

Conference of the Regional and Local Authorities for the Eastern Partnership (CORLEAP)

Activity Report (January 2018 - November 2020)

This summary reports on CORLEAP activities, as noted in the CORLEAP Action Plan 2018-2020 on related conferences and political events and on relevant publications and studies commissioned in support of those activities.

CORLEAP EVENTS

12th CORLEAP Bureau meeting including debate on Fostering participatory democracy at local and regional level

29 May 2018, Brussels

Two draft CORLEAP reports were presented and discussed: [Facilitating sustainable municipal development through bilateral municipal cooperation](#) by Andris Jaunsleinis (LV/ALDE), Member of Ventspils Municipal Council, and [Economic cooperation and economic development at local level](#) by Emin Yeritsyan, President of the Union of Communities of Armenia. The thematic debate on "Fostering participatory democracy at local and regional level" concluded that the development of local democratic governance and civil society varies considerably in the Eastern partner countries. These circumstances present significant challenges for the Eastern Partnership agenda. Discussants looked at the challenges faced by local and regional authorities and exchanged on success stories for overcoming them.

8th CORLEAP annual meeting

24 September 2018, Kyiv

The meeting was co-chaired by Markku Markkula, First Vice-President of the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) and Volodymyr Prokopiv, Head of Kyiv City Council. The above mentioned reports were adopted. During a session on Engaging young citizens and dealing with disinformation, members were informed about the results of a youth workshop dealing with disinformation. In an interactive, practical exercise, young participants from all six Eastern partner countries learned how disinformation ("fake news") campaigns were made, and how to recognize and fight disinformation. Another session was devoted to the EU financial assistance for LRAs in Eastern partner countries, with the participation of Hans Janssen (NL/EPP), CoR rapporteur on the proposed Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument.

CORLEAP - EURONEST workshop on Freedom, independence and plurality of media in EaP countries

11 October 2018, Brussels

The joint CORLEAP - EURONEST workshop during the European Week of Regions and Cities looked at good practice and innovative perspectives in terms of overcoming through territorial and parliamentary cooperation some of the challenges to media freedom policies. It was co-chaired by Emin Yeritsyan, President of the Union of Communities of Armenia and MEP Rebecca Harms, Co-President of the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly.

Forum on Local Democracy

12 November 2018, Yerevan

The event focused on 'Decentralisation and local economic development', bringing together 120 partners of the local government system in Armenia – mayors and councilors and their associations, as well as representatives of the national government, international agencies and experts – to foster an environment of constructive dialogue on local economic development, one of the most important means of local sustainable development and social cohesion. The forum was co-organised with the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Development and the CAA, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, and the Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation (SDC).

14th CORLEAP Bureau meeting

28 March 2019, Yerevan

Mr Pavel Branda (CZ/ECR), Deputy Mayor of Rádlo Municipality and Mr Sergii Chernov, Chairman of Kharkiv Regional Council, President of the Ukrainian Association of Local and Regional Authorities, presented their draft reports for discussion on promoting people-to-people contacts through cross-border cooperation programmes and capacity building of local and regional government in Eastern Partnership countries.

Conference on Local Authorities and Civil Society Organisations

28 March 2019, Yerevan

The event took place after the Bureau meeting, gathering a large audience comprised of Armenian politicians and civil-society representatives. The conference focused on how civil society and local authorities can overcome challenges of coordination and capacity-building as part of their efforts to implement agreements reached between the EU and Eastern partner countries. The event was co-organised with the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, the Union of Communities of Armenia, the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Development of the Republic of Armenia, and the EU funded project "Commitment to Constructive Dialogue".

