

Official Journal of the European Union

C 315



English edition

Information and Notices

Volume 58

23 September 2015

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I

(Resolutions, recommendations and opinions)

RESOLUTIONS

EURONEST PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

RESOLUTION ⁽¹⁾**on engaging in a stronger partnership between the EU and Eastern European partner countries through the European Neighbourhood Instrument for 2014-2020**

(2015/C 315/01)

THE EURONEST PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY,

- having regard to the Constituent Act of the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly of 3 May 2011,
 - having regard to the Joint Declaration of the Eastern Partnership Summit held in Vilnius on 28 and 29 November 2013,
 - having regard to the European Parliament resolution of 12 March 2014 on assessing and setting priorities for EU relations with the Eastern Partnership countries ⁽²⁾,
 - having regard to the Joint Communication of the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of 20 March 2013 entitled 'European Neighbourhood Policy: working towards a stronger partnership',
 - having regard to the European Parliament legislative resolution of 11 December 2013 on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a European Neighbourhood Instrument ⁽³⁾,
 - having regard to the European Parliament resolution of 23 October 2013 entitled 'European Neighbourhood Policy, working towards a stronger partnership – Position of the European Parliament on the 2012 progress reports' ⁽⁴⁾,
 - having regard to the European Parliament's resolutions on the review of the European Neighbourhood Policy and its Eastern dimension, as well as on the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Republic of Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine,
 - having regard to the Joint Statement of the European Union and the Republic of Armenia as agreed on 29 November 2013 in Vilnius by the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Armenia's Security Policy and Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian,
- A. whereas the Eastern Partnership was established in 2009 as a common endeavour of the European Union and its Eastern European partners with the objective of accelerating their political association and economic integration, on the basis of mutual interests, commitments, responsibility and joint ownership,
- B. whereas the states participating in the Eastern Partnership have entered into a mutual commitment to fundamental values, democracy, respect for human rights, the rule of law, good governance and the principles of the market economy and sustainable development,

⁽¹⁾ Adopted on 17 March 2015 in Yerevan, Armenia.

⁽²⁾ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2014)0229.

⁽³⁾ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2013)0567.

⁽⁴⁾ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2013)0446.

- C. whereas the Eastern Partnership Summit held in November 2013 in Vilnius was marked by a number of achievements, new agreements and progress towards closer relations, but was also tarnished by the decisions of some partner countries not to engage in Association Agreements with the EU, despite having successfully completed the negotiations,
- D. whereas the decision of the then President of Ukraine at the Vilnius Summit triggered the mass protests in Maidan Square which were followed by a dramatic chain of events for the country over 2014 — in particular, a wave of demonstrations resulting in the deaths of hundreds of Ukrainians in February, the illegal annexation of Crimea by Russia in March and, from the spring on, the outbreak and escalation of a new conflict in eastern Ukraine, with the direct military presence of the Russian Federation and its support for separatist forces, resulting in over 6 000 deaths,
- E. whereas the EU on the one side and Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine on the other have signed and subsequently ratified bilateral Association Agreements, including Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas (DCFTAs), in spite of the direct political, military and economic pressure exerted by the Russian Federation,
- F. whereas the EU and Belarus have begun negotiating visa facilitation and readmission agreements, thus allowing the promotion of people-to-people contacts; whereas, however, the resumption of political and economic dialogue between the EU and Belarus will depend on the unconditional release of all remaining Belarusian political prisoners and their full rehabilitation as regards their political and civic rights,
- G. whereas all the partner countries except for Belarus are confronted with separatism and territorial disputes, in which Russia is directly involved or exerts a major influence,
- H. whereas illegal separatist regimes have been established in Georgian and Moldovan territories; whereas the Crimean peninsula in Ukraine has been annexed by Russia, and armed confrontations are continuing between separatists and official Kiev forces in south-eastern Ukraine,
- I. whereas access to the EU market as well as to those of neighbouring Eurasian countries, in particular Russia, is vital for the partner countries and their economies; whereas some industrial sectors of partner countries are still dependent on production chains inherited from the former Soviet Union, thanks to which they are economically linked to the Russian Federation; whereas the extension of the Customs Union of the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan and Belarus to other partner countries and the Eurasian Economic Union should not be seen as projects competing with the economic component of the Eastern Partnership, as long as partner countries are allowed to choose freely which of the organisations to join; whereas efforts should be made in order to improve cooperation and make the two economic areas compatible so that the Eastern Partnership countries can fully exploit their potential,
- J. whereas the EU introduced restrictive measures against Russia in April and July 2014, and reinforced them in September 2014, in order to promote a change of course in Russia's adventurist aggressive actions violating the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine and destabilising its eastern region,
- K. whereas in August 2014, in retaliation against both the EU's restrictive measures and the signing of Association Agreements, Russia decided to impose an embargo on agricultural and food products from the EU, other Western countries and some partner countries,
- L. whereas 2014 was the first year of a renewed programmatic and financial framework for implementing the European Neighbourhood Policy of the EU, and its specific Eastern dimension, until 2020,

Building on the first achievements of the Eastern Partnership to open new prospects for the period 2014-2020

1. Stresses that, since its inception in 2009, the Eastern Partnership has brought a number of concrete and tangible achievements which have been mutually beneficial for the societies of the EU and partner countries and have been reflected in a variety of agreements at different levels of political, economic and cultural cooperation, which have a broad potential for improvement given sufficient support from all parties involved;

2. Welcomes the fact that the Vilnius Summit participants reaffirmed their founding commitment to the principles of the Eastern Partnership, i.e., primarily, the rule of law, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and democracy; stresses that these principles must be respected;
3. Shares the view of the Vilnius Summit participants that every partner should freely exert its sovereign choice on the scope of its ambitions and the objectives that it seeks to achieve in its relations with the EU and within the Eastern Partnership, in accordance with the principle of differentiation; recalls, in this respect, that the Eastern Partnership is a voluntary project respecting sovereign choices of its participant states and intensifying their relations, and that this should bring benefits to them, and beyond that to all of Europe, in terms of stability and prosperity;
4. Welcomes the signing of Association Agreements, including DCFTAs, between the EU and Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia; calls for swift ratification of these agreements by EU Member States; stresses the importance of implementing all the parts of the agreements and adopting the relevant reforms in all the fields concerned, in order to avoid social and environmental dumping; calls on all sides to continue the task of reform in accordance with the Association Agenda, and calls on the European Commission and the EU Member States to offer assistance in tackling those reforms; encourages the EU Member States to share their rich experience in the process of establishing democratic regimes and reforms based on respect for fundamental values and the rule of law, especially those Member States which could build on both their experience of EU integration and their close relations with partner countries; calls on the governments of partner countries which have ratified Association Agreements, including DCFTAs, with the EU, to organise public debates and information campaigns, including at local level, with the active involvement of civil society organisations, including National Platforms of the Civil Society Forum, since a detailed understanding of the content and impact of the agreements is paramount for their success;
5. Condemns Russia's direct and indirect military aggression in eastern Ukraine and the illegal annexation of Crimea in reaction to the sovereign choice of Ukraine to move forward in its European perspective; calls on the Russian Federation to respect the internationally recognised sovereignty of Ukraine, to withdraw its forces, to stop supporting separatist forces in eastern Ukraine and, to respect the numerous international, multilateral and bilateral treaties, including the UN Charter, the Helsinki Final Act and the 1994 Budapest Memorandum, which call for diplomatic solutions for all crises, as well as for avoidance of all forms of armed aggression or intervention in other states; calls on Russia to end the information war aimed at inciting ethnic hatred between Russians and Ukrainians; demands full cooperation by all parties with the investigations into the shooting-down of MH17, and stresses that those responsible must be brought to justice; condemns, furthermore, the trade restrictions imposed by Russia on the EU and several partner countries; supports the EU's restrictive measures against Russia and insists that it should maintain them as long as Russia fails to comply with the Minsk Agreements or adopt a constructive position as regards reaching a peaceful settlement to the conflict in eastern Ukraine; condemns the illegal, non-constitutional and illegitimate elections held in the separatist-controlled areas of Donetsk and Luhansk and recognised by Russia, which constitute a threat to the unity of Ukraine and a hindrance to the peace process; urges the Russian authorities to immediately release Nadia Savchenko, who was abducted and is illegally detained in Russia;
6. Condemns the signing of a treaty between the Russian Federation and Abkhazia on 24 November 2014 on alliance and strategic partnership, as well as Russia's intention to sign a treaty on closer relations with the breakaway region of Tskhinvali in 2015; stresses that these actions constitute a serious threat to stability and security in the region, generate serious risks affecting the efforts in the direction of normalisation of relations between Georgia and the Russian Federation, and undermine the Geneva International Discussions; calls on the Russian Federation to respect the fundamental principles of international law and the territorial integrity of Georgia and comply with the 2008 Ceasefire Agreement between Georgia and Russia;
7. Emphasises that the EU bears the responsibility of clearly defining the prospects that it wants to offer in response to the ambitions and European perspective of partner countries; deplors the fact that Russia has so far only perceived these ambitions and the Eastern Partnership as a threat to its geopolitical sphere of influence; notes that the Customs Union and the Eurasian Economic Union treaty which entered into force in January 2015 entail a project of economic integration between their members which is not compatible with Association Agreements and their trade components (the DCFTAs); calls on the Russian Federation to refrain from economic pressure and threats over security and energy supply, and to respect the right of its neighbours to freely choose their political and economic destiny; reiterates its call on the Russian Federation to reach a peaceful resolution of the conflicts at the negotiating table;

8. Considers that the creation of the Customs Union and the Eurasian Economic Union treaty, inspired by the ideals of the European Union and entering into force in January 2015, can only have beneficial effects for the participant countries as long as the Russian Federation refrains from coercing countries to join via economic pressure and threats over security and energy, supply and allows its neighbours to freely choose their political and economic destiny; notes that the new structures are not compatible with the Association Agreements and DCFTAs, and underlines the need to find lines of cooperation and communication in the future, as either way, trade and good relations between countries on both sides will have to be ensured;
9. Notes the potential of the ENI as an incentive for greater cooperation with those countries which still have to sign Association Agreements with the EU, and calls for renewed efforts to address them;
10. Believes that the Eastern Partnership Summit to be held in May 2015 in Riga should mark a reinforcement of the Eastern Partnership, characterised by strengthened political and economic ties between the EU and partner countries and deepened and improved bilateral as well as multilateral relations among all partners; calls on the EU and partner countries to remain consistent in pursuing the original vision of the Eastern Partnership, while focusing on implementing reforms which produce changes in societies and reinforce ties between their peoples;
11. Identifies political association, democratic reforms, human rights and fundamental freedoms, the strengthening of public institutional capacity and the independence of the judiciary, the fight against corruption, the reinforcement of energy security and people-to-people contacts, and cooperation on education as key priority areas on which the EU and its partners should expend more effort and ensure results at the Riga Summit;
12. Calls on the EU to establish, without delay, visa-free regimes for short-term travel with those partner countries which have committed to and completed Visa Liberalisation Action Plans, provided the conditions are fulfilled; stresses the importance of launching Visa Liberalisation Action Plans with those partner countries which have registered progress in implementing Visa Facilitation and Readmission Agreements with the EU; underlines the importance of cooperating on visa regimes and mobility partnerships, as a vector to bring the societies closer and to spread among citizens a sense of belonging to the same community of values;
13. Stresses that closer relations between the EU and partner countries will be conditional on tangible results of democratic reforms and the quality of the rule of law, as well as positive developments in the governance of state institutions and the spheres of political life and the judiciary; notes in this respect that there are deplorable tendencies to confrontation between government and opposition in some of the partner countries; urges the governments to refrain from political retribution and selective justice and to duly address the particular concerns that have been expressed by the European Parliament, by the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODHIR), and by other international institutions;
14. Recommends that the EU and partner countries develop a more strategic and results-oriented approach in the programmes that they jointly design and implement; considers that ministerial meetings should be the place where sector cooperation strategies are discussed, and that the Eastern Partnership Platforms and their expert panels should be more active in proposing, devising and reviewing those strategies;
15. Stresses the importance of stepping up cooperation programmes and exchange schemes targeted on young people, students, scientists and researchers within the Eastern Partnership; notes with satisfaction that the new EU programmes in those areas, namely the Erasmus+ programme and the 'Marie Skłodowska-Curie' actions within the Horizon 2020 Research Framework Programme, offer more opportunities for strengthening researcher mobility and scholarships for young people in partner countries; welcomes the successes of the first-ever sessions of the Euronest Scola and Eastern Partnership-Young Leaders Forum held in 2013 and 2014, and recommends that sessions of this type be organised on a regular basis; encourages, furthermore, the introduction of joint grant schemes for cultural development and joint cultural events, and suggests that there should be a monthly joint brochure, published in English and in the languages of the partner countries, which would directly inform residents of partner countries about the European Union and European thought, and would provide clear information on the relations of those partner countries with the EU;

Achieving the Eastern Partnership's objectives through implementing the new European Neighbourhood Instrument for 2014-2020

