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## RESOLUTION

### **Supporting Eastern Partnership (EaP) Countries**

*Adopted at the YEPP Council Meeting via Zoom, 24.04.2021*

#### **Recognizing that:**

1. EU EaP program was established for following goals: 1) to increase the cooperation with 6 post-Soviet states of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine; 2) to promote core European values such as democracy, human rights and the rule of law; 3) to provide foundation for new Association Agreements with the EU.
2. All EaP countries except Moldova in recent months has experienced unusual violence, worsening of the security situation in their home states and/or the crisis of democracy:
  - Belarus has experienced massive crackdown on democratic opposition and massive amount of inhumane violence against the peaceful protesters who demand nothing more but integrity of elections. The opposition to the authoritarian leader is getting arrested, tortured and silenced from the side of the government;
  - Ukraine, which territory is currently partly occupied by Russia has experienced renewed attacks on Ukrainian soldiers from Russia-backed-and-sponsored mercenaries in Eastern Ukraine. Only in 2021 alone (in times of ceasefire) more than 20 Ukrainian soldiers were killed by the Russia-backed-and-sponsored mercenaries, while total amount of casualties on both sides since 2014 tops 13 000 people. Recently it also became known that Russia is gathering massive amount of troops near Ukrainian border for unclear reasons – step that is perceived by Ukraine as a potential threat;<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Kramer, A. 30.03.2021. *Fighting Escalates in Eastern Ukraine, Signaling the End to Another Cease-Fire*. The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/30/world/europe/ukraine-russia-fighting.html>



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- Armenia and Azerbaijan have engaged into active warfare over Nagorno-Karabakh territory that claimed lives of thousands and disputed large territories of the region. Factual defeat in the war also led to political turmoil in Armenia, which has the potential to make country less democratic if the centralization of political power occurs in the near future.
  - Previously stable Georgia (also partly occupied by Russia), has experienced political turmoil as well. Political disagreements between the ruling coalition and the opposition led to massive protests with few casualties and the arrest of the leader of the opposition.
3. At the same time, some of EaP countries currently are experiencing democratic awakening. Citizens of Belarus first time in many years are actively engaging into the process of democratization the country which is ruled by commonly-called “the last dictator in Europe”.<sup>2</sup> Ukraine currently undertake impressive amounts of reforms that are aimed at making a country more democratic and less corrupt. Similar reforms are currently implemented in Moldova.

#### **Acknowledging that:**

1. The EU shows strong commitment to EaP countries, provides necessary funding to the program member states and promises to provide the founding for Association Agreements with the European Union within the Joint Declaration of the Prague Eastern Partnership Summit of May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2009.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Aslund, A. 09.08.2020. *Europe's last dictator: The rise and (possible) fall of Alyaksandr Lukashenka*. Atlantic Council. <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/europes-last-dictator-the-rise-and-possible-fall-of-alexander-lukashenko/>

<sup>3</sup> Council of the EU. 07.05.2009. *Joint Declaration of the Prague Eastern Partnership Summit*. Council of the EU. [https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/31797/2009\\_eap\\_declaration.pdf](https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/31797/2009_eap_declaration.pdf)



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2. A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign And Security Policy of 2016 and it's renewed version of 2019 notes the importance of EU's foreign policy pillar that promotes European values and defends democracy, human rights and the rule of law globally.<sup>4</sup>
3. Two EaP countries (Georgia and Ukraine) are official NATO candidate countries.
4. Both the YEPP, EPP and the EU are mentioning core European values in our founding documents as a cornerstone of our organizations.

#### **YEPP supports:**

1. The strive of the EaP nations for greater freedoms and democracy
2. Perspective of joining the EU and NATO of those EaP countries which expresses such wish

#### **YEPP condemns:**

1. The repressions against civil society and political opposition in EaP countries
2. Continuing Russian occupation of a number of EaP country territories

#### **YEPP calls on:**

1. Governments of EaP countries to abstain from using force and suppressive measures in relation to civil society and political opponents.
2. NATO to provide a clear path of membership (as well as possibility to closer cooperation) for EaP countries that express such a wish. The EU to establish closer cooperation with EaP countries that express such a wish (for example Georgia and Ukraine) and provide a clear set of steps, as well as assistance and guidance that will enable them to fulfill the entry prerequisites and accelerate their membership.

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<sup>4</sup> EEAS. 2016. *Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe. A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign And Security Policy*. EEAS. [https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/top\\_stories/pdf/eugs\\_review\\_web.pdf](https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/top_stories/pdf/eugs_review_web.pdf)



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3. The EPP to be even more active in promoting membership in NATO of those EaP countries that express such a wish.
4. The YEPP Board to support those YEPP organizations from now on forward that currently experiencing financial difficulties due to political unrest (especially those of Belarus who currently spent available resources on supporting the cause of the pro-democracy protesters) by granting membership fee freeze and restoring voting rights in the YEPP for the period of those difficulties caused by the political unrest.<sup>5</sup>
5. The EU to enhance cooperation with EaP countries, while proposing alternative arrangements for future engagement in the short term.

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<sup>5</sup> Such action is possible by provided by the Article 7th of BY-LAWS OF THE INTERNATIONAL NON-PROFIT ASSOCIATION “YOUTH OF THE EUROPEAN PEOPLE’S PARTY” that allows the Congress and the Council to grant such exceptions. Such step is necessary for supporting YEPP organizations and civil societies in EaP countries in times of war or political unrest by means of strengthening youth voice in biggest youth political organization in Europe.