9th CORLEAP annual meeting

12 September 2019, Turku

The annual meeting was co-chaired by Mr Karl-Heinz Lambertz (BE/PES), President of the European Committee of the Regions and Mr Emin Yeritsyan, President of the Union of Communities of Armenia. Amb. Matti Anttonen, Permanent State Secretary, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland and Mr Ilkka Kanerva, MP, Chair of the Board of the Regional Council of Southwest Finland, delivered opening remarks on behalf of the Finnish Presidency of the Council of the EU. Mr Pavel Branda (CZ/ECR), Deputy Mayor of Rádlo Municipality, presented for adoption his report on [Promoting people-to-people contacts through cross-border cooperation programmes in Eastern Partnership countries](#). The report calls for a significant increase of EU financial support for small cross-border projects designed to initiate and promote grassroots contacts and interaction between people on different sides of the border. Mr Sergii Chernov, Chairman of Kharkiv Regional Council, President of the Ukrainian Association of Local and Regional Authorities, presented for adoption his report on [Capacity building of local and regional government in Eastern Partnership countries](#). The report highlights the importance of the shift towards e-governance, of training and development programmes, and advocates for the establishment of an Eastern Partnership Academy of Public Administration.

Within the context of the 10th anniversary of the Eastern Partnership, the meeting provided the opportunity to contribute to the reflections about the future from a local and regional perspective, with the participation of Mr Tadeusz Andrzejewski (LT/ECR), CoR Rapporteur-general on the topic, Amb Anna Westerholm, Swedish Ambassador for the EaP, and Ms Audrone Perkauskiene, Head of Division for the EaP, Regional Cooperation and OSCE, European External Action Service.

CORLEAP - EURONEST workshop on Strengthening resilience in the Eastern Partnership

12 October 2020, Brussels (Online via Interactio)

The workshop was co-organised with the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly, within the framework of the European Week of Regions and Cities. Against the backdrop of strengthening resilience as the overriding policy framework of the Eastern Partnership, panelists at the workshop shared good practice and innovative perspectives, looking at ways to overcoming through territorial and parliamentary cooperation some of the challenges to reinforcing resilience at multiple levels – state, society and community. The opening remarks by EURONEST Co-President Mr Andrius Kubilius and CORLEAP Bureau member and rapporteur Mr Pavel Branda (CZ/ECR) set the stage for a panel debate with Prof. Kataryna Wolczuk, from the Centre for Russian, European and Eurasian Studies at the Birmingham University; Vassilis Maragos, Head of Unit responsible for Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus & Eastern Partnership, DG NEAR; Tatiana Bădan, Mayor of Selemet and President of the Congress of Local Authorities of Moldova, and Gunn Marit Helgesen, Vice-President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe and President of its Chamber of Regions.

OTHER CORLEAP ACTIVITIES

EEAS Seminar on Public Administration Reform at Local and Regional Level

16 March 2018, Yerevan

Emin Yeritsyan, Head of the Armenian delegation to the Congress and of the Armenian delegation to CORLEAP called for coordinated actions of the two institutions in order to support the Eastern Partnership countries in achieving the '20 Deliverables for 2020' at a seminar organised by the EEAS in Yerevan on 16 March 2018.

18th Meeting of the EaP Platform 1: Strengthening Institutions and Good Governance

20 April 2018, Brussels

The meeting was dedicated to discussing the draft Work Programme (WP) of the Platform for 2018-2019 and stocktaking of relevant developments with regard to the 20 deliverables for 2020. The CORLEAP secretariat argued in support for a reference within the main goals and actions section of the WP to decentralisation reforms, strengthening local democracy and good governance at all levels.

7th Ordinary Session of the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly

25-27 June 2018, Brussels

Mr Karl-Heinz Lambertz, CoR President of the European Committee of the Regions and CORLEAP Co-chair, presented ongoing CORLEAP activities and spoke in support of complementarity and further reinforcing the respective institutional roles in the streamlined multilateral EaP architecture.

Eastern Partnership Foreign Affairs Ministerial meeting

15 October 2018, Luxembourg

Ministers took stock of progress towards achieving the 20 deliverables intended to strengthen the economies, governance, connectivity and societies of EaP countries. CORLEAP was represented by the co-chair, Mr Emin Yeritsyan, President of the Association of Communities of Armenia, and by Mr Pavel Branda, deputy mayor of Rádlo (Czech Republic) and CORLEAP rapporteur on people-to-people contacts through cross-border cooperation.