16. Welcomes the adoption of the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) for the period 2014-2020, taking fully into account the Eastern dimension of the European Neighbourhood Policy, which should result in concrete and visible improvements for the populations concerned;
17. Regrets the substantial cuts made to the ENI budget compared to the original proposal from the Commission; calls for a close dialogue with the Commissioner responsible for the European Neighbourhood Policy in order to ensure the best use of scarce resources; considers that the balance between the Eastern and Southern parts of the ENI, with 40 % of total cooperation allocations going to the Eastern region, should be maintained; calls on the Commission to assist partner countries in strengthening their administrative capacities in order to take full advantage of the funding possibilities under the ENI;
18. Notes the need for a more balanced distribution of funds between partner countries, while acknowledging the need for better project proposals from the Eastern partners; considers it vital that the Commission and partner governments encourage and support more local actors as regards applying for and receiving ENI support for their projects;
19. Underlines the importance of the principles of ownership and mutual accountability in programming and implementing country programmes under the ENI; considers that success is partly bound up with agreed and mutually binding commitments between the EU and partner countries;
20. Recommends that, by contrast with the period 2007-2013, greater efforts be made to help partner countries to actually implement newly introduced legislation and to consolidate reforms needed for strengthening democracy and the rule of law in line with EU law and standards; recalls the need to establish a credible track record of such implementation before EU assistance is stepped up;
21. Calls on the Commission and partner countries to establish a limited number of priorities under national action plans and multi-country regional programmes for 2014-2015, in order to maximise their impact and deliver tangible and measurable results;
22. Urges the Commission to prepare a comprehensive strategy for relations with Belarus, aimed at fostering mutual understanding and the country's modernisation and democratisation; considers that such a strategy should include priority areas for reforms in Belarus for the improvement of relations and effective cooperation within the framework of the ENP, and should be based on the 'more for more' principle;
23. Positively identifies the provisions applying to ENI implementation, which rely on an incentive-based and tailor-made approach; considers that they are properly inspired by the 'more for more' principle, which had hitherto materialised only to a limited extent; stresses that the 'more for more' principle implies also a 'less for less' principle, which should be duly applied should the countries concerned not be willing to undertake the necessary reforms; is of the view, however, that the regional perspective should be preserved, notably by enhancing multilateral contacts as well as cross-border cooperation projects and platforms; welcomes, in this regard, the fact that 10 % of the ENI budget is to be allocated, through 'multi-country umbrella programmes', to those partner countries showing progress towards the establishment and consolidation of deep and sustainable democracy and in the implementation of agreed reforms contributing to that goal;
24. Notes with satisfaction that ENI financial allocations for individual national action plans will be subject to a variation of up to 20 %, which also leaves room for applying greater differentiation in implementing the ENI;
25. Recommends that partner countries' efforts towards approximation to EU legislation and standards be accompanied by a proportionate technical assistance on the part of the EU, in order to ensure the smooth and gradual absorption of all relevant parts of the EU *acquis* and bring concrete and visible benefits for economies and populations;

26. Stresses the need for EU assistance also to be targeted on addressing regional economic and social disparities within partner countries, as projects are too often concentrated in one region or the capital while people in more remote locations do not enjoy the benefits of such projects and remain largely unfamiliar with the merits of the EU integration process;
 27. Calls for the EU and its Member States to implement cooperation and support policies towards partner countries in a coherent and efficient fashion and in coordination with other international and national donors; strongly encourages them to jointly programme actions and projects in partner countries; calls for a strengthened coordination and fostered synergies between ENI-funded projects and other EU-funded instruments and EU programmes open to participation by Eastern Partner countries, while stressing that established formats such as donors/investors' conferences, working groups, communication between EU delegations and Member States' embassies on the ground, etc., should not lose sight of the agreed policy objectives;
 28. Emphasises the significant role that civil society plays in contributing to political dialogue and democratic reform processes in partner countries; recommends that the EU's political commitment to civil society in partner countries be reflected throughout the ENI programming;
 29. Calls on the parliaments of the Eastern Partnership countries to contribute to the discussion and raise public awareness of the ongoing processes and main achievements in the framework of the new European Neighbourhood Instrument for 2014-2020, in relation to enhancing the visibility of the EU programmes in their respective countries;
 30. Instructs its Co-Presidents to forward this resolution to the President of the European Parliament, the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, the European External Action Service, the governments and parliaments of the EU Member States and the Eastern European partners.
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RESOLUTION ⁽¹⁾**on infrastructural cooperation between the EU and Eastern Partnership countries: joint road, rail and air transport projects**

(2015/C 315/02)

THE EURONEST PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY,

- having regard to the European Parliament resolution of 23 October 2013 on the European Neighbourhood Policy: towards a strengthening of the partnership. Position of the European Parliament on the 2012 reports,
 - having regard to the European Parliament resolutions on the review of the European Neighbourhood Policy and its eastern dimension, and to those on the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Republic of Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine,
 - having regard to the Joint Declaration of the Eastern Partnership Summit (Vilnius, 28-29 November 2013) — Eastern Partnership: the way ahead,
 - having regard to the communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament, entitled 'The EU and its neighbouring regions: A renewed approach to transport cooperation' (COM(2011) 415) and the Commission's European Union Neighbourhood Transport Plan, which covers the aviation sector, maritime and inland waterway transport, road and rail transport, and infrastructure connections,
 - having regard to the Joint Declaration on the Future of Eastern Partnership transport cooperation by the ministers responsible for transport of the EU Member States and partner countries of the Eastern Partnership and representatives of the European Commission,
 - having regard to the Council conclusions on transport cooperation with the EU's neighbouring regions, adopted at the 3 116th Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council meeting,
 - having regard to the European Commission's 2011 White Paper entitled 'Roadmap to a Single European Transport Area — Towards a competitive and resource efficient transport system',
 - having regard to the list of priority infrastructure projects on the Eastern Partnership regional transport network, endorsed at the meeting of EU and Eastern Partnership Transport Ministers on 9 October 2013 in Luxembourg,
 - having regard to the signature of the Association Agreements between the EU and Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia respectively,
 - having regard to the efficiency of sea and river navigation as systems to move goods, to connect people and to develop better market integration,
1. Stresses the fact that transport is vital to Europe's prosperity as it enables goods to be distributed efficiently and citizens to travel freely; recalls that the EU is a major political and economic partner of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries and that strengthened cooperation in the transport sector could significantly help these countries to become economically stronger and politically more stable; points out that citizens and businesses in the EU and in neighbouring regions are the direct beneficiaries of improved transport cooperation, which aims to reduce the time and resources spent on transportation of goods, services and passengers, and that closer market integration can also help to open up new market opportunities for businesses in both the EU and its neighbouring regions;

⁽¹⁾ Adopted on 17 March 2015 in Yerevan, Armenia.

2. Considers that better transport connections can be achieved through improved transport infrastructure and through closer market integration, ensuring smooth travel for passengers and efficient and secure transport of goods, taking into account the specific geographical situation of the EaP countries; hopes, in this regard, that a visible link will be made between the transport policy in the EaP countries and the Europe 2020 strategy;
3. Underlines that closer integration between the transport markets of the EU and its Eastern Partners depends on each country's will and readiness in this regard, and is conditional on neighbouring countries' progress in applying standards that are equivalent to those of the EU in areas such as safety, security, the environment and social matters; calls on the EU to provide all necessary technical support and advice, and not to resort to protectionism;
4. Stresses that large divergences in terms of transport infrastructure remain between the eastern and western parts of Europe, and need to be tackled, and that the European continent needs to be more homogeneous in terms of transport infrastructure;
5. Recalls that congestion is a major concern, particularly in road and air transport; underlines the need to address the considerable bottlenecks in European transport, with the aim of meeting citizens' demands to travel and the economy's need to transport goods and services, while anticipating resource and environmental constraints;
6. Acknowledges the adoption of the new TEN-T guidelines, shaping the core and comprehensive network of strategic European infrastructure in the eastern and western parts of the European Union, and thus shaping the Single European Transport Area; calls on the European Commission to reflect on the possibility of connecting the TEN-T core network to the transport network in the EaP countries;
7. Calls on the Commission to undertake and publish, jointly with the governments of the Eastern Partners, a joint assessment study on the transport infrastructure, hubs and links of mutual interest that could establish a comprehensive basis for future joint projects;
8. Takes note of the increased pressure on public resources for infrastructure funding; stresses that a new approach to funding and pricing is needed, based on public and private partnerships, which would enable local communities to partner with interested private actors and government agencies, and to make use of international funds to create transport means which would benefit all parties involved; urges the EU Member States and the EaP countries to exchange best experience and intensify cooperation in this field;
9. Recognises the importance of further improving the investment environment in EaP countries in order to attract investments from the EU Member States in the road, rail, maritime and air transport sectors that will support the development of respective infrastructure, the integration of EaP countries and EU Member States, the adoption of EU standards and capacity development in the EaP countries;
10. Calls on the Commission and the governments of the Eastern Partners to include the principle of ease of transport in future trade agreements;
11. Underlines that transport sector reforms in EaP countries should ensure greater approximation to EU transport standards; considers that negotiations on air services agreements between the EU and the EaP countries should be concluded with those countries that have started them, and, in this regard, hopes for the early start of similar negotiations with the rest of the EaP countries; believes that maritime safety and security should be improved through policy reform, that flags should be improved in accordance with the Paris Memorandum on Port State Control, and that the partner countries should be able to demonstrate improved track records in road safety and that they are taking concrete steps to improve rail interoperability with the EU; considers that transport links with the EU should be improved through better planning of networks and work on priority infrastructure projects that help to connect the partner countries with the trans-European transport network; encourages the partner countries to rehabilitate existing roads and construct new ones;

12. Takes note of the existence of closed borders within the Eastern Partnership territory, as well as of the communication difficulties for those countries which do not have direct access to seas, and calls, in this regard, on the EU to contribute to more open and accessible ways of communication via implementation of tangible projects;
13. Stresses that the Single European Sky, currently under construction, should also be extended to include the EU's neighbours — the recognition of EU law and the principle of 'EU designation' is a minimum precondition for this; points out that the Single European Sky aims to improve safety and reduce delays, costs and emissions and that as part of the gradual approach to establishing a Single European Sky, the EU's neighbouring countries are willing to form or join functional airspace blocks (FABs) with EU Member States; calls on the EaP countries to contribute to the smooth operation of air communications both between EU and EaP countries, and within Eastern Partnership territory;
14. Recalls that road transport plays a key role in trade flows with those EaP countries with which the EU shares a land border; points out, however, that cumbersome administrative procedures at border crossings remain an obstacle to the efficient flow of goods between the EU and its neighbours in the east, and on average, 40 % of total transportation time is lost at the borders owing to discrepancies in administrative procedures; stresses that facilitation of border-crossing procedures is therefore of key importance in stimulating trade by cutting time and costs and that sharing experience of successful reforms in this field would be beneficial for the EaP countries;
15. Draws attention to the fact that mortality due to road traffic injuries is considerably higher in most EaP countries than on average in the EU, and therefore the low level of road safety in the EaP countries is an issue of direct concern for the EU; stresses that improvement of road safety through training, sharing of best practices, awareness raising and promoting safer road infrastructure, including secure parking, constitutes a priority for the EU's cooperation and financial assistance with the neighbouring regions; encourages the European Commission to investigate the possibility of extending common EU-wide intelligent transport systems services to the EaP countries;
16. Is pleased to note that several EaP countries have expressed interest in increased road market access with the EU and considers that the EU should exercise its external competence in this field with a view to further market integration with these countries; calls, in this regard, on the Commission to closely monitor the partner countries to make certain that they implement and apply the relevant safety, security, environmental and social standards, and to ensure that Member States do not resort to protectionist measures; considers that the main objective of such an initiative should be to gradually remove quantitative restrictions in exchange for the implementation of standards that guarantee the quality of road transport services between the EU and the EaP countries, which is a concept not included in the current bilateral regimes;
17. Stresses that open, fair, non-discriminatory, transparent and efficient charging systems for the use of railway infrastructure along the corridors between the EU, its Eastern neighbours, the Middle East and Asia are necessary to exploit the full potential of rail freight traffic (including rehabilitation of existing railroads and construction of new, more efficient ones); encourages regional cooperation on this issue and notes with dismay that physical barriers to trade and freight growth also include the lack of interoperable rail systems, insufficient technology and rolling stock in poor condition; points out that efficiency of passenger transport by rail can be increased through better cooperation on border crossings, without requiring considerable infrastructure investments;
18. Encourages the promotion of low carbon vehicles and alternative fuel infrastructure in order to decrease fossil fuel consumption and thereby lower the impact of transport on the environment;

