



Motion

Proposer: PC3 (decided on: 03/30/2026)

Title: Future of the Eastern Partnership: a new European strategy for the East

Motion text

1 11 November 2023 (lapsing). Renewed for Federal Committee April 2026 Submitted
2 by Political Commission 3: External Affairs & Global Governance

3 The Eastern Partnership (EaP), within the framework of the European
4 Neighbourhood Policy, is a policy of strategic interest to the European Union
5 (EU) and should therefore be reformed so that it may enable an even greater
6 level of cooperation. EaP countries and their citizens have a wish for closer
7 European integration. However, the region can no longer be treated as a single

8 bloc: it now consists of EU accession candidates (Ukraine, Moldova), a country
9 whose European path is blocked by its own government, despite its candidate
10 status (Georgia), a state pivoting towards the EU while maintaining complex
11 economic ties with Russia (Armenia), an authoritarian energy partner
12 (Azerbaijan), and a country under effective Russian occupation (Belarus). Russia
13 still harbours imperialist ambitions on former Soviet republics, instead of
14 respecting their independence and freedom to choose their own future. Russia's
15 continued imperialist agenda prevents peaceful cooperation between the Russian
16 Federation and the European Union while also sowing discontent and instability
17 in the EaP countries.

18 The European Union should demonstrate that it is the main partner for dialogue
19 and cooperation with EaP countries, as well as the best equipped global actor to
20 guarantee peace, stability, progress and respect for democracy and human rights.
21 The EU must respond with a differentiated strategy that offers credible
22 accession perspectives to willing reformers, deepens security cooperation with

23 vulnerable partners, and supports civil society under authoritarian rule. JEF
24 Europe therefore calls for a radical shift in the EU's foreign policy towards
25 the Eastern Partnership based on differentiation, conditionality, and genuine
26 solidarity.

27 JEF Europe,

28 1. Recalling JEF Europe's resolutions, a) "For a common European response to the
29 invasion of Ukraine and the future of Ukraine"; b) "The EU response to the
30 Russian Federation's aggression of Ukraine", strongly condemning Russia's full-
31 scale invasion of Ukraine, now in its fourth year, and urging for stronger EU
32 support to Ukraine, including military, financial, and humanitarian assistance;

33 2. Noting with frustration the limits of the EU's foreign policy and the related
34 unanimity rule in the framework of the ENP, which remains too often constrained
35 and paralysed by the conflicting positions of the Member States in the Council,
36 allowing a single country to block sanctions, enlargement steps, or crisis
37 responses;

38 3. Deeply concerned about the human toll of active and unresolved conflicts
39 across the region, including Russia's war against Ukraine, the continued
40 occupation of Georgian

41 territories, Azerbaijan's ethnic cleansing of Nagorno-Karabakh's Armenian
42 population, and the frozen conflict in the Transnistrian region of the Republic
43 of Moldova;

44 4. Denouncing Russia's comprehensive destabilisation campaign aimed at
45 undermining EaP countries through military aggression, hybrid attacks, election
46 interference, disinformation, energy blackmail, trade embargoes, and the
47 conclusion of integration treaties with separatist or breakaway regions, such as
48 South Ossetia, Abkhazia, Transnistria, Crimea, Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia,
49 and Kherson;

50 5. Noting with regret the insufficient reaction of the EU to Russia's violation
51 of Georgian territorial integrity in 2008 and the consequent emboldening of
52 Russia, and insisting that the EU must learn from this failure by adopting a
53 credible deterrence and sanctions policy today;

54 6. Noting with concern, the growing influence and destabilising actions of
55 external actors in the South Caucasus and Black Sea regions, including Türkiye's
56 assertive posture, Iran's deepening ties, and China's expanding economic

57 **footprint;**

58 **7. Having regarded the implementation of the EU-Armenia Comprehensive and**
59 **Enhanced Partnership Agreement since 2019, and welcoming Armenia's historic**
60 **pivot towards the European Union, demonstrated by: the effective suspension of**
61 **its CSTO membership; active participation in the EU civilian mission; the launch**
62 **of visa liberalisation dialogues; and the adoption of a law on initiating EU**
63 **accession in early 2025, while noting that Armenia intends to maintain its**
64 **economic ties with the Eurasian Economic Union;**

65 **8. Condemning the ethnic cleansing of the entire Armenian population of Nagorno**
66 **Karabakh by Azerbaijan following Azerbaijan's September 2023 military offensive,**
67 **and deeply concerned by the lack of provisions for the right of return in the**
68 **peace agreement concluded in 2025 and ongoing threats to Armenian cultural and**
69 **religious heritage;**

70 **9. Deeply concerned that following decoupling from Russia, the EU has become**
71 **increasingly dependent on other non-democratic regimes like Azerbaijan for**
72 **energy, without imposing meaningful human rights conditionality, thereby**
73 **undermining the EU's credibility as a normative power;**

