



Eastern Partnership and Its Prospects: What Can the EU Offer to the Eastern Neighbors?

**Central European University, Budapest
Nádor utca 9, Auditorium
May 6, 2015**

The Eastern Partnership (EaP) in its current form clearly failed to fulfill expectations, its results are ambivalent and it did not prove to be a sufficient pole of attraction for a number of the Eastern partners of the European Union. At this point, it is unlikely that the EU as a whole is ready to offer membership perspective for the most progressive countries, but it is certain that it needs to move beyond the current bid if it wishes to revive and sustain the partners' reform drive.

As part of an event series centered around the Eastern relations of the European Union, the CEU Center for EU Enlargement Studies organizes an international conference in cooperation with the Latvian Embassy to Hungary and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation Budapest to discuss how the EU's Eastern Partnership policy could be reformed and should develop in the short and mid-term if it wishes to address the current challenges brought forth in the aftermath of the Vilnius Summit, through the war in Ukraine and by Russia's pursuit of establishing the Eurasian Union, a new regional alliance seeking to revive cooperation within the post-Soviet space under Russia's leadership. With international experts, the conference seeks to provide alternatives, policy recommendations on how the EU could move out of this impasse in cooperation with the regional partners towards a mutually beneficial and credible policy solution.

As the event takes place in the framework of the Latvian EU Presidency's program before the Riga Summit, the analysis and the recommendations of the experts will feed into the late stages of its preparations. Result of earlier CEU-CENS events and projects related to the EaP will be channeled into this conference to contribute to the discussion. The conclusions of the conference will be published in a conference brief.

9.00 – 9.30 Registration

9.30 – 9.45 Opening remarks

- John Shattuck, President and Rector, Central European University, Budapest
- Imants Lieģis, Ambassador of Latvia to Budapest
- Jan Niklas Engels, Director, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Budapest

9.45 – 10.15 Keynote Speech

- Andris Piebalgs, Adviser to Latvian President, Former European Commissioner (2004-2014)
- Zsolt Németh, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, Parliament of Hungary



10.15 – 12.00 Panel I.

Eastern Partnership as seen by Eastern Partners

The panel seeks to identify the main challenges in the most engaged partner countries which have already signed their Association Agreements with the European Union. It will assess the expectations of Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine towards the EU. Considering that the membership offer is not on the table, potential other, more feasible alternatives and solutions will be sought that could make the cooperation more fruitful for all parties.

Chair: Péter Balázs, Director, CEU Center for EU Enlargement Studies, Budapest

Speakers:

- Juris Poikāns, Ambassador at Large for Eastern Partnership, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Latvia, Riga
- Victor Chirila, Director, Foreign Policy Association, Chisinau
- Dmytro Shulga, Director, European Program Initiative, International Renaissance Foundation, Kyiv
- Ivane Chkhikvadze, EU Integration Program Manager, Open Society Georgia Foundation, Tbilisi

12.00 – 13.00 Buffet Lunch

13.00 – 14.30 Panel II.

Eurasian Union – A rival on the rise?

In light of its first months, the panel will discuss whether and to what extent the Eurasian Union is a rival to the Eastern Partnership, and under what circumstances could cooperation be considered between the EU and the Eurasian Union. The panel seeks to discuss the account especially of those EaP countries, which have pledged for joining the Russia-led integration scheme – Armenia and Belarus.

Chair: Miklós Haraszti, Director for Human Rights Research, CEU Center for EU Enlargement Studies, Budapest

Speakers:

- Lolita Čigāne, Member of the Latvian Parliament, Chairperson of the European Affairs Committee
- James Nixey, Head of Russia and Eurasia Program, Chatham House, London
- Richard Giragosian, Director, Regional Studies Center, Yerevan
- Andrei Yeliseyeu, Research Fellow, Belarusian Institute for Strategic Studies, Vilnius

14.30 – 14.45 Coffee Break

14.45 – 16.15 Panel III. Rethinking the EaP – A view from the EU

The panel will discuss whether there is a need for a reformed approach to the Eastern neighbors and if the EU is ready and capable to address the challenges appearing in the reforming countries and those posed by the emergence of the Eurasian Union. It will seek to examine how various actors within the European Union, especially the Central European countries, could further engage with the individual EaP partner countries in support of their Europeanization attempts, and how their engagement could influence the future development of the EU's overall approach to the regions.

Chair: Zsuzsanna Végh, Researcher, CEU Center for EU Enlargement Studies, Budapest
Speakers:

- Julian Lindley-French, Director, Europa Analytica, Rotterdam
- Amanda Paul, Policy Analyst and Senior Program Executive, European Policy Center, Brussels
- Grzegorz Gromadzki, Senior Fellow, Stefan Batory Foundation, Warsaw

16.15 – 16.30 Concluding Remarks

- Péter Balázs, Director, CEU Center for EU Enlargement Studies, Budapest