19. Stresses that reforms which seek to bring the rail sector of the EaP countries closer to the EU's standards (safety, security, environmental, social and interoperability) should continue, as this would not only benefit passenger and freight transport, but would also attract more investment in the rail sector; points out that high demand for rolling stock modernisation in neighbouring countries creates new market opportunities for EU companies; emphasises that the abovementioned reforms are also a precondition for any market opening in the future;
 20. Urges the EU to assist in achieving compliance through the sharing of information on developing national civil aviation security programmes and the sharing of best practices in the implementation and quality control of aviation security measures; stresses that the international standards in aviation security laid down by the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) should be fully implemented, and points out that regulatory convergence in the region, over and above international standards, could be facilitated by improving knowledge and implementation of the aviation security provisions of the European Civil Aviation Conference (ECAC) and the principles laid down in the EU's primary legislation;
 21. Points out that the EaP countries should also be the future beneficiaries under the Single European Sky air traffic management research programme (SESAR), which aims to modernise the air traffic control infrastructure in Europe, and that greater assistance from the EU to EaP countries that are seeking to modernise their air traffic management systems would be very welcome.
 22. Supports further regulatory approximation and achievement of compliance in all transport areas, the institutional development of the governmental agencies responsible for the development of the road, rail, maritime and air transport sectors in the EaP countries, and the adoption of consequent standards, through exchange of best EU practices, technical assistance, and the organisation of study tours, workshops and forums;
 23. Supports implementation of the transport infrastructure projects along the Eastern Partnership transport network through existing EU programmes and instruments that improve connections with the TEN-T core network, and also the completion of ongoing projects connecting EaP countries with EU transport networks;
 24. Deems it necessary for Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia, as signatories of Association Agreements, to receive adequate support from the EU in the development of the road, rail, air and sea sectors;
 25. Underlines that sea transport and navigable ways represent a fundamental element for the development of trade, for facilitating the movement of passengers and for a better interconnection among transport systems, after taking into account the specific geographic features of the EaP countries;
 26. Instructs its Co-Presidents to forward this resolution to the President of the European Parliament, the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the European External Action Service, and the governments and parliaments of the Member States and of the Eastern Partnership.
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RESOLUTION ⁽¹⁾**on challenges, potential and new engagement in cooperating on energy efficiency and renewable sources within the Eastern Partnership**

(2015/C 315/03)

THE EURONEST PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY,

- having regard to the Constituent Act of the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly of 3 May 2011,
- having regard to the Joint Declaration of the Eastern Partnership Summit held in Vilnius on 28 and 29 November 2013,
- having regard to the conclusions of the European Council of 24 October 2014 on the 2030 climate and energy policy framework,
- having regard to the decisions of the United Nations Climate Change Conference held in Warsaw from 11 to 22 November 2013,
- having regard to the European Parliament resolution of 5 February 2014 on a 2030 framework for climate and energy policy ⁽²⁾,
- having regard to the European Parliament resolution of 21 May 2013 on current challenges and opportunities for renewable energy in the European internal energy market ⁽³⁾,
- having regard to the European Parliament resolution of 14 March 2013 on ‘The Energy roadmap 2050, a future with energy’ ⁽⁴⁾,
- having regard to the European Parliament resolution of 12 June 2012 entitled ‘Engaging in energy policy cooperation with partners beyond our borders: A strategic approach to secure, sustainable and competitive energy supply’ ⁽⁵⁾,
- having regard to the European Parliament resolution of 26 November 2014 on the UN climate change conference in Lima calling for a binding energy efficiency target of 40 % in line with overall cost-effective potential for energy efficiency improvement ⁽⁶⁾,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 23 July 2014 entitled ‘Energy efficiency and its contribution to energy security and the 2030 framework for climate and energy policy’ (COM(2014)0520),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 22 January 2014 entitled ‘A policy framework for climate and energy in the period from 2020 to 2030’ (COM(2014)0015),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 8 March 2011 entitled ‘Roadmap for moving to a competitive low-carbon economy in 2050’ (COM(2011)0112),
- having regard to Directive 2012/27/EU on energy efficiency,
- having regard to Directive 2009/28/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2009 on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources and amending and subsequently repealing Directives 2001/77/EC and 2003/30/EC,

⁽¹⁾ Adopted on 17 March 2015 in Yerevan, Armenia.

⁽²⁾ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2014)0094.

⁽³⁾ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2013)0201.

⁽⁴⁾ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2013)0088.

⁽⁵⁾ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2012)0238.

⁽⁶⁾ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2014)0063.

- having regard to the National Strategy Papers for Energy of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine for the periods up to 2020 and 2030,
 - having regard to the 2014-17 core objectives and work programme of the Eastern Partnership: Platform 3 — Energy security,
 - having regard to the establishment of the Eastern Europe Energy Efficiency and Environment Partnership (E5P) in 2009,
 - having regard to the 2013 Annual Report on the activities of the Energy Community to the European Parliament and the national parliaments and to the Annual Report of 24 September 2014 on the Activities of the Energy Community in 2014,
- A. whereas global energy demand is continuously increasing, at a pace comparable to that of the population, human activity and technology development, and this results in intensifying global competition for fossil fuel resources, thus putting at risk the energy supply of the poorest economies;
- B. whereas concerns have emerged over climate change, growing energy demand and uncertainties of oil and gas global markets, arousing reflection on the part of both producer and consumer countries with regard to devising mutually beneficial strategies for transforming energy sectors into low-emission sectors, finding new balances among various sources of energy, ensuring reliable and safe supply, and limiting energy consumption;
- C. whereas energy consumption is expected to grow within the Eastern European region at a higher speed than the EU average, as part of a general trend accompanying the economic and social development of the region; whereas Eastern European partner countries are currently three times more energy-intensive than the average EU Member State and their untapped potential for energy efficiency remains huge;
- D. whereas it is therefore in the economic, social and environmental interests of both the EU and the Eastern European partner countries to reduce carbon dioxide emissions originating in the use of fossil fuels, to develop alternative and cost-effective sources of energy, and to increase energy efficiency;
- E. whereas the regional energy policy dialogue under the Eastern Partnership has intensified over the last years, covering convergence of energy markets, diversification of energy supply and transit, development of sustainable energy sources, and infrastructures of common and regional interest;
- F. whereas the UN Climate Change Conference held in Warsaw in November 2013 marked an important step forward with a view to reaching a new universal climate agreement in 2015, to be based in particular on policies and measures for reducing carbon dioxide emissions from energy systems;
- G. whereas energy-saving and energy efficiency measures, together with increased use of renewable sources, would also contribute to reducing multiple forms of energy dependency, including financial, technology or fuel dependency in the nuclear and fossil sectors, acquisition and ownership of strategic energy infrastructure, and investment in energy projects by non-reliable third parties in EU and Eastern European partner countries;
- H. whereas the increasing share of renewables can lead to substantial cost savings, as seen in the EU's external energy bill in recent years (an alleviation of EUR 30 billion in 2012);
- I. whereas the degraded state of the residential building sector, energy transmission and distribution infrastructures inherited from the past poses serious challenges for energy efficiency and energy-saving in many EU and Eastern European partner countries;
- J. whereas the EU has adopted a climate and energy policy framework for 2030, setting a set of objectives, namely to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 40 % compared with 1990 levels, to increase the share of renewable energy consumed in the EU to 27 %, and to improve energy efficiency by at least 27 % compared to the projections for 2030;

- K. whereas full implementation of the current as well as of the second climate and energy package and the successive EU legislation in the field of energy efficiency is the responsibility of all EU Member States, and the same applies to the Eastern European partner countries in terms of transposed legislation; whereas the lack of correct and timely transposition can jeopardise the security of individual EU Member States or of the EU and its Eastern European partner countries as a whole;
- L. whereas in 2009 the EU adopted a renewable energy directive laying down mandatory national targets to be achieved through promoting the use of renewable energy; whereas in 2012 it further adopted an energy efficiency directive under which Member States must implement binding measures for energy saving, in particular obligations for the annual renovation of 3 % of government buildings and for energy companies to reduce energy consumption at customer level;
- M. whereas Eastern European partner countries have engaged in adopting and implementing policy and legal frameworks for renewables and energy efficiency, including through the contractual relations of some of them existing within the Energy Community Treaty; whereas, however, their efforts are hindered by insufficient monitoring and technical capacity and by the lack of investment and instruments for their implementation;
- N. whereas in 2013 Armenia, Georgia and Moldova joined the Eastern Europe Energy Efficiency and Environment Partnership (E5P), which was first established with Ukraine and which aims to promote energy efficiency and environmental investments in the countries of the Eastern Partnership;
- O. whereas, although the global economic crisis has had a negative impact on investment for energy savings and renewables, international financial institutions still play a significant role by leveraging national funds and loans for investing in the sustainable use of energy and the development of renewables;
- P. whereas EU and Eastern European partner countries need to take into account the overall competitiveness of their economies and energy sectors, when shaping adequate policies for imposing obligations on energy efficiency in industrial sectors, developing renewables and integrating them into national energy mixes;
- Q. whereas Ukraine and Moldova joined the Energy Community in 2011 and were therefore obliged to transpose, inter alia, the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (by 30 September 2012), the Energy Labelling Directive (by the end of 2011), the Energy Services Directive (by the end of 2011), and the Renewable Energy Sources Directive (by the end of 2013); whereas Georgia is negotiating to become a fully-fledged member of the Energy Community in 2015;

Achieving progress and delivering results for renewable energy and energy efficiency

1. Shares the view of the Eastern Partnership Vilnius Summit participants on the strategic importance and necessity of closer cooperation in the areas of the environment and climate change as priorities for action; welcomes the engagement of the Summit participants in developing a new universal climate agreement to be adopted at the UN Climate Change Conference to be held in 2015 in Paris; emphasises the common interest in strengthening bilateral and multilateral cooperation within the Eastern Partnership in the energy field, in order to achieve climate policy objectives;
2. Welcomes the progress resulting from the Vilnius Summit, and calls on the participants in the Summit to be held in May 2015 in Riga to take further steps forward in energy cooperation under the Eastern partnership; regrets that, in specific cases, bilateral energy trade has been used as an instrument of political pressure by the Russian Federation; stresses that further development of cooperation between the EU and its partners is needed to strengthen mutual energy security and to make them more independent and resilient to external pressure;
3. Underlines the importance of giving high political priority to achieving progress in the development of renewable energy and energy efficiency in order to move towards low-emissions energy systems, to mitigate the risks posed by climate change and to promote secure, sustainable and affordable energy for the benefit of our economies and citizens;

4. Stresses that existing ageing infrastructures, 'missing links' and a higher share of renewables in energy production and consumption all point to the need for large-scale investment in developing adequate infrastructure for transmission and storage of electricity; calls on the EU and the Eastern European partner countries to strengthen regional cooperation and encourage the modernisation of energy grids, through, in particular, the development and promotion of 'smart grids' and the construction of new interconnection and cross-border infrastructures; stresses that these investments are to be complemented with measures for behavioural changes, energy saving and strong consumer support, highlighting the benefits of switching from fossil fuels to renewables, particularly in the heating sector; also stresses the importance of developing internet backbone network in order to support smart grid operations, as well as of ensuring the cybersecurity of critical infrastructures;
5. Notes that certain renewable energy sources are intermittent and considers, in this regard, that the more ubiquitous electricity networks are, the more geographically distant energy sources can be exploited, and thus a balance can be achieved regarding the production or unavailability of renewable energy facilities;
6. Emphasises the role of the energy efficiency of buildings and the importance of renovating energy-inefficient buildings in partnership with the EU in order to maximise their energy efficiency;
7. Considers that the development of renewable energy should go hand in hand with support for storage capacities and flexible back-up power capacity, and underlines the need for effective energy efficiency measures to ensure electricity supply in periods of demand peaks; encourages the EU and the Eastern European partner countries to support and facilitate the setting-up of new partnerships to ensure technology transfer in the areas of demand-side management, smart grids and storage technologies; calls for improved cooperation between the EU and its partner countries in a joint effort to counter attacks of whatever kind on critical infrastructures;
8. Highlights the problems affecting rural communities in the Eastern European partner countries related to gasification, since currently such communities still depend on natural resources derived from the forest, the result being massive deforestation and forest degradation on a scale accounting for around one fifth of all human-generated emissions;
9. Recommends that the EU and its Eastern European partner countries foster and test local and decentralised renewable energy production and distribution networks, which would create a more resilient, balanced and democratic energy system, improve energy security, provide business opportunities and cover the needs of local communities and markets;
10. Calls on the EU Member States and their partners to increase the capacity of the search for alternative energy cooperation with private investors in extracting organic-rich shale gas, which would create a strong advantage enabling energy import-dependent countries to better withstand external political pressure;
11. Stresses that the potential of energy savings concerns all sectors of the economy, including industry, agriculture, buildings (particularly with regard to residential buildings' high energy inefficiency levels), transport and services; believes that progress towards energy efficiency must rely on decisions concerning the effective implementation of intelligently-funded measures made by a complex chain of stakeholders, ranging from policymakers to energy producers and individual consumers;
12. Stresses that shifting to a more energy-efficient economy should also accelerate the spread of innovative technological solutions and improve the competitiveness of industry, while boosting economic growth and creating high-quality jobs in a number of sectors related to energy efficiency;
13. Stresses that energy efficiency policies should be based on detailed analyses of energy use, markets and technologies and the identification of sectors and opportunities where actions can potentially yield the biggest improvements; calls, in this regard, on the EU Member States and the Eastern European partner countries to shape energy efficiency policies, aiming as a matter of priority at removing barriers to efficiency investments, gradually setting and implementing performance standards in all energy-intensive sectors, including industry, raising taxes on the most inefficient products and equipment where less energy-hungry alternatives exist, and creating funding models that are accessible for private households;

14. Underlines the importance of completing district heating projects throughout the Eastern European partner countries, ensuring that each renovation or construction project is developed with energy efficiency as a priority;

Ensuring the right framework conditions for sustainable development of renewable energy and stimulation of energy efficiency

