Young Global Limited (Ukraine)
- Michael EMERSON, Associate Senior Research Fellow, Centre for European Policy Studies (Brussels)

Discussion

13:00 – 13:30

FORUM WRAP-UP: WHAT NEXT?

- Dmytro SHULGA, Director of the European Programme of the International Renaissance Foundation (Ukraine)
- Hugues MINGARELLI, EU Ambassador to Ukraine

13:30 – 14:30

Lunch

14:30 – 16:30

Side event – Discussion “CIVIL SOCIETY PARTICIPATION IN THE ASSOCIATION AGREEMENTS IMPLEMENTATION: INSTITUTIONS AND PRACTICES IN THE THREE ASSOCIATED COUNTRIES AND A ROOM FOR INTER-SOCIETY COOPERATION”

Sharing civil society initiatives and innovative projects to move forward the AA implementation in the associated countries. What are the good practices of policy advocacy and communicating with the government and EU institutions? Civil society platforms and coalitions – lessons learned. What is the potential for inter-country civil society cooperation? What expectations GE, MD and UA civil society have for the EU support?

Moderator: Zoriana MISHCHUK, Civic Synergy Project Team Leader&Key Expert (Ukraine)

Speakers:

- Ivan KULCHYTSKYI, UA CSP member, President of NGO "Agency of European Innovations" (Ukraine)
- Vitaliy MARTYNIUK, Coordinator of the UNP Working Group “Democracy, Human Rights, Good Governance and Stability”, Head of the International Programs of the Centre for Global Studies “Strategy XXI” (Ukraine)
- Dumitru FORNEA, EU-Moldova Civil Society Platform, EESC, Head of International Relations Department at the MERIDIAN National Trade Union Confederation (Romania)
- Denis CENUȘĂ, Program Director, Expert-Group (Moldova)
- Kakha GOGOLASHVILI, Co-Chair of the Georgia-EU Civil Society Platform, Senior Fellow, Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies (Georgia)
- Lasha TUGUSHI, Director, "Liberal Academy–Tbilisi", Country Facilitator of the Georgian National Platform of the EaP Civil Society Forum

16:30

Snacks&Coffee

Departure of participants