74 **10. Deeply concerned about Belarus's complete subordination to Russia since the**
75 **fraudulent 2020 elections, including: the permanent stationing of Russian**
76 **tactical nuclear weapons; the presence of Wagner Group mercenaries; the**
77 **integration of Belarusian territory into Russia's military planning; the**
78 **regime's complicity in the forced deportation of Ukrainian children; and the**
79 **weaponisation of migration as a hybrid warfare tool, and strongly condemning the**
80 **continued brutal response of the authorities against the opposition, now largely**
81 **in exile, in prison, or silenced;**

82 **11. Applauding the progress made by Ukraine and Moldova towards EU membership,**
83 **welcoming the opening of accession negotiations with both countries and the**
84 **completion of bilateral screening, and noting that the European Commission**
85 **assessed in late 2025 that both countries are ready to open thematic clusters**
86 **including the fundamental cluster on justice and human rights;**

87 **12. Condemning the actions of the illegitimate Georgian government led by**
88 **Georgian Dream including the deliberate dismantling of democratic institutions,**
89 **including: the adoption of the Russian-style "foreign agents" law; brutal**
90 **crackdowns on peaceful protesters; anti-LGBTQI+ legislation; and the reversal of**
91 **democratic reforms, while expressing continued solidarity with the Georgian**
92 **people's unwavering European aspirations and resistance against the illegitimate**

93 regime;

94 13. Also deeply concerned about the significant challenges faced by the EaP
95 countries in ensuring an adequate level of human rights standards, as well as
96 the state of democracy and the rule of law;

97 14. Reiterating the importance of freedom of the media, freedom of expression
98 and the activities of non-governmental organisations and human rights defenders,
99 especially represented in youth organisations, in shaping public opinion based
100 on factual information free from foreign interference, hybrid threats and
101 disinformation;

102 15. Recalling the essential contribution of civil society organisations, such as
103 the members of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum, regarding the
104 quality of democracy and their important involvement in the dialogue between the
105 European institutions and the EaP countries;

106 16. Acknowledging that the 'Beyond 2020' framework on the Eastern Partnership
107 has become obsolete given the fundamentally different relationships the EU now
108 maintains with accession candidates, authoritarian regimes, and countries under
109 Russian occupation;

110 17. Reminding that the campaign "Democracy under Pressure", which aims to raise
111 awareness of democratic backsliding, human rights abuses, and challenges to the
112 rule of law, initially in Belarus, is one of JEF's oldest campaigns, and has
113 expanded in relevance to encompass democratic collapse in Georgia, authoritarian
114 consolidation in Azerbaijan, and the ongoing struggle for democracy across the
115 region;

116 18. Noting the launch of the EU's Common Maritime Agenda for the Black Sea and
117 the strategic approach to the Black Sea region adopted in 2025, which
118 establishes three pillars: enhancing security and resilience, fostering
119 sustainable growth, and promoting environmental protection;

120 19. Recognising the importance of climate diplomacy and green transition
121 cooperation with Eastern Partnership countries, particularly in Ukraine,
122 Moldova, and Georgia, as part of the EU's strategic interest in building
123 resilient and sustainable societies;

124 JEF Europe therefore,

- 125 **1. Reiterates the EU's commitment to strengthening multilateralism and recalls**
126 **the importance of developing a common European foreign policy as the only way to**
127 **pursue peace and international justice;**
- 128 **2. Demands the introduction of qualified majority voting in particular in**
129 **foreign policy decisions concerning the Eastern neighbourhood, ending the**
130 **paralysis caused by individual Member States, who entertain close diplomatic and**
131 **economic ties with the Russian Federation, blocking sanctions, enlargement**
132 **steps, or crisis responses;**
- 133 **3. Insists that the most important area on which the EU's Eastern policy should**
134 **be focused is the advancement of respect for human rights, the rule of law, and**
135 **the achievement of a higher standard of democracy, while recognising that the**
136 **needs differ fundamentally between accession countries, where conditionality**
137 **applies, countries suffering from armed aggression and authoritarian regimes,**
138 **where support must flow exclusively to civil society and independent media;**
- 139 **4. Encourages the EU institutions to further intensify their cooperation with**
140 **the Council of Europe and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in**
141 **Europe in monitoring and implementing strategies and practices aimed at**
142 **improving the level of democracy, the rule of law, and achieving the expression**
143 **of political and civil rights for all citizens;**
- 144 **5. Mandates the EU to maintain and significantly expand sanctions on Belarus**
145 **indefinitely, targeting sectors enabling Russian military integration, the**
146 **forced deportation of Ukrainian children, and the regime's hybrid warfare**
147 **operations, including migration manipulation, and to maintain these sanctions**
148 **until free and fair elections are held and all political prisoners are released;**
149
- 150 **6. Requires the EU to significantly increase and simplify funding for local**
151 **independent civil society, human rights defenders, independent universities,**
152 **research centres, independent media, and democratic movements across the Eastern**
153 **neighbourhood, with particular attention to organisations operating under**
154 **authoritarian regimes where access is restricted and risks are high;**
- 155 **7. Demands that the EU massively scale up support for independent media, fact-**
156 **checking organisations, and media literacy programmes as a direct counter to**
157 **Russian disinformation campaigns and state propaganda;**
- 158 **8. Insists that the EU actively support EaP countries in safeguarding their**
159 **rights under international law, including territorial integrity, and champion**