15. Supports the objectives of increasing public awareness of renewable energy in the Eastern European partner countries, and recognises that currently the business community in those countries lacks knowledge regarding renewable energy production and means of participation in investment projects; highlights the role of international financial institutions in leveraging national funds and loans for investing in sustainable energy use and the development of renewables;
16. Supports the objectives of the work programme of the Eastern Partnership Platform on Energy Security for 2014-17, and in particular that of enhanced cooperation in implementing legislation on energy efficiency and renewable energy and promoting investments;
17. Emphasises that regulatory frameworks for renewables and energy efficiency are of the utmost importance since investment decisions in these fields are largely affected by administrative authorisations; recommends that the governments of EU Member States and Eastern European partner countries ensure transparency, consistency and continuity in shaping legal, financial and regulatory frameworks, in order to strengthen investor confidence and share regulatory know-how and best practices; stresses that the Commission should be vigilant and ensure that energy investments and policy decisions in any of the EU Member States do not undermine energy security in other Member States or in Eastern European partner countries;
18. Invites the Commission to review the Energy Efficiency Directive in order to extend the energy efficiency obligation schemes beyond 2020 and propose the revised directive with targets for 2030 for final adoption by the Energy Community;
19. Supports the approximation by Eastern European partner countries to EU legislation and standards relevant to renewables and energy efficiency, especially in the framework of the Energy Community, and the implementation of related national strategies and action plans; emphasises, in this regard, the importance of legislation expanding access to domestic renewable energy markets to foreign investors and facilitating energy trade among national and local parties; stresses that domestic and foreign investors should enjoy equal treatment as regards access to renewable energy markets; expects legislative proposals for continuing the growth of domestic renewable sources of energy and production of energy from renewables beyond 2020; welcomes the fact that Eastern European partner countries which have adopted national energy efficiency programmes have set quantified targets, as regards, in particular, decrease of energy intensity, reduction of carbon dioxide emissions and heat losses in the housing sector; stresses that energy efficiency targets that have not been met should be revisited periodically and new strategies should be put in place in order to make sure that they are reached in both the EU and the partner countries;
20. Takes the view that more coherent support systems for renewable energy are needed in order to build up renewable capacity in an efficient manner, in particular for innovative technologies in the solar, wind and biomass sectors, but that they should not give rise to excessive subsidies and should be phased out once technologies are mature;
21. Highlights the role that the transport sector can play in emissions reduction via the integration of renewable energy goals in public transport work programmes;
22. Encourages the EU and the Eastern European partner countries to set up new financing models for enhancing renewables and energy saving which rely less on public and more on private funding;
23. Calls for country-specific assessment studies to be carried out on energy consumption in order to put in place a strategy to optimise investments that would increase efficiency and reduce costs and dependence on imports in the long term; urges increased private and public investment in the renovation of energy-inefficient residential buildings in the EU and its partner countries;

24. Recalls its recommendation that the EU Member States and the Eastern European partners facilitate the establishment of preferential treatment for trade in energy generated from renewable sources, i.e. under the mechanisms and conditions provided for under Directive 2009/28/EC;
25. Welcomes the fact that, within the framework of the transposed Renewable Energy Sources (RES) directive, Ukraine almost doubled the share of RES in its final consumption, from 2,99 % in 2012 to 3,96 % in 2013;

Encouraging common approaches to policymaking and strengthening multilateral cooperation in renewables and energy efficiency within the Eastern partnership

26. Stresses that, while energy policy objectives have been set and coordinated at EU level, EU Member States have to choose appropriate strategies depending on the structure of their domestic energy markets; recommends that EU Member States and Eastern European partner countries engage in further exchanges and cooperation in research and policymaking with regard to renewables and energy efficiency, in parallel with tackling the problem of energy poverty, with a special emphasis on low-income and vulnerable households which cannot themselves afford to invest in energy efficiency and modernisation projects and would be the most affected by rising energy prices, providing information and tailored financing mechanisms to enable them to reduce energy use, diversify energy sources and build energy autonomy on a household level;
27. Highlights the interest of developing an open and integrated energy market between the EU and its Eastern European partners, which could boost renewable energy development by providing more opportunities for trade and investment; recommends that the EU and the Eastern European partner countries engage in developing regional trade in electricity from renewables in the framework of new agreements;
28. Welcomes the Commission's intention to draw up guidelines on trade in renewables at the European level, and recommends that full account be taken of the trade potential of the EU with Eastern European partner countries;
29. Welcomes the support that the INOGATE programme, including the Energy Saving Initiative in the Building Sector (ESIB) has provided to the Eastern European partner countries; believes that the INOGATE programme should be implemented in the future, in a more tailor-made format for every partner country, on the basis of contractual agreements and commitments to make policy changes;
30. Praises the results of the 'Covenant of Mayors' EU initiative bringing together city councils in an effort to reduce carbon dioxide emissions through energy efficiency and renewable energy actions; calls on the EU to reinforce this initiative and recommend it to more municipalities, in particular in Eastern European partner countries; recommends that the initiative should include the deployment of further efforts to promote energy efficiency principles and change consumers' mentalities, in particular, through awareness-raising campaigns;
31. Recognises the value of the Eastern Europe Energy Efficiency and Environment Partnership (E5P), as a multi-donor fund managed by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development whose purpose is to facilitate investments in energy efficiency and reduction of carbon dioxide emissions in Eastern European partner countries; welcomes the decision made by Armenia, Georgia and Moldova to join the activities of the E5P Fund, as both contributors and recipients, in October 2013, noting that the E5P Fund has operated successfully in Ukraine since 2009; encourages Azerbaijan and Belarus to also become member countries of the E5P and to join its donor community, thus enabling the stepping-up of their efforts to improve energy efficiency;
32. Invites the EU to make better use of the Neighbourhood Investment Facility and to cofinance investments in energy efficiency measures and RES projects, building on, inter alia, the experience gained in the implementation of energy efficiency projects under the Western Balkan Investment Framework;
33. Underlines the need to develop education in the academic fields relevant to renewables and energy efficiency, as important vectors for innovation; recommends that the EU develop support programmes under the European Neighbourhood Instrument for 2014-20, enabling universities and engineering schools in the EU and the Eastern European partner countries to develop closer cooperation and exchanges of Ph.D and degree students in the field of energy engineering and economy;

34. Welcomes the priorities of the EU's Intelligent Energy Europe programme and of the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (Horizon 2020); calls for the EU to open up its Intelligent Energy Europe programme to Eastern European partner countries and to take measures to facilitate their participation, with the aim of exchanging best practices, developing new technologies and fostering innovation in the field of renewable energy and efficiency;
 35. Instructs its Co-Presidents to forward this resolution to the President of the European Parliament, the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the European External Action Service, the governments and parliaments of the EU Member States and the Eastern European partners.
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RESOLUTION ⁽¹⁾**on culture and intercultural dialogue in the context of the Eastern Partnership**

(2015/C 315/04)

THE EURONEST PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY,

- having regard to the Joint Declaration of the Eastern Partnership Summit held in Vilnius on 28 and 29 November 2013 entitled ‘Eastern Partnership: the way ahead’,
 - having regard to the Joint Declaration of the Eastern Partnership Summit held in Warsaw on 29 and 30 September 2011,
 - having regard to the European Parliament’s resolution of 23 October 2013 on ‘the European Neighbourhood Policy: towards a strengthening of the partnership. Position of the European Parliament on the 2012 reports’,
 - having regard to the European Parliament’s resolution of 12 May 2011 on the cultural dimensions of the EU’s external actions,
 - having regard to the European Parliament’s resolution of 14 January 2004 on ‘preserving and promoting cultural diversity: the role of the European regions and international organisations such as Unesco and the Council of Europe’,
 - having regard to the relevant working documents issued by the European Parliament’s Committee on Culture and Education, such as the working document of 15 October 2013 on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on establishing the Creative Europe Programme and the working document of 16 October 2013 on Erasmus+,
 - having regard to the draft opinion of 5 November 2013 of the European Parliament’s Committee on Culture and Education on the EU foreign policy in a world of cultural and religious differences,
 - having regard to the 2005 Unesco Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions,
 - having regard to the 1972 Unesco World Heritage Convention and the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflicts with Regulations for the Execution of the Convention,
 - having regard to the Constituent Act of the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly of 3 May 2011,
 - having regard to the Joint Communication of 15 May 2012 of the European Commission and of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy entitled ‘Eastern Partnership: A Roadmap to the Autumn 2013 Summit’,
 - having regard to the resolution of 3 April 2012 of the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly on strengthening civil society in the Eastern Partnership countries, including the question of cooperation between government and civil society and the question of the reforms aimed at empowering civil society,
 - having regard to the 2014 resolution of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Parliamentary Assembly on protection of cultural property in the OSCE area,
- A. whereas the main richness of Europe is its cultural heritage, which must be preserved for the benefit of the people;
- B. whereas culture can and should be a facilitator for development, inclusion, innovation, democracy, human rights, education, conflict prevention and reconciliation, mutual understanding and respect;

⁽¹⁾ Adopted on 17 March 2015 in Yerevan, Armenia.

- C. whereas cultural cooperation and intercultural dialogue, which are the building blocks of cultural diplomacy, can serve as instruments for global peace and stability; whereas artists act as de facto cultural diplomats by exchanging and confronting different aesthetic, political, moral and social values;
- D. whereas cultural goods, including sports and youth activities, contribute to Europe's non-material development and economy and help to create a knowledge-based society, in particular through cultural industries and tourism;
- E. whereas new media and communication technologies, such as the internet, can act as instruments for cultural cooperation and intercultural dialogue and for facilitating access to cultural content and education;
- F. whereas, just like biodiversity in nature, the diversity of European cultures is part of the living heritage that is vital to the sustainable development of our societies, and whereas it should therefore be safeguarded and protected against any risk of extinction;
- G. whereas cohesive multicultural societies that manage their diversity democratically and sustainably help to foster plurality are more open and better placed to form part of the richness that cultural diversity represents; whereas personal mobility in the shared European area, as well as both established and new migratory flows and exchanges of all kinds, foster such cultural diversity;
- H. whereas the objective of safeguarding and promoting each and every facet of the European Union's cultural heritage has been bolstered under the Lisbon Treaty;
- I. whereas cultural diversity is one of the fundamental principles of the European Union, as enshrined in Article 22 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights, which states that 'the Union shall respect cultural, religious and linguistic diversity';
- J. whereas preserving and promoting cultural and linguistic diversity within and between Member States is a fundamental value and, at the same time, one of the major tasks of the European Union; whereas the European Agenda for Culture defines the strategic objective of promoting culture as a vital element of the EU's international relations;
- K. whereas the 2005 Unesco Convention on the Protection and Promotion of Cultural Diversity allows Parties to the convention to take appropriate measures to protect cultural activities, goods and services in order to foster diversity in terms of cultural expression, both within the territory of the Parties and under international agreements;
- L. whereas all languages in Europe are equal in value and worth, form an integral part of Europe's cultures and civilisations, and contribute to the enrichment of humanity; whereas respect for linguistic diversity makes a positive contribution to social cohesion by boosting mutual understanding, self-esteem and open-mindedness, and whereas linguistic diversity increases access to culture and contributes to creativity and to the acquisition of inter-cultural skills, as well as promoting cooperation between peoples and countries;
- M. whereas the notion of linguistic diversity in the EU and Eastern European partner countries embraces not only official languages, but also co-official languages, regional languages and languages that are not officially recognised within these states; whereas all languages reflect a mentality, a style of creativity and historical, social and cultural knowledge and skills, which are part of the richness and diversity of EU and Eastern European partner countries and form the basis of European identity; whereas the linguistic diversity within a country should therefore be seen as an asset instead of a burden and should be supported and promoted accordingly;
- N. whereas the Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, which has been ratified by 24 EU Member States and by all five Euronest Parliamentary Assembly partner countries, considers that the creation of a climate of tolerance and dialogue is necessary to enable cultural diversity to be a source and a factor, not of division, but of enrichment for each society;
- O. whereas the Council of Europe's European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, which has been ratified by 16 EU Member States and signed by four Eastern European partner countries, provides both a frame of reference for the protection of languages in danger of dying out and a means of protecting minorities;
- P. whereas some endangered European languages spoken by cross-border communities enjoy very different levels of protection depending on the state or region in which speakers of the language concerned live; whereas in some EU and Eastern European partner countries minority or regional languages exist which are endangered or dying out, but in other, neighbouring countries are official, majority languages;

