The role of bilateral cooperation between EaP and EU countries’ municipalities in facilitating sustainable municipal development in EaP

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Draft thesis, Brussels, 29 May 2018
The bilateral cooperation:

• between municipalities from EaP and EU countries is form of partnership, which is based on practical examples and increasing mutual trust

• includes direct municipality to municipality contacts, as well as co-operation between local governments’ associations
Sustainable municipal development:

• Democratic sustainability
• Fiscal sustainability
• Administrative sustainability
• Economical sustainability
• Ecological sustainability
Democratic sustainability

• Constitutional and legislative guaranties of local democracy;
• Legislative guaranties for local property and freedom to act with it;
• Traditions and skills of participatory democracy.
Fiscal sustainability:

• Existance of local taxes and fees;
• Substantial share of own revenues – from municipal taxes and general grants from national budget, which ensures substantial level of freedom for spending;
• Level of total revenues, which is proportional to local competences, compared to central government competences;
• Opportunity to choose proportions of local priorities (nationally accepted normative can be established only for delegated central government functions);
• Correspondence between municipal development planning and local resources.
Administrative sustainability:

- Responsibility of local executive authorities to elected local decision makers;
- Autonomy to choose forms and management of executive institutions and municipal companies;
- Autonomy of local personal policy.
Economical sustainability

• Existence of skilled work force;
• Existence of opportunities for leisure time, cultural and sport events;
• Capability to attract and save creative private entrepreneurs.
Opportunities of benchmarking:

• Best practical implementation of those conditions we can find in different EU member states

• Particular local authorities could be chosen for benchmarking

• Dissemination of better practice among EU countries and to Eastern Partnership countries
Readiness from central governments of Eastern Partnership is different

• In all cases introduction of municipal sustainability conditions has to be step by step process
Main arguments against:

• lack of trust to capacity and honesty of local politicians, local administrators and local residents.

• That lack is based on myths about preferences of centralized hierarchical bureaucracy.

• That lack is the psychological phenomenon of belief on conservative values.
Forms of bilateral cooperation:

– Twinning – the most traditional form, very important for establishing people to people, municipality to municipality, entrepreneur to entrepreneur mutual trust.

– Partnership – the most popular form in the context of UN Sustainable Development Goals. It helps to implement common bilateral and multilateral projects.
– Trans-boundary cooperation. Several EU countries – Latvia, Lithuania and Poland - have boundary with Belarus, Poland with Ukraine, Romania with Moldova. It gives opportunity to use trans-boundary cooperation instruments.

– Cooperation between local government associations as facilitator and co-ordinator of direct contacts of municipalities.
Draft themes for Azerbaijan:

• Strengthening of local citizens’ participation in order to prepare wider basis for representative democracy in future;

• Dissemination of knowledge about local budgeting and local development planning, in order to prepare conditions of future fiscal decentralization;

• Dissemination of practice of diversification of local entrepreneurship.
Draft themes for Georgia:

• Methods of regional development planning and implementation;
• Methods of facilitating local entrepreneurship;
• Dissemination of practice of effective auditing local governments
Draft themes for Armenia:

• Practice of distribution powers between local governments and the State;
• Practice of inter municipal cooperation in order to improve services;
• Practice of strengthening the role of elected council
Draft themes for Moldova:

• Practice of relations between elected mayor and elected council;
• Practice of budget planning decreasing centralized normatives;
• Practice of providing public utilities by private and public sector enterprises
Draft themes for Ukraine:

• Practice of decentralized budgeting on the basis of local taxes and general grants from national budget (equalization system);

• Practice of local executives’ subordination to local representatives;

• Participatory democracy in order to increase trust to municipalities
Draft themes for Belarus:

• Practice of local executives subordination to local representatives
• Practice of budget planning without centralized normatives
• Methods of local participatory democracy
Thank you for attention!