19th Meeting of the EaP Platform 1: Strengthening Institutions and Good Governance

19 February 2019, Brussels

The CORLEAP secretariat presented the CORLEAP non-paper on "Capacity-building for local and regional public administration in Eastern Partnership countries", that had been agreed by the co-chairs. The non-paper was received with great interest in the context of the reflection on EaP deliverables beyond 2020.

EaP Foreign Affairs Ministerial meeting

13 May 2019, Brussels

On 13-14 May a series of events took place in Brussels to mark the 10th Anniversary of the Eastern Partnership. At the EaP ministerial meeting, Mr Karl-Heinz Lambertz, CoR President and co-chair of CORLEAP, spoke in favour of greater support for decentralisation, greater attention to governance, increased funding for people-to-people projects and cooperation between local and regional authorities. He made a specific call for the creation of an 'Eastern Partnership Academy for Public Administration', to support the empowerment of local authorities.

Structured consultation on the future of the Eastern Partnership

CORLEAP contributed with suggestions on how to further develop and increase the visibility of the involvement of local and regional authorities across the Partnership priorities, drawing on CORLEAP reports and position papers adopted during 2018-2019. Among these suggestions, CORLEAP advocated for the creation of a platform for online training and/or the establishment of an EaP Academy for the Public Administration serving the local/regional governments, with headquarters to be located in one of the partner countries and tailored to the specific needs of public administration at sub-national level.

8th Ordinary Session of the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly

8-10 December 2019, Tbilisi

Mr Tadeuš Andžejevski (LT/ECR), CoR rapporteur on the future of Eastern Partnership and Ms Ketevan Mamulashvili, member of Tbilisi City Council and member of CORLEAP conveyed the message of local and regional authorities.

EaP Foreign Affairs Ministerial meeting

11 June 2020, Brussels

CORLEAP was invited to provide a written contribution to the discussion of Foreign Affairs Ministers, ahead of the Eastern Partnership Leaders' meeting. In their response to the HR/VP, CORLEAP co-chairs underlined that the need to improve results in the sphere of governance can create fresh impetus

for decentralisation reforms in Eastern partner countries, and that the EU should further support the socio-economic recovery of partner countries by strengthening good governance at all levels.

Recommendations to Heads of State or Government of the EU and the Eastern partner countries

18 June 2020

CORLEAP's 10th annual meeting had to be postponed to 2021 in view of the COVID pandemic. CORLEAP's message to the EaP Leader's meeting was thus adopted by written procedure, based on the recommendations of CORLEAP thematic reports. (See Recommendations in [English](#) and [Russian](#))

Eastern Partnership Platform 1 "Strengthening institutions and Good Governance"

24 November 2020, online

The CORLEAP proposal to establish an EaP Academy of Public Administration was presented in the discussion document as the as first proposal in the context of increased accountability and capacity of public administrations through peer-to-peer learning. Ms Aleksandra Dulkiewicz (PL/EPP), Mayor of Gdańsk, welcomed the uptake of the proposal and reminded about the CORLEAP ownership (the CORLEAP non-paper presented at the EaP Platform 1 meeting in February 2019), and the need to address public administration at local level.

STUDIES

[Capacity building of local and regional public administration in Eastern Partnership countries](#)

Publication date: 23.05.2019

Author: Center for Social and Economic Research (CASE) - Szymon Ananicz, Dzmitry Babicki, Stanislav Bieliei, Krzysztof Głowacki, Justine Renard, Nino Sichinava, Katarzyna Sidło, Małgorzata Zawadzka

[EU financial assistance available to local and regional authorities in Eastern Partnership countries](#)

Publication date: 19.09.2018

Author: Karolina Zubel and Przemysław Kowalski (Center for Social and Economic Research - CASE)