- Q. whereas, given the urgent nature of the situation they are facing, special attention should be paid to those languages that are in danger of dying out, by recognising multiculturalism and multilingualism, implementing policy measures that combat existing prejudices against endangered languages and adopting an anti-assimilation approach;
- R. whereas teaching individuals in their mother tongue is the most effective way for them to learn; whereas if children are taught in their mother tongue from the start, and in parallel with an official language, they acquire a natural skill that they can use to learn more languages later on, and whereas linguistic pluralism is an advantage for young Europeans;
- S. whereas more than 300 different national minorities and linguistic communities live on the European continent;
- T. whereas the European Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities, and whereas these values are common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail (Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union); whereas these values are also part of the Eastern Partnership;
- U. whereas the Presidency Conclusions of the European Council held in Copenhagen on 21 and 22 June 1993 state that respect for and protection of minorities is a requirement for applying for membership of the European Union;
- V. whereas the national minority communities represent a special contribution to European culture;
- W. whereas it is crucially important for the future of the EU and the Eastern European partner countries, for their stability, security and prosperity and for good neighbourhood relations that the issue of national minorities, intercultural and interethnic relations be addressed; whereas majority and minority peoples share a mutual, yet asymmetric, political and moral responsibility for the integration, preservation and development of minority communities' identities, cultures and languages;
- X. whereas every individual should have the inalienable right to choose freely whether they belong to a national minority, and they should be put at no disadvantage as a result of that choice or their exercising the rights connected to that choice; whereas no EU Member State or Eastern European partner country may question the right of persons belonging to national minorities to choose freely an identity or multiple identities;
- Y. whereas it is the prime responsibility of the Member States to protect all cultural heritage of great importance against intentional destruction in the event of armed conflict;
- Z. whereas cultural heritage reflects a nations' history, traditions and national origins;

Respect for cultural rights: key principles

1. Stresses the importance of the cultural dimension and of intercultural dialogue for the full development of the Eastern Partnership;
2. Calls on the EU Member States and Eastern European partner countries to honour the commitments that they have entered into by acceding to the 2005 Unesco Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, be it on their own territory or in connection with international agreements;
3. Calls on all EU Member States that have not done so to follow the example set by participating Euronest Parliamentary Assembly countries, which have all signed and ratified the Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities; further calls on all EU Member States and Eastern European partner countries that have not yet done so to ratify and implement the Council of Europe's European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages;

4. Firmly believes that the rights of members of national minority communities must be guaranteed in order to create appropriate conditions for their development, and that such rights must be comparable with those enjoyed by members of majority communities in EU Member States and Eastern European partner countries; notes that, since national minorities do not have legal personality, they cannot be legal subjects and cannot therefore be party to contracts or covenants; underlines, however, that they must be the object of collective protection and that their members must enjoy the capacity to act — either as individual legal subjects or within the framework of various entities with legal personality — in defence of the respective national minorities' identity and cultural rights; stresses that these rights are not territorial or connected to territory and that their recognition and protection must be legally regulated both at the level of each nation state concerned and at transnational (international) level (Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation No 1735 (2006) on the concept of 'nation');

Cultural dialogue and cultural cooperation

5. Emphasises both the need to adopt a comprehensive approach to cultural mediation and cultural exchange between EU Member States and Eastern European partner countries and the role of culture in fostering democratisation, human rights, conflict prevention and peace-building;
6. Expresses its concern at the fact that protracted conflicts in the territory of Eastern European partner countries have not yet been resolved in an international, legal framework; stresses that the existing situation remains a serious obstacle to the democratic development of such regions and negatively affects exchanges and mutual benefit processes among Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries in the cultural sphere, among others;
7. Regrets the destruction of historical, religious and cultural monuments in the territories of Eastern European partner countries, and in particular where prolonged conflicts exist; calls on the EU Member States and EaP Member States to compel those countries that are in conflict to refrain from destroying monuments, replacing their original parts and illicitly importing, exporting or modifying them, as such actions decrease the cultural and historical value of such monuments;
8. Commends, in this context, mutual exchange initiatives, calls for further efforts aimed at fostering intercultural contact among people living in areas of protracted conflict and echoes the need to spread the ideas of peace and trust and to start a genuine process of reconciliation between the parties on either side of such conflicts;
9. Stresses the need to devise effective strategies for intercultural negotiations between EU Member States and Eastern European partner countries, and considers that a multicultural approach to this task may facilitate the conclusion of beneficial agreements, thereby putting the EU and Eastern European partner countries on an equal footing;
10. States that cultural and educational exchanges between EU Member States and Eastern European partner countries can potentially strengthen civil society, foster democratisation and good governance, encourage the development of skills, promote human rights and fundamental freedoms and provide building blocks for lasting cooperation;
11. Encourages the EaP countries to develop programmes for educational exchange, following the example of the EU Erasmus programme, which has proved to be a useful tool not only in the area of education, but also for intercultural exchange, resulting in better understanding of different cultures;
12. Encourages the EU Member States and Eastern European partner countries to step up their cooperation efforts in order to further improve national legal frameworks for the protection and preservation of cultural heritage and cultural assets, in accordance with national legislation and international legal frameworks, including measures to combat illegal trafficking in cultural assets and intellectual property; recalls, in this context, the efforts currently being made in the EU to recast the directive on the return of cultural objects unlawfully removed from the territory of a Member State (COM(2013)311) (Vergiat report);
13. Calls for coherent strategies to foster youth mobility, the mobility of cultural professionals, artists and creators, cultural and educational development (including media and ICT literacy) and access to artistic expression in all its forms in the EU Member States and Eastern European partner countries; calls for an increased budget for these activities;
14. Encourages cooperation with practitioners, mediator organisations and civil society, in both EU Member States and Eastern European partner countries, in drawing up and implementing external cultural policies and in promoting cultural events and exchanges that improve mutual understanding whilst taking due account of European cultural and linguistic diversity;

Access to EU programmes

15. Underlines the European Union's pivotal role in strengthening intercultural dialogue with the Eastern European partner countries, with the aim of supporting solidarity and social and political cohesion; suggests efforts to promote confidence-building between, and the coexistence of, communities that have traditionally lived next to each other, by teaching and encouraging learning about one another's identity, languages, history, heritage and culture and regional identities, with a view to achieving better understanding of and greater respect for diversity;
 16. Recalls the importance of the Cultural Cooperation Protocols and their added value in bilateral agreements with Eastern European partner countries; urges the Commission to present its strategy on future cultural cooperation protocols and to consult all stakeholders, including the European Parliament, the parliaments of the EaP countries and civil society, about this strategy;
 17. Underlines the importance of cultural diplomacy and welcomes the Erasmus+ and Europe for Citizens programmes, which contribute to enhancing linguistic competence, cultural awareness, active citizenship and mutual understanding; stresses the importance of the Creative Europe programme in the cultural and creative sectors; underlines the importance of increased funding for these programmes;
 18. Fully supports the increased involvement of EaP countries in the aforementioned programmes and encourages synergies and youth initiatives in the fields of education, multilingualism, sport, media, tourism, volunteering and training as integral parts of EU-EaP cooperation and dialogue;
 19. Values all public-private cooperation in which civil society — including NGOs and European cultural networks — plays a strong role with regard to addressing the cultural aspects of EU relations with Eastern European partner countries;
 20. Supports the increasing involvement of Eastern European partner countries in EU cultural, mobility, youth, education and training programmes and calls for young EaP participants in particular to be granted access to these programmes;
 21. Calls for the creation of a cultural visa for nationals, artists and other professionals in the cultural field who are from Eastern European partner countries along the lines of the existing Scientific Visa package, which has been in force since 2005, in order to further facilitate mobility in the cultural sector beyond the ongoing visa facilitation talks; urges a time-frame to be set for introducing this cultural visa programme;
 22. Instructs its Co-Presidents to forward this resolution to the President of the European Parliament, the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the EEAS, and the governments and parliaments of the Member States and of the Eastern Partnership countries.
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RESOLUTION ⁽¹⁾
on the centennial of the Armenian genocide
(2015/C 315/05)

THE EURONEST PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY,

- having regard to Article 9(3) of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 10 December 1948,
 - having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 16 December 1966,
 - having regard to the UN Convention on the Non-Applicability of Statutory Limitations to War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity of 26 November 1968,
 - having regard to the European Parliament resolution of 20 July 1987 on a political solution to the Armenian question,
 - having regard to the European Parliament resolution of 15 November 2000 on the 1999 Regular Report from the Commission on Turkey's progress towards accession,
 - having regard to the European Parliament resolution of 28 September 2005 on the opening of negotiations with Turkey,
 - having regard to the resolutions and statements of the legislative bodies of a number of EU Member States,
- A. whereas 2015 marks the centennial of the Armenian genocide perpetrated under the Ottoman Empire,
- B. whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation for freedom, justice and peace in the world,
- C. whereas the denial of genocide is widely recognised as the final stage of genocide, enshrining impunity for its perpetrators and demonstrably paving the way for future genocides; whereas the absence of unequivocal and timely condemnation of the Armenian genocide contributed to a large extent to the failure to prevent future crimes against humanity,
- D. whereas the early prevention of such crimes can undoubtedly stop the escalation of conflicts, tragedies and humanitarian catastrophes,
1. Condemns all forms of crime against humanity and genocide, and deeply deplores attempts to deny them;
 2. Pays tribute to the memory of the innocent victims of all genocides and crimes committed against humanity;
 3. Stresses that the prevention of genocides and crimes against humanity should be a priority for the international community; believes that further development of international capacity in this area is essential;
 4. Supports the international struggle to prevent genocides, to restore the rights of people subjected to genocide and to establish historical justice;
 5. Invites Turkey to come to terms with its past;
 6. Considers that preparing the ground for future reconciliation between peoples is of the utmost importance.

⁽¹⁾ Adopted on 17 March 2015 in Yerevan, Armenia.

RESOLUTION ⁽¹⁾**on the Russian military aggression against Ukraine and the urgent need for a peaceful resolution to the conflict**

(2015/C 315/06)

THE EURONEST PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY,

- having regard to all recent European Parliament resolutions on the situation in Ukraine,
 - having regard to the Minsk Protocol of 5 September 2014, to the Minsk Memorandum of 19 September 2014, and to the 'Package of measures for the implementation of the Minsk agreements' of 12 February 2015,
 - having regard to UN Security Council Resolution 2202 (2015) of 17 February 2015,
- A. whereas the cooperation between the European Union (EU) and the Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries is founded on the values of respect for the territorial integrity of states, human dignity, liberty, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms,
- B. whereas the illegal annexation of Crimea was the first case of forcible incorporation of a part of one country into another in Europe since World War II, in violation of international law, including the Charter of the United Nations, the Helsinki Final Act and the 1994 Budapest Memorandum,
- C. whereas Russia remains in breach of the ceasefire agreement of 2008 with Georgia, as it continues to occupy its territories,
- D. whereas Russian aggression and occupation of the Crimean Peninsula, together with acts of aggression in eastern Ukraine which led to material losses for Ukraine, its citizens and its legal entities, should be remedied by the Russian Federation via international judicial institutions,
- E. whereas the armed conflict in eastern Ukraine has resulted in thousands of military and civilian casualties, including the 298 innocent passengers of Malaysian Airlines flight MH17, with many more wounded and hundreds of thousands having fled their homes,
1. Confirms that the EU and its partner countries have a common interest in promoting and establishing peace and security in Ukraine, which is suffering from military aggression by the Russian Federation;
 2. Stresses that Russia's annexation of Crimea and military aggression against Ukraine breaches fundamental principles of international law; expresses its full support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders;
 3. Supports the agreement reached in Minsk on 12 February 2015 with Chancellor Merkel and President Hollande and the Trilateral Contact Group's signing of the 'Package of measures for the implementation of the Minsk agreements'; welcomes the UN Security Council's endorsement of the agreement as a whole;
 4. Calls on all sides to act responsibly and to implement the package of measures in full and in good faith, as it offers a way forward to a peaceful resolution of the conflict; expresses deep concerns over the reported numerous breaches of the ceasefire and strongly condemns the Russian-backed separatists' offensive, the seizure of Debaltseve, in clear violation of the ceasefire agreement, and all acts of terrorism; calls on the Russian Federation to ensure full implementation of the Minsk agreements; reminds Russia of its commitments and special responsibility in this respect;
 5. Urges progress in the withdrawal of heavy weapons and calls on the signatories of the Minsk Package to provide baseline information, including inventories, withdrawal routes and concentration points, to the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission;

⁽¹⁾ Adopted on 17 March 2015 in Yerevan, Armenia.

