Parliamentary Assembly
Assemblée parlementaire
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Doc. 11828
03 February 2009

The impact of the European Union Eastern Partnership on economic growth in Eastern Europe

Motion for a resolution
tabled by Mr Andrea RIGONI and other members of the Assembly

This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only those who have signed it

Successive European Union (EU) enlargements have turned Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine into neighbours of the EU. As a result, the EU has developed an increasing interest in promoting security, stability and prosperity in these countries, which – with the exception of Belarus – have been beneficiaries of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) since 2004. At the same time, the EU's strategic interest in these countries has also increased, with a view to the diversification of energy supplies.

After the conflict in Georgia in August 2008 – which highlighted the volatility of the region – the EU decided to strengthen, in unequivocal terms, its support for democratic and market-oriented reforms in these countries, by setting up a new instrument, the EU Eastern Partnership.

The Partnership would lead to the conclusion of new association agreements, including deep and comprehensive free trade arrangements with those countries willing and able to enter into a deeper engagement, gradual integration in the EU economy and easier travel to the EU through gradual visa liberalisation. The Partnership would also promote democracy and good governance; strengthen energy security; promote sector reform and environmental protection; encourage people-to-people contacts; support economic and social development; and offer additional funding for projects to reduce socio-economic imbalances and increase stability.

This Partnership would achieve an enduring increase of the large-scale privatisation process; more effective and free competition; encourage private sector participation in large infrastructures; promote a regulatory system based on transparency and stability to enhance foreign investments; and finally support, with more attention, economic growth in transition countries.

The Eastern Partnership will have to face an unforeseen enemy: the global financial crisis which is engulfing the young market economies of these countries, affecting their banks, foreign investment and prospects of economic growth.

The beneficiaries of the Eastern Partnership represent a neighbourhood for the EU but for the Council of Europe they are – with the exception of Belarus – fully-fledged members. It is, therefore, of the utmost importance that the Assembly follows the implementation of the Eastern Partnership, evaluates its impact and puts forward recommendations to enhance the synergy between the Council of Europe and the EU in order to ensure the continued economic and social progress of the countries in question, despite the difficulties posed by the financial crisis.

Signed (see overleaf)

Signed[1]*:*

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