



Ministry of
Territorial Administration
and Development,
Republic of Armenia



Yerevan, 26 October 2016

EUROPEAN UNION LAUNCHES NEW INITIATIVES IN SUPPORT TO LOCAL AUTHORITIES OF THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP COUNTRIES

Today, October 26, 2016, more than 350 representatives of central, regional and local authorities of the Eastern Partnership gathered in Yerevan to launch new EU initiatives in support to local sustainable development and economic growth in the Eastern Partnership countries, during a High-Level Conference aimed at celebrating 20 years of local government in the Republic of Armenia.

The EU officially launches the new Mayors for Economic Growth initiative (M4EG) and the second phase of Covenant of Mayors East (CoM East), targeting the business sector and energy efficiency respectively. These actions aim at fostering cooperation between local authorities and civil society organisations as to further enhance accountability, exchange good practices and strengthen capacities of municipalities as efficient and effective administrators for local development. By encouraging public-private partnerships these initiatives are also expected to contribute to the creation of new job opportunities at the local level and GDP/per capita growth.

In the keynote speech Mr. Lawrence Meredith, Director for Neighbourhood East, DG Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR) of the European Commission stated: *"Efficient and effective local administrations play an important role in implementing real changes on the ground, making economies more resilient and improving the living conditions of citizens. The EU will continue to support Eastern Partnership countries in their efforts to strengthen local authorities' capacities in order to foster local sustainable development and economic growth, including the creation of new job opportunities at the local level."*

"Further strengthening of the local governance contributes to the creation of conditions that ensure the active participation of citizens in the formation of local authorities and their interest in functioning the elected governments. Our goal is to achieve financial stability, transparent and equitable governance at the local level, in order to guarantee citizens the opportunity to solve the main problems on the ground in cooperation with the local authorities", - said David Lokyan, Minister of Territorial Administration and Development of the Republic of Armenia. Mr. Minister also thanked the European Commission and Conference of Regional and Local Authorities for the Eastern Partnership (CORLEAP) and the relevant EU institutions for their continued support to the development of democracy and he stressed that he is ready to support this process in every possible way.

Ambassador, Head of European Union Delegation to Armenia Mr. Piotr Antoni Świtalski welcoming the participants underlined: *"The European Union realises that capacity of local authorities to be an effective development player also depends on existence of an effective system of relations with other levels of governance and conducive national frameworks. Nonetheless, the local authorities are seen as important agents, which should have their own development agendas coherent with the national policies"*.

The event was organised jointly by the European Commission, the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Development of the Republic of Armenia, the Conference of the Regional and Local Authorities for the Eastern Partnership (CORLEAP) and the EU Covenant of Mayors East (CoM East) project.

The conference also marked the signing ceremony of 19 new local authorities from the Eastern Partnership countries joining the new Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy. Tomorrow the discussion will continue with a special focus on the prospects and benefits of the new Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy in the Eastern Partnership countries.

For further information please contact Ms. Tatiana Derevyankina, CoM East Communication Manager, tel.: + 380 44 332-66-08, e-mail: tatiana.derevyankina@eumayors.eu

<http://www.eumayors.eu>, <http://www.soglasheniemerov.eu>

Background:

Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy is an urban climate and energy initiative of the European Union bringing together local, regional and national authorities voluntarily committed to implementing the EU climate and energy objectives. The CoM initiative was launched in 2008 by the European Commission after the adoption of the 2020 EU Climate and Energy Package. Building on the success of the Covenant of Mayors, the Mayors Adapt initiative was set up in 2014 to engage cities in taking action to adapt to climate change. At the end of 2015, the two initiatives merged under the new integrated Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy, adopting the EU 2030 objectives (including 40% CO₂ emissions reduction by 2030) and an integrated approach to climate change mitigation and adaptation. With over 7000 signatories representing over 210 million citizens, it has become one of the world's largest climate and energy initiatives.

Ministry of Territorial Administration and Development of the Republic of Armenia is the National Coordinator (CNC) of the "Covenant of Mayors" EU initiative in Armenia. It supports local communities – signatories of the Covenant in development and implementation of sustainable energy policies to contribute to the strengthened energy independence of Armenia.

Covenant of Mayors East (CoM East) is the EU-funded project aimed at introducing the EU climate and energy initiative to the Eastern Partnership countries. CoM East supports local authorities in implementing sustainable energy policies, reducing their dependency on fossil fuels, improving the security of energy supply, and facilitates their contribution to climate change mitigation and adaptation. Running since 2011, the project has now entered a second phase integrating EU 2030 objectives but leaving certain flexibility for signatories in the EaP region (i.e. at least 30% CO₂ emissions reduction by 2030).

Mayors for Economic Growth (M4EG) is an upcoming initiative of the European Union inspired by the Covenant of Mayors concept and success, but applied to the economic field. As such, the project will support local authorities in the Eastern Partnership countries to become active facilitators for economic growth and job creation by strengthening their technical skills and capacities to implement smart local economic strategies, in line with the principles of good governance and sound financial management.

Conference of Regional and Local Authorities for the Eastern Partnership (CORLEAP) was established by the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) in 2011 to add a regional and local dimension to the EU's Eastern Partnership. CORLEAP brings together 36 regional and local politicians - 18 from the CoR, representing the EU, and 18 from the Eastern Partnership countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine).