6. Stresses that, in line with the Minsk agreements, re-establishing Ukraine's control over its borders remains essential; reiterates that OSCE observers and unmanned aerial vehicles must be granted full and immediate access to the affected zones so that they can assume their monitoring and verification functions — such zones include all parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts and areas along the state border with Russia;
 7. Calls on the EU and its partner countries to continue to provide qualified staff, equipment and financial contributions to the SMM; welcomes the decision to double the number of special observers; emphasises that the separatists have repeatedly failed to respect and promote the provisions of the Minsk agreements, thus leading to a further escalation of tensions and the resumption of armed hostilities;
 8. Considers that the EU and its partner countries should explore ways to support the Ukrainian Government in enhancing its defensive capabilities and the protection of Ukraine's borders;
 9. Calls on Russia to withdraw its troops and armaments from occupied territories, to stop sending, supplying and financing mercenaries and supporting, training and arming irregular forces;
 10. Takes note of the Ukrainian proposal of 19 February 2015, which calls on the Council of the European Union to consider the possibility of launching an EU Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) mission in Ukraine as an effective tool for ensuring due and full implementation of the Minsk agreements, aimed at safeguarding Ukraine's territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence and the inviolability of its borders;
 11. Encourages the adoption of confidence-building measures to support the peace and reconciliation efforts; underlines the importance of an inclusive political dialogue, decentralisation and other constitutional changes already proposed in the Poroshenko peace plan; stresses the need to avoid propaganda, hate speech and rhetoric, including by Russia, which may further aggravate the conflict; emphasises that such an inclusive dialogue should involve civil society organisations and citizens from all the regions and minorities concerned;
 12. Calls on the Russian authorities to immediately release Nadiya Savchenko, Member of the Ukrainian Verkhovna Rada and of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, and other Ukrainian citizens who continue to be illegally detained in Russian prisons;
 13. Expresses its great concern about the humanitarian situation in the Donbas and stresses the need for further financial and humanitarian assistance; draws attention to an increasing number of internally displaced persons, refugees in neighbouring countries and children affected by the conflict;
 14. Calls for the continuation and intensification of diplomatic dialogue and pressure in order to achieve a sustainable settlement of the conflict; stresses that the international community should be ready to react with appropriate means to any blatant breach of the ceasefire and to any actions that undermine the efforts to reach a comprehensive settlement; underlines that the maintenance, reinforcement or reversibility of the EU's restrictive measures depend on Russia's own attitude and on the implementation of the Minsk agreements; stresses that there can be no military solution to this or other conflicts in our common neighbourhood; recommends applying similar models of internationally assisted peaceful reintegration of occupied territories into legal and constitutional orders;
 15. Calls on the authorities of Ukraine to deliver tangible progress in implementing the Association Agreement and to implement the ambitious but long overdue reforms with great determination, despite the war effort; stresses the need to strengthen the rule of law, eradicate corruption and move forward with key constitutional, judiciary, social and economic reforms;
 16. Strongly condemns the increasing number of terrorist acts in Ukrainian cities, including the recent act in Kharkiv committed on 22 February 2015 during a peaceful march commemorating the first anniversary of the shootings of civilians in Euromaidan;
 17. Supports the international and independent investigation into the circumstances of the tragic downing of Malaysian Airlines flight MH17 and urges all parties to show a genuine willingness to cooperate, guarantee safe and unrestricted access to the MH17 crash site, and allow access to all other relevant resources that may aid the investigation and help bring to justice the perpetrators of this crime; underlines that no amnesty will be given to the perpetrators of this war crime.
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IV

(Notices)

NOTICES FROM EUROPEAN UNION INSTITUTIONS, BODIES, OFFICES AND AGENCIES

EURONEST PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

RULES OF PROCEDURE

**adopted on 3 May 2011 in Brussels, amended on 3 April 2012 in Baku, on 29 May 2013 in Brussels
and on 18 March 2015 in Yerevan**

(2015/C 315/07)

*Article 1***Nature and objectives**

1. The EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly is the parliamentary institution of the Eastern Partnership between the European Union and its Eastern European Partners, to which Article 49 of the Treaty on European Union in principle could be applied, founded on mutual interests and commitments as well as on the principles of differentiation, shared ownership and responsibility.
2. The EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly shall be the parliamentary forum promoting the necessary conditions to accelerate political association and further economic integration between the European Union and the Eastern European Partners. It shall contribute to the strengthening, development and visibility of the Eastern Partnership, as the institution responsible for parliamentary consultation, supervision and monitoring of the Partnership.
3. Participation in the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly shall be voluntary, provided that the membership criteria established by the Constituent Act are fulfilled and the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly shall maintain a spirit of integration and openness.
4. The EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly shall help to support, promote and consolidate in practical terms the Eastern Partnership by covering its four thematic platforms, namely:
 - (a) questions related to fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms as well as questions related to market economy, sustainable development and good governance;
 - (b) further economic integration between the EU and its Eastern European Partners, supporting the socioeconomic reforms of the Eastern European Partners, as well as trade and investment liberalisation, leading to convergence with EU laws and standards with the objective of establishing a network of deep and comprehensive free trade areas;
 - (c) mutual energy support and security mechanisms and the harmonisation of the Eastern European Partners' energy policies and legislation;
 - (d) promoting people-to-people contacts and facilitating the interaction between the European Union and the Eastern European Partners citizens, in particular young people; promoting cultural cooperation and inter-cultural dialogue as well as supporting education, research, the development of the information and media society.

*Article 2***Composition**

1. The EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly shall be a joint Assembly and shall be comprised of:
 - (a) 60 members of the European Parliament;
 - (b) 10 members from each of the participating Parliaments of the Eastern European Partners.
2. The members of the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly delegated by the European Parliament and by the Parliaments of the Eastern European Partners should be appointed in accordance with the procedures established, respectively, by the European Parliament and by each of the Parliaments of the Eastern European Partners, so that the distribution of the various political groups and delegations represented is reflected as far as possible. In accordance with the same procedures, each participating Parliament may decide to appoint substitute members to the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly.
3. The EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly shall be organised on the basis of parliamentary delegations established by its two components. The members may also organise themselves within the framework of their own political families within the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly.
4. The participating Parliaments shall promote gender balance in the appointments to the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly and its bodies.
5. The EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly shall ensure that the composition of all its bodies is balanced in respect of the breakdown of the political families and the nationality of members.
6. Any unfilled seat shall in all cases remain at the disposal of the Parliament to which it has been attributed.

*Article 3***Responsibilities**

The EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly shall be the forum for parliamentary discussion, consultation, supervision and monitoring in respect of all questions relating to the Eastern Partnership. For these purposes, the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly shall, inter alia, adopt resolutions, recommendations and opinions addressed to the Eastern Partnership Summit, the institutions and ministerial conferences devoted to developing the Eastern Partnership as well as to the European Union and Eastern European Partners' institutions. Similarly, it shall be responsible for drawing up reports and proposals for the adoption of specific measures related to the various spheres of activity of the Partnership, at the request of the Summit or the ministerial conferences.

*Article 4***Presidency and Bureau**

1. The two components of the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly shall elect a Bureau from among their members, consisting of two Co-Presidents of equal status (one belonging to each of the two components of the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly) and a number of Vice-Presidents (one from each of the participating Eastern European Partners different from the country of the relevant Co-President and an equal number from the European Parliament). The electoral procedures and terms of office shall be decided by each component separately.
2. Any member of the Bureau who is unable to attend the forthcoming Bureau meeting can be replaced by a member of the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly belonging to the same political group in the European Parliament or to the same Eastern European Partner Delegation. The Co-Presidents must be informed in writing about the substitution in advance of the meeting. If the Co-President is replaced, the substitute will assume his/her functions as the Bureau member, but not those of the Co-President.
3. The Bureau shall be responsible for coordinating the work of the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly, monitoring its activities, resolutions and recommendations, and establishing relations with the Eastern Partnership Summit, the ministerial conferences and the groups of high-level officials and ambassadors as well as representatives of civil society and other bodies. The Bureau represents the Assembly in relations with other institutions.

4. The Bureau shall meet, on the initiative of the Co-Presidents, at least twice a year, with one of these meetings coinciding with the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly's plenary session. A quorum of the Bureau shall be attained when at least half of the members from its Eastern European Partners component and half of the members from its European Parliament component are present.

5. The Bureau shall draw up the draft agenda for the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly and lay down procedures for the running of the Assembly.

6. The Bureau shall be responsible for matters relating to the composition and responsibilities of committees and working groups. The Bureau shall also be responsible for authorising the committees to draw up reports, motions for resolutions and recommendations. It may also refer various matters for consideration to the committees, which may draw up reports on a particular topic.

7. The Bureau shall adopt its decisions by a two-thirds majority of the members present. If any Member or substitute Member of the Bureau representing an Eastern European Partner delegation declares on behalf of his/her delegation that the content of the decision to be adopted by the Bureau would have impact on his/her country's vital interest, and provides a written explanation with the description of the prejudice to support that, consensus amongst the Members of the Bureau is required for adoption. This option may be used only in exceptional cases when the survival, safety and vitality of the nation are specially affected by the proposed decision and must relate only to that part of a decision which would have impact on that Eastern European Partner country's vital interests. This option must not be used for provoking failure of the Bureau to adopt a whole decision or for decisions of technical or procedural nature.

8. If, when calculating the quorum of Members present or the number of votes to attain the two-thirds majority, the figure is not a whole number, this latter shall be rounded up.

Article 5

Relations with the Eastern Partnership Summit, the Council of Ministers, the European Commission and ministerial conferences

1. The Bureau shall forge closer ties in all areas with the institutions and bodies of the Eastern Partnership and with the Eastern Partnership organisations. The practical arrangements for that cooperation shall, where appropriate, be laid down in the corresponding memorandums and protocols of understanding.

2. The representatives of the Eastern Partnership Summit, the Council of Ministers, the European Commission and ministerial conferences devoted to the development and consolidation of the Eastern Partnership shall be invited by the Bureau to take part in the sessions and meetings of the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly and its bodies.

Article 6

Observers

1. On a proposal from the Bureau, the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly may allow representatives of Parliaments of the EU Troika to attend the meetings of the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly as observers.

2. The Bureau may also invite representatives of other institutions and bodies, as well as other persons, to attend the sessions and meetings of the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly, its committees and working groups.

Article 7

Plenary sessions of the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly

1. The EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly shall be convened by its Co-Presidents and shall meet, in principle, once a year, alternately in an Eastern European Partner country and on the premises of the European Parliament in one of its places of work, at the invitation of the European Parliament or of the Parliament of the Eastern European Partner hosting the session.

2. At the request of the Bureau, the Co-Presidents may convene an extraordinary session of the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly.

3. The first sitting of each session of the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly shall be opened by the President of the European Parliament or by the President of the Parliament of the Eastern European Partner hosting the session.

Article 8

Chairing of sessions

1. The Co-Presidents shall jointly decide which of them will be the Chair of each session of the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly. The Chair may choose to be replaced in the chair by another Co-President or by a Vice-President during the session.

2. The Chair shall open, adjourn and close the sessions. He/she shall ensure that the Rules of Procedure are observed, maintain order, call upon speakers, restrict speaking time, put matters to the vote and announce the outcome of votes.

3. The Chair shall decide on matters which arise during sessions, including those which are not provided for in the Rules of Procedure. If necessary, he/she shall consult the Bureau.

4. The Chair may speak in a debate only in order to introduce the topic or to call speakers to order. If he/she wishes to take part in a debate, he/she shall vacate the chair to another Co-President or to a Vice-President.

Article 9

Agenda

1. The Co-Presidents shall submit the draft agenda for the plenary session, drawn up by the Bureau, to the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly for its approval.

2. The draft agenda of each plenary session shall include two categories of topics:

(a) reports submitted by the standing committees; these will be limited, in principle, to one report per committee per session. Motions for resolutions, which may also be contained in a report, must be tabled four weeks prior to the opening of the session. The maximum length of the motions for resolution is laid down in Annex II to the Rules of Procedure. The Bureau may decide, on request by the Committees' Co-Chairs, how many reports will be voted per session depending on the progress of work for their preparation.

(b) urgent topics proposed by a standing committee or submitted by the Bureau itself; urgent topics shall only be included on an exceptional basis and may not exceed three per session;

3. At least 10 members of the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly, from at least two delegations, or a political group in the European Parliament may table a motion for a resolution on an urgent topic. Motions for resolutions on urgent topics must be limited to the point 'Urgencies' entered on the agenda for the session and may not exceed 1 000 words. Motions for resolutions on urgent topics must be tabled 48 hours prior to the opening of the session at which they are to be debated and voted on.

4. Motions for resolutions on urgent topics shall be submitted to the Bureau, which shall ensure that each motion meets the criteria set out in paragraph 3, is entered on the agenda and is available in the working languages of the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly. The Bureau's proposals shall be submitted to the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly for approval.

Article 10

Quorum

1. A quorum of the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly shall be attained when at least one third of the members from its Eastern European Partners component and one third of the members from its European Parliament component are present.

2. All votes shall be valid whatever the number of voters, unless the Chair, at the request made before voting has begun by at least 15 members present, establishes at the time of voting that the quorum is not present. If the vote shows that the quorum is not present, the vote shall be placed on the agenda for the next session.

Article 11

Seating arrangements

1. All members shall be seated in alphabetical order, by name, without regard to their nationality. The Bureau will be seated at the front.
2. The representatives of the Eastern Partnership Summit, the Council of Ministers, the European Commission the ministerial conferences and observers shall be seated separately from members.

Article 12

Official and working languages

1. The official languages of the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly shall be the official languages of the European Union and the official languages of the Eastern European Partners. The working languages shall be English, German, French and Russian. In any working place, any linguistic support requested as to ensure that each member of the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly can participate fully in its proceedings may be delivered by the relevant services of the European Parliament, provided the Parliament of the country hosting the meeting agrees.
2. The Parliament hosting the meeting shall make the working documents available to the members of the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly in its working languages and, whenever possible, in all the official languages.
3. In principle, and as far as possible, all members may speak in one of the official languages of the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly during debates. Interventions shall be interpreted into the working languages of the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly and, only if this will be possible according to the Code of Conduct on Multilingualism of the European Parliament, into the relevant official languages of the European Union when meetings of the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly are held in one of the working places of the European Parliament.
4. Meetings of the committees and, where appropriate, working groups, as well as hearings, shall be held in the working languages, without prejudice to the possibilities provided for in the Rules of Procedure.
5. Texts adopted by the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly shall be published in all the official languages of the European Union in the *Official Journal of the European Union* and by the Parliaments of the Eastern European Partners in their official languages in the form deemed appropriate by each of them.

