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Trends of the Eastern Partnership
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The Eastern Partnership Initiative was a success story so far, but the offer of full membership would boost reform in EaP countries, claims international research

PRESS RELEASE

9 April 2015, PRAGUE – Association for International Affairs (AMO) has concluded a unique research project focused on the Eastern Partnership initiative. It aims at evaluation of the initiative since its inception and also at its perspectives in the future. The research was being carried out not only by AMO but also by partner organizations from eight European countries and one independent expert. The project results will be presented on 14th April at Permanent Representation of the Czech Republic to the EU. Registration is available under registration@amo.cz. Research results are downloadable from dedicated website.

Prague-based think-tank AMO carried out extensive research on the Eastern Partnership Initiative (EaP) past year. International Visegrad Fund co-funded initiative focused especially on the **evolution of this initiative**, its **prospects** and the rivalry between European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and **Russia-led Eurasian integration**. It was based on detailed questionnaires disseminated among important opinion leaders. In all, 1,783 people from the Visegrad Group and EaP countries were approached, of whom 36.5% responded to the questionnaire, with 21.9% replying to all questions.

The survey focused on the past of the EaP and its significance: “The EaP initiative is generally viewed in a positive light, with the vast majority of respondents from EaP countries asserting that there had been certain (62.1%) or significant (15%) **progress in the political association between EU and EaP partner countries**. Stakeholders from a majority of EaP partner countries agree that it is a vehicle driving the transformation of participating countries towards **European standards and the rule of law**.”

Researchers also wanted to find ways how to improve or reform the initiative: “The majority of stakeholders from EaP partner countries advocate the **“more-for-more” approach as a cornerstone principle of the EaP initiative**. The full membership would serve as an incentive for further reforms, respondents believe. Funding should, as a matter of preference, be channeled into regional development programmes, the SME Facility, the development of regional energy market, energy efficiency, and EaP partner countries’ participation in EU Community programmes.” In regards to the bleak situation in Ukraine, the research also focused on the geopolitical implication of these events: “Interestingly, 37.9% of stakeholders still view the **EaP as a geostrategic tool** wielded by the EU against the Russian Federation’s interests.”

Final results of the project will be presented to the general public **in Brussels on 14th April at the Permanent Representation of the Czech Republic to the EU**. The study represents a follow-up of previous research projects **Trends of Czech foreign policy** (2011) and **Trends of Czech European Policy** (2013). Trends of the Eastern Partnership were supported by the International Visegrad Fund (IVF).

The Association for International Affairs – AMO is a non-governmental non-profit organization founded in 1997 with the aim of promoting education and research in the field of international relations. It has developed into a leading Czech foreign policy think-tank that is not bound to any political party or ideology. It produces independent analyses, encourages high-level expert and public debate, and makes advocacy on local, regional, and European level.