160 **accountability**

161 **mechanisms for crimes of aggression, war crimes, and human rights violations**
162 **committed in the region, through support for international tribunals and**
163 **prosecution mechanisms;**

164 **9. Demands that the EU take a leading role in conflict resolution and peace-**
165 **building across the region, including through expanded civilian monitoring**
166 **missions such as EUMA in Armenia, active participation in existing negotiation**
167 **formats, and targeted sanctions against spoilers;**

168 **10. Insists that any peace agreements addressing regional conflicts include**
169 **explicit provisions for the right of return of displaced populations and**
170 **protection of cultural and religious heritage;**

171 **11. Demands that energy cooperation with Azerbaijan be conditioned on meaningful**
172 **human rights compliance, with suspension mechanisms for continued violations,**
173 **including review of the EU-Azerbaijan Partnership and Cooperation Agreement,**
174 **imposing targeted sanctions on those responsible for arbitrary detention, and**
175 **freezing expanded energy cooperation until tangible human rights progress is**
176 **made;**

177 **12. Calls on the EU to articulate a clear and differentiated long-term strategy**
178 **for the Eastern neighbourhood, offering credible EU membership to willing and**
179 **reform-minded countries, deepening security and defence cooperation to counter**
180 **Russian aggression, supporting the resilience of societies under authoritarian**
181 **rule, and keeping the door open to all Eastern partners that demonstrate genuine**
182 **commitment to European values and reforms;**

183 **13. Demands that the EU pursue a merit-based but politically ambitious**
184 **enlargement agenda that:**

185 **● maintains momentum in accession negotiations with Ukraine and Moldova,**
186 **supporting the opening of the fundamental cluster on justice and human rights; ●**
187 **offers a credible European perspective to Georgia, conditional on a fundamental**
188 **reversal of anti-democratic legislation;**

189 **● explores deepened political association with Armenia should it continue its**
190 **European orientation, while acknowledging its complex economic ties; ● keeps the**
191 **door open to other Eastern partners that demonstrate genuine commitment to**
192 **European values;**

193 **14. Insists on the full implementation of Association Agreements and Deep and**
194 **Comprehensive Free Trade Areas with willing and reform-minded countries, and**
195 **calls for their gradual extension to cover sectoral integration in energy,**
196 **digital markets, transport, and green transition, as a pathway to closer**
197 **economic alignment with the EU single market;**

198 **15. Supports deeper sectoral integration between the EU and willing Eastern**
199 **partners, including:**

200 **● transport connectivity through extension of TEN-T networks;**

201 **● digital integration through roaming agreements and harmonisation of digital**
202 **markets;**

203 **● energy cooperation through synchronisation of grids and renewable energy**
204 **partnerships;**

205 **● green transition through access to EU climate financing;**

206 **16. Insists on the role that the EU, in cooperation with civil society**
207 **organisations, must play in promoting civil and political rights, in ensuring**
208 **the protection of ethnic and religious minorities including Armenians remaining**
209 **in Azerbaijan and national minorities in Georgia, and in defending the civil**
210 **rights of the most discriminated and harassed members of society, including**
211 **those in the LGBTQI+ community who face increasing state-sponsored persecution**
212 **in several EaP countries;**

213 **17. Requires a major expansion of EU youth programmes in the Eastern**
214 **neighbourhood, including Erasmus+, European Solidarity Corps, and dedicated**
215 **youth mobility schemes, with simplified visa procedures and increased funding to**
216 **ensure that young people in Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, and Armenia (including**
217 **refugees and vulnerable groups) have meaningful opportunities for education,**
218 **training, and exchange within the EU;**

219 **18. Calls on the EU to grant observer status in the European Committee of the**
220 **Regions and the European Economic and Social Committee to Ukraine and Moldova,**
221 **and to maintain such status for Georgia only if democratic progress resumes;**

222 **19. Mandates full implementation of the EU's Common Maritime Agenda for the**
223 **Black Sea, with adequate funding for military mobility infrastructure, a**
224 **maritime security monitoring hub, and connectivity corridors;**

225 **20. Urges the EU to finalise a legal framework for the confiscation of frozen**
226 **Russian state assets for the reconstruction of Ukraine, extending this principle**
227 **to Belarusian regime assets.**