Article 13

Public nature of debates

The sessions of the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly shall be public unless it decides otherwise.

Article 14

Right to speak

1. A member of the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly may speak when called upon to do so by the Chair.
2. Representatives of the Eastern Partnership Summit, the Council of Ministers, the European Commission, ministerial conferences and observers shall be given the floor upon receiving authorisation to speak from the Chair.
3. If a speaker departs from the subject, the Chair shall call the speaker to order. If the speaker persists, the Chair may forbid that speaker to speak for such time as he/she sees fit.

Article 15

Points of order

1. A Member may raise a point of order or move a procedural motion and shall have a prior right to speak for not more than two minutes.

2. The Chair may, on request, give the floor to one speaker against the procedural motion for not more than two minutes.
3. No further speakers shall be heard.
4. The Chair shall announce his/her decision on the point of order or procedural motion. If necessary, he/she shall consult the Bureau.

Article 16

Voting rights and voting procedures

1. Each member shall have a single, personal, non-transferable vote.
2. The EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly shall vote electronically. If the electronic vote is not possible, the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly shall vote by show of hands. If the result of the show of hands is doubtful, a fresh vote shall be taken using coloured cards.
3. Counting of votes shall be made by the Counting Commission, which shall consist of two equal parts of representatives of the secretariats of the two components of the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly. The Counting Commission shall be appointed by the Bureau before the beginning of each session and it shall report the result of the counting of votes directly to the Co-Presidents.
4. The EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly may decide to vote by secret ballot if at least 15 members of the Assembly submit a request to that effect in writing by 6.00 p.m. on the day preceding the vote.
5. The EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly shall take its decisions by a simple majority of the members who took part in the vote. If a request for a vote by separate components has been submitted before the beginning of the vote by a minimum of one tenth of the members belonging to at least two political groups in the European Parliament or to at least two delegations from the Eastern European Partner component of the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly, a vote shall be taken in which the representatives of the Eastern European Partner component and the representatives of the European Parliament component shall vote separately, although simultaneously⁽¹⁾. The text in question shall be deemed to have been adopted if it secures a two-thirds majority of the votes cast separately in both components.
6. Where the text to be put to the vote contains two or more provisions or references to two or more points or lends itself to division into two or more parts having a distinct meaning and/or normative value, a split vote may be requested by a political group of the European Parliament or a minimum of 5 members of the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly. The request shall be submitted in writing to the Co-Presidents by 18.00 the day before the vote, unless the Co-Presidents set a different deadline.

Article 17

Resolutions and recommendations of the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly

1. The EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly may adopt resolutions and recommendations addressed to the Eastern Partnership Summit and the institutions, bodies, groups and ministerial conferences devoted to strengthening the Eastern Partnership or addressed to the European Union and the Eastern European Partners institutions, on matters related to the various fields covered by the Partnership.
2. The EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly shall vote on motions for resolutions included in reports submitted by the standing committees.
3. The EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly shall also vote, where appropriate, on motions for resolutions addressing urgent topics.

⁽¹⁾ Following a proposal of the Working Group on RoP of the Euronest PA, endorsed by the Bureau of the Euronest PA on 17 March 2015, in order to allow the use of the electronic equipment, each component should vote one at the time, without announcing the result until both components have voted.

4. The Chair shall, where appropriate, invite the authors of similar motions for resolutions on urgent topics to draw up a joint motion for a resolution. At the end of the debate, the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly shall first vote on each of those motions and the corresponding amendments. Once a joint resolution has been tabled, all other motions tabled on the same topic by the same authors shall fall. Similarly, once a joint resolution has been adopted, all the other texts on that topic shall fall. Should no joint resolution be adopted, the remaining motions for resolution shall be put to the vote in the order in which they were tabled.

Article 18

Messages to Eastern Partnership Summit meetings

The Bureau of the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly shall submit a message to the summit meeting, or, where appropriate, to the Eastern Partnership ministerial meeting, based on the resolutions and recommendations adopted by the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly. The message shall be forwarded to the relevant institutions jointly by the Co-Presidents.

Article 19

Statements

The Bureau may agree urgently on statements concerning any matter relating to the Eastern Partnership and in response to any natural emergency, the onset of a crisis or the outbreak of a conflict concerning which it is considered appropriate or necessary to issue an institutional call urging those involved to refrain from violence and/or to engage in political negotiations, or for solidarity with the persons and countries affected. Such statements should be based on any existing resolutions and recommendations adopted by the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly and should be sent as soon as possible to all members of the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly for information. Statements are to be made public by the Co-Presidents.

Article 20

Amendments

1. Amendments to texts debated during the session may be tabled by a minimum of 5 members of the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly or by a political group as mentioned in Article 2.3. Amendments shall relate to the text they seek to alter and shall be submitted in writing. The Bureau may decide the amendment to be inadmissible, on the basis of these criteria.
2. The deadline for the tabling of amendments shall be announced at the beginning of the session.
3. When a vote is being taken, amendments shall have priority over the text to which they relate.
4. If two or more amendments have been tabled to the same part of the text, the amendment that departs furthest in content from the original text shall be put to the vote first. Only oral amendments which correct factual or language mistakes may be taken. No other oral amendments shall be taken.
5. The Assembly shall not consider any amendment (including oral amendments) regarding which a vital interest objection has been raised.

Article 21

Questions for written answer

1. Any member of the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly may put questions for written answer to the ministerial bodies of the Eastern Partnership, the Presidency-in-Office of the Summit, the Council of Ministers of the European Union or the European Commission.
2. Those questions must relate to the Eastern Partnership and in particular to its four thematic platforms. The questions shall be submitted in writing to the Bureau, which shall decide whether they are admissible and, if such is the case, forward them to the relevant bodies, specifically requesting a written answer within two months from the date on which the question was forwarded.

*Article 22***Questions for oral answer**

1. At each session, question time to the ministerial bodies of the Eastern Partnership, the Presidency-in-Office of the Summit, the Council of Ministers of the European Union and the European Commission shall be held at such times as may be decided by the Bureau so as to ensure the presence of the abovementioned institutions at the highest level.
2. Any member of the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly may table one question for oral answer. Those questions must relate to the Eastern Partnership and in particular to its four thematic platforms. If a question is tabled by several members, only one of those members will be called to put the question orally. Questions, which must not exceed 100 words, shall be submitted in writing to the Bureau within the deadline set by the latter. The Bureau shall decide if they are admissible. In particular, the Bureau shall declare inadmissible the questions that are related to subjects which are already included in the agenda of the session. Questions declared admissible shall be forwarded to the relevant institutions. The Co-Presidents shall decide on the order in which oral questions are taken and the authors of the questions shall be notified of their decision.
3. The EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly shall set aside not more than two hours during each session for dealing with questions for oral answer. Questions that remain unanswered for lack of time shall be answered in writing, unless the author withdraws the question. An oral question may only be answered if its author is present.
4. The ministerial bodies of the Eastern Partnership, the Presidency-in-Office of the Summit, the Council of Ministers of the European Union and the European Commission shall be invited to give brief answers to questions. At the request of 20 or more members of the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly, the answer may be followed by a debate. The Chair shall set a time limit for this debate.

*Article 23***Requests for the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly's opinion**

At the request of the Eastern Partnership Summit, the ministerial conferences, the European Commission or other relevant EU or Eastern Partnership institutions, the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly may, on a recommendation of the Bureau, decide to draw up opinions and proposals for the adoption of specific measures related to the various spheres of activity of the Eastern Partnership. In such cases, the request shall be submitted to the Bureau, which may place the matter before the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly together with a recommendation.

*Article 24***Minutes of Proceedings**

The draft minutes of the plenary sessions and those of the meetings of the Bureau, standing committees and working groups, together with the records of attendance and the texts of the decisions adopted, shall be prepared and kept by the Secretariat of the Delegation which is hosting the sessions and meetings. Upon completion, the other Delegations will receive a copy of these draft minutes.

*Article 25***Standing committees**

1. In order to examine specific aspects of the Eastern Partnership in greater depth, the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly shall set up the following four standing committees:
 - Committee on Political Affairs, Human Rights and Democracy;
 - Committee on Economic Integration, Legal Approximation and Convergence with EU Policies;
 - Committee on Energy Security;
 - Committee on Social Affairs, Education, Culture and Civil Society.
2. In line with the general arrangements for the functioning of the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly, the standing committees shall be composed of members of the Assembly, in accordance with Article 2, and shall function in a strictly joint manner. Powers, responsibilities, membership and procedures of standing committees are laid down in Annex I.

3. The Rules of Procedure of the standing committees shall be adopted by the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly on a proposal from the Bureau.

Article 26

Temporary and follow-up committees

At any time the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly may, on a proposal from the Bureau or from members of the Assembly, including at least one third of the Eastern European Partners component and one third of the European Parliament component, set up temporary or follow-up committees and, when deciding to set them up, shall determine their responsibilities, composition and mandate. No more than two such committees may be operational at the same time. Follow-up committees must complete their work within one year, in special cases this term may be prolonged for another 6 months.

Article 27

Working groups and hearings

1. The Bureau may decide to set up working groups on a specific aspect of the Eastern Partnership or to send fact-finding missions to the Eastern European Partners or European Union countries or to international organisations, subject to budgetary constraints. In either case, the Bureau shall decide on their organisation, responsibilities and composition. These working groups or missions may be instructed to draw up reports and motions for resolutions or recommendations addressed to the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly. The working groups created shall continue functioning until the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly decides otherwise. The number of members of a working group shall be 10 (5 members from each component).

2. Any member of the Working Groups who is unable to attend a meeting may be replaced by a member of the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly, belonging to the same political group in the European Parliament or to the same Eastern European Partner Delegation. The Co-Chairs of the concerned Working Group shall be informed in writing about the substitution in advance of the meeting.

3. With a view to achieving greater understanding between the peoples of the European Union and those of the Eastern European Partners, and to raising public awareness of questions relating to the Eastern Partnership, the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly may organise hearings at regular intervals. These shall be organised under the responsibility of the Bureau and shall provide an opportunity to invite persons able to give the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly first-hand information about political, economic, social and cultural situations that are of concern.

Article 28

Relations with Parliamentary Cooperation Committees (PCCs) and Delegations

1. The EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly shall invite the Parliamentary Cooperation Committees (PCCs) and delegations set up under existing Agreements, and any others set up subsequently, to collaborate in its work.
2. That invitation may include, in particular, the meeting of existing Parliamentary Cooperation Committees (PCCs) and delegations during the session of the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly.

Article 29

Funding of costs of organisation, participation, interpretation and translation

1. Without prejudice to Article 12, paragraph 1, the Parliament hosting a session of the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly, a meeting of the Bureau or a meeting of one of the committees or working groups shall be responsible for the practical arrangements relating to the organisation of the session or meeting.
2. On a proposal from the Bureau, the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly may recommend that a financial contribution from other Parliaments should be provided to cover expenditure on the organisation of a session of the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly or a meeting of a committee or working group.
3. Travel, subsistence and local transport expenses of participants shall be met by the institution of which they are members.
4. The costs of organisation shall be met by the Parliament hosting a session of the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly, a meeting of the Bureau or a meeting of one of the committees or working groups, with the provisos set out in the paragraphs below.

5. When a session of the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly, a meeting of the Bureau or a meeting of one of the committees or working groups is held in the places of work of the European Parliament, the latter shall, without prejudice of Article 12, paragraph 1 and owing to its own linguistic diversity, provide interpretation into the official languages of the European Union, depending on the requirements of each meeting and according to the Code of Conduct on Multilingualism of the European Parliament.

6. When a session of the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly, a meeting of the Bureau or a meeting of one of the committees or working groups is held outside the places of work of the European Parliament, the latter shall, without prejudice of Article 12, paragraph 1 and owing to its own linguistic diversity, provide interpretation solely into the working languages of the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly and into official languages of the European Union which are to be used by the members of the European Parliament in accordance with the Code of Conduct on Multilingualism of the European Parliament.

7. The European Parliament shall assume responsibility for translating the official documents adopted by the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly into the official languages of the European Union. That institution shall also, provided the Parliaments of the Eastern European Partners would agree and owing to its own linguistic diversity, take charge of the translation into the working languages of the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly of documents produced in preparation for, or during, the meetings of the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly and its bodies. The Parliaments of the Eastern European Partners shall assume responsibility for translating the official documents adopted by the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly into the respective official languages of their countries.

Article 30

Secretariat

1. The EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly shall be assisted in the preparation and smooth running of the Assembly's work by a Secretariat consisting of officials drawn from each of the two components of the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly.

The Secretariat shall provide assistance to the plenary sessions, to the Bureau, to the committees and to the working groups. In order to guarantee professional and impartial assistance to the Assembly, the two components will facilitate close cooperation and capacity building, as well as mutual exchange of professional experience between the various components of the Secretariat.

2. Salaries and other expenses of the staff of the secretariat shall be borne by their respective Parliaments.

3. The Parliament hosting a session of the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly or a committee meeting shall provide assistance with the organisation of the session or meeting in question.

Article 31

Interpretation of the Rules of Procedure

The Co-Presidents or, at their request, the Bureau shall rule on questions relating to the interpretation of the Rules of Procedure.

Article 32

Amendment of the Rules of Procedure

1. Amendments to the Rules of Procedure shall be adopted by the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly on the basis of proposals from the Bureau.

2. Amendments shall be adopted by a two-thirds majority of the members present. If a request for a vote by separate components has been submitted before the beginning of the vote by a minimum of one tenth of the members belonging to at least two political groups in the European Parliament or to at least two delegations from the Eastern European Partner component of the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly, a vote shall be taken in which the representatives of the Eastern European Partner component and the representatives of the European Parliament component shall vote separately. The text in question shall be deemed to have been adopted if it secures a two-thirds majority of the votes cast separately in both components.

3. Unless otherwise specified when the vote is taken, the amendments to the Rules of Procedure shall enter into force on the first day of the session following their adoption.

ANNEX I

POWERS, RESPONSIBILITIES, MEMBERSHIP AND PROCEDURES OF STANDING COMMITTEES*Article 1*

There shall be four standing parliamentary committees with the following powers and responsibilities:

- Committee on Political Affairs, Human Rights and Democracy;
- Committee on Economic Integration, Legal Approximation and Convergence with EU Policies;
- Committee on Energy Security;
- Committee on Social Affairs, Education, Culture and Civil Society.

I. Committee on Political Affairs, Human Rights and Democracy

This committee shall be responsible for matters relating to:

1. the development of stable democratic institutions, questions of governance and the role of political parties;
2. the promotion of political dialogue, multilateral confidence building measures and contribution to peaceful conflict settlement;
3. relations with other national and international organisations and parliamentary assemblies for matters falling within its terms of reference;
4. peace, security, stability;
5. electoral standards, regulation of the media and combating corruption.

II. Committee on Economic Integration, Legal Approximation and Convergence with EU Policies

This committee shall be responsible for matters relating to:

1. monitoring economic, financial and commercial relations between the EU and the Eastern European Partners, with third countries and with regional organisations;
2. relations with relevant international organisations (specifically the World Trade Organization) and with organisations working at regional level to promote economic and trade integration;
3. technical harmonisation or standardisation measures in sectors covered by international legal instruments;
4. questions relating to the funding of the Partnership, including follow-up to the implementation of facilities of the European Investment Bank and other instruments and mechanisms of this type;
5. social and human development, social infrastructures and services, including health issues;
6. migration and human exchanges;
7. sustainable development, natural resources, global warming and energy policy;
8. environmental governance, investment in a regional context, climate change;
9. facilitating the interconnection of transport and telecommunications networks;
10. harmonisation of the regulatory environment.
11. transborder cooperation

III. Committee on Energy security

This committee shall be responsible for matters relating to:

1. monitoring the development and implementation of a mutual energy support and security mechanism;
2. supporting the strengthening of contacts in relation to energy security and energy crisis preparedness;
3. supporting the work of the energy security panel;
4. monitoring the harmonisation of partners' energy policies and legislation and the diversification of supply and transit routes;
5. supporting the creation of an interconnected and diversified energy market.

IV. Committee on Social Affairs, Education, Culture and Civil Society

This committee shall be responsible for matters relating to:

1. the promotion of cooperation in the fields of culture and education and relations with relevant international organisations and agencies;
2. matters relating to young people and gender equality;
3. monitoring the development of the information society and the role of media;
4. supporting cooperation in the area of education, language learning, youth and research;
5. relations with the Civil Society Forum and with the NGOs from the EU and the Eastern European Partners;
6. the promotion of cultural cooperation and inter-cultural dialogue.

Article 2

1. Each of the standing committees shall have a maximum of 30 members and shall consist as far as possible of equal numbers of Members from both components and reflect the composition of the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly. The size and composition of the committees shall be decided by the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly on a proposal from the Bureau.
2. Each member of the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly shall have the right to be a member of one of the standing committees. In exceptional cases, a member may belong to two standing committees.
3. Members are appointed in accordance with the procedures to be established by each Parliament in such a way as to reflect as far as possible the distribution of the various political groups and delegations represented, respectively, in the European Parliament and in the Eastern European Partner component.

Article 3

1. Each committee shall elect a Bureau from among its members consisting of two Co-Chairs of equal status (one from each of the two components of the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly) and four Vice-Co-Chairs (two from each of the two components of the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly), in respect of whom the electoral procedures and terms of office shall be decided by each component.
2. The Co-Chairs shall jointly decide which of them is to preside at each meeting of the committee.
3. The committees may appoint rapporteurs to examine specific questions within their competence and prepare reports to be submitted to the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly, subject to authorisation from the Bureau, in accordance with the Rules of Procedure.
4. The standing committees may discuss their agenda items without a report and may inform the Bureau in writing that the items in question have been discussed.
5. The committees shall report to the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly on their activities.

Article 4

1. Committees shall meet when convened by their Co-Chairs and for a maximum of two meetings per year, one of which is to be held during the session of the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly.
 2. Any member may table amendments for consideration in committee.
 3. As far as procedure is concerned, the Rules of Procedure of the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly shall apply *mutatis mutandis* to committee meetings. In particular, the quorum of a committee shall be reached when at least one third of the members of each component are present.
 4. Unless a committee decides otherwise, all meetings shall be public.
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ANNEX II

LENGTH OF TEXTS

The following maximum limits shall apply to texts submitted for translation and reproduction:

- explanatory statements, preparatory working documents and minutes of working group meetings and fact-finding missions: six pages;
- motions for resolution contained in reports and on urgent topics: four pages, including recitals, but excluding citations.

One page is understood to mean a text of 1 500 printed characters, not including spaces.

This Annex may be amended by the Bureau.

RULES OF PROCEDURE**of the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly standing committees adopted by the Euronest PA on
3 May 2011 and amended on 29 May 2013 in Brussels and on 18 March 2015 in Yerevan**

(2015/C 315/08)

Pursuant to Article 25(3) of the Rules of Procedure of the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly and taking into account the proposal from the Bureau, the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly hereby adopts the Rules of Procedure of the standing committees.

*Article 1***Field of Application**

1. The Rules of Procedure of the standing committees lay down the common working mechanisms for all four standing committees of the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly (hereafter: committees):

- Committee on Political Affairs, Human Rights and Democracy,
- Committee on Economic Integration, Legal Approximation and Convergence with EU Policies,
- Committee on Energy Security,
- Committee on Social Affairs, Education, Culture and Civil Society.

2. The Rules of Procedure of the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly shall apply *mutatis mutandis* to committee meetings without prejudice to the Rules of Procedure of the standing committees.

*Article 2***Composition**

1. A committee shall have a maximum of 30 members, and shall be comprised of:

- 15 members of the European Parliament,
- 15 members from the participating Parliaments of the Eastern European Partners ⁽¹⁾.

It shall reflect the composition of the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly.

2. Each member of the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly shall have the right to be a member of one of the standing committees. In exceptional cases, a member may belong to two standing committees.

3. Members are appointed in accordance with the procedures to be established by each Parliament in such a way as to reflect as far as possible the distribution of the various political groups and delegations represented, respectively, in the European Parliament and in the Eastern European Partner component.

4. The size and composition of the committees shall be approved by the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly on a proposal from the Bureau.

*Article 3***Chairmanship and Bureau**

1. Each committee shall elect a Bureau from among its members consisting of two Co-Chairs of equal status (one from each component) and four Vice-Chairs (two from each component), in respect of whom the electoral procedures and terms of office shall be decided by each component separately.

2. The Co-Chairs shall jointly decide which of them is to preside the meeting of the committee.

⁽¹⁾ Upon accession of the further Eastern European Partner (Belarus), the seats would be re-distributed among the Eastern European Partners.

*Article 4***Substitutes**

1. Any full member who is unable to attend a committee meeting may be replaced by a substitute member from the same component of the Assembly, subject to the agreement among those two members. The Chair must be informed of any substitutions before the start of the meeting.
2. Within the committee, the substitute member shall have the same rights and be subject to the same obligations as the full member.

*Article 5***Meetings**

1. Committees shall meet when convened by their Co-Chairs and for a maximum of two meetings per year, one of which is to be held during the session of the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly.
2. On a proposal from the Bureau of the committee, the Co-Chairs shall draw up and submit the draft agenda of each committee meeting.
3. Meetings of the committees shall be held in the working languages of the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly. Unless a committee decides otherwise, all meetings shall be public.
4. The Chair shall direct the proceedings, ensure that the Rules of Procedure are observed, maintain order, give speakers the floor, declare discussions closed, put issues to the vote and announce the outcome of votes.
5. No member may speak unless called upon to do so by the Chair. A speaker may not be interrupted except for points of order. If a speaker departs from the subject, the Chair shall call him to order and may, on the second occasion, forbid him to speak for the remainder of the debate on the same subject.
6. The Chair shall call to order any committee member who creates a disturbance during the proceedings. Should the offence be repeated, the Chair may exclude the offender from the room for the remainder of the meeting.
7. Two or more committees may, upon the agreement among their Bureaus, hold joint meetings on subjects of common interest to them.

*Article 6***Reports and urgent topics**

1. The committees may appoint rapporteurs to examine specific questions within their competence and prepare reports to be submitted to the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly, subject to authorisation from the Bureau. The number of such reports shall be limited, in principle, to one report per committee per session. The Bureau may decide, on request by the Committees' Co-Chairs, how many reports will be voted per session depending on the progress of work for their preparation.
2. On exceptional basis, a committee may propose urgent topics to the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly. The number of urgent topics is limited according to Article 9, paragraph 2(b) of the Rules of Procedure of the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly.
3. In addition, the committees may discuss other items in their agenda without a report and may inform the Bureau of the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly in writing that the items in question have been discussed.
4. The committees shall report to the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly on their activities.

*Article 7***Quorum and voting**

1. The quorum of a committee shall be attained when at least one third of the members of each component are present.
2. All votes shall be valid whatever the number of voters. However, any member of the committee may request for the quorum to be established before a vote is taken. If after such request the quorum is not established, the vote shall be postponed.

3. The committee takes its decisions by a two-thirds majority of the members who took part in the vote. Any member may table amendments for consideration in committee. The committee shall vote by show of hands with each member having a single, personal and non-transferable vote.
4. Counting of votes shall be made by the Counting Commission, which shall consist of two equal parts of representatives of the secretariats of each component of the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly. The Counting Commission shall be appointed by the Bureau (or by the Committee Co-Chairs) before the beginning of the relevant meeting and shall report the result of the counting of votes directly to the Co-Chairs.
5. Any member may table amendments for consideration in committee, within the deadline announced by the Co-Chairs. Amendments shall relate to the text they seek to alter and shall be submitted in writing. Oral amendments may only be taken if they aim at correcting factual or language mistakes. No other oral amendments should be taken.
6. If a request for a vote by separate components has been submitted before the beginning of the vote by a minimum of three members of the committee belonging to at least two political groups in the European Parliament or to at least two delegations from the Eastern European Partner component of the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly, a vote shall be taken in which the representatives of the Eastern European Partner component and the representatives of the European Parliament component shall vote separately, although simultaneously. The text in question shall be adopted if it secures a two-thirds majority of the votes cast separately in both components.
7. Where the text to be put to the vote contains two or more provisions or references to two or more points or lends itself to division into two more parts having a distinct meaning and/or normative value, a split vote may be requested by a political group of the European Parliament or a minimum of 1 member of the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly. The request shall be submitted in writing to the Co-Chairs by 18.00 the day before the vote, unless the Co-Chairs set a different deadline, and will be considered, in principle, accepted.

Article 8

Other arrangements

1. The Parliament hosting a meeting of the committee shall be responsible for the practical arrangements, assistance and the costs relating to the organisation of the meeting.
2. However, on a proposal from the Bureau, the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly may recommend that a financial contribution from other Parliaments should be provided to cover expenditure on the organisation of a meeting of a committee.

Article 9

Interpretation of the rules

The Co-Chairs, or at their request, the Bureau of a committee, have the right to rule on all questions relating to the interpretation of the Rules of Procedure of standing committees.

Article 10

Amendment of the Rules of Procedure of the standing committees

1. Amendments to the Rules of Procedure of standing committees shall be adopted by the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly on the basis of proposals from the Bureau.
 2. Amendments shall be adopted by a two-thirds majority of the members who took part in the vote. If a request for a vote by separate components has been submitted before the beginning of the vote by a minimum of one tenth of the members belonging to at least two political groups in the European Parliament or to at least two delegations from the Eastern European Partner component of the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly, a vote shall be taken in which the representatives of the Eastern European Partner component and the representatives of the European Parliament component shall vote separately. The text in question shall be deemed to have been adopted if it secures a two-thirds majority of the votes cast separately in both components.
 3. Unless otherwise specified when the vote is taken, the amendments to the Rules of Procedure of the standing committees shall enter into force immediately after their adoption.
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ISSN 1977-091X (electronic edition)
ISSN 1725-2423 (paper edition)



Publications Office of the European Union
2985 Luxembourg
LUXEMBOURG

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