

CORLEAP Digest

The local voice of the Eastern Partnership

Issue 14, April 2021

Dear reader,

The purpose of this e-newsletter is to inform you about the work of the Conference of Regional and Local Authorities for the Eastern Partnership ([CORLEAP](#)), the policy background and the international context in which it operates.

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Since the end of 2020, the political situation in the Eastern Partnership region has been tense, as most of the partner countries have been facing security and sovereignty threats, as well as internal political crises. The Eastern Partnership Summit could not take place in the beginning of 2021, as planned, due to the continuous travel restrictions and health situation both in the EU and in the EaP region. In the meantime, other meetings and activities went on in digital format. The implementation of various projects and programmes on the ground successfully adapted to the new realities of remote cooperation, benefitting from the possibility to enlarge the circle of participants and speakers relatively easily thanks to available technology.

CORLEAP Digest picks relevant EaP news for local and regional authorities. Comments and contributions can be sent to: corleap@cor.europa.eu.

Best wishes,

The CORLEAP secretariat

Eastern Partnership News



Additional funding from the EU for COVAX Facility to secure access to COVID-19 vaccines

On 19 February, the European Union announced an additional €500 million for the COVAX Facility, doubling its contribution to date for the global initiative that is leading efforts to secure fair and equitable access to safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines in low and middle-income countries. This new pledge brings the European Union closer to achieving COVAX's target to deliver 1.3 billion doses for 92 low and middle income countries, including Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, by the end of 2021.

[Read more](#)



The Republic of Moldova strengthens climate change mitigation and adaptation capacities with the support of the European Union's project EU4Climate and UNDP.

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European Union and WHO deliver ventilators and protective equipment to COVID-19 hospitals in Georgia

On 17 February, the European Union, the World Health Organisation, the European Investment Bank and Georgian officials handed over 10 ventilators and 1,000 items of protective equipment for the treatment and care of patients with severe cases of COVID-19 to N. Kipshidze Central University Clinic of Tbilisi State Medical University.

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EU supports better understanding and management of Ukraine's water resources

On 18 December, the European Union Water Initiative Plus for the Eastern Partnership (EUWI+) showed that with EU support, the first part of the management plan for the Dnipro River Basin has been developed and a vast pollutant screening has been organised. These activities will simultaneously address challenges related to protecting the environment, improving public health and making economic development more sustainable.

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COVID-19 vaccines shipped by COVAX arrive in Moldova

Moldova became the first country in Europe to receive vaccines from the COVAX facility, with the arrival on 4 March of 14,400 doses of the anti-COVID-19 vaccine.

The arrival marked a historic step towards the goal of ensuring equitable distribution of anti-COVID-19 vaccines globally, in what will be the largest vaccine procurement and supply operation in history.

[Read more](#)



Nagorno-Karabakh: EU allocates additional €3 million in humanitarian aid for conflict-affected civilians

The Commission has announced €3 million in humanitarian aid to assist those affected by the recent large scale hostilities in and around Nagorno-Karabakh, including a significant number of displaced people. Since the beginning of the hostilities in September 2020, the EU has mobilised a total of €6.9 million in humanitarian assistance.

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The EU and Armenia Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement enters into force

On 1 March 2021, the European Union-Armenia Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA) will enter into force. It has now been ratified by the Republic of Armenia, all EU Member States and the European Parliament. This represents an important milestone for EU-Armenia relations.

[Read more](#)



EU publishes EU4Business Report on SME Support in Eastern Partnership

The report shows an extra €1.3 billion income for small and medium-sized enterprises, which received support through the European Union's EU4Business initiative in 2019. Almost 80,000 companies in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine received assistance and managed to create over 117,000 new jobs.

[Read more](#)



EU launches new website showcasing 131 active EU projects in Azerbaijan - eu4azerbaijan.eu

The EU has launched a new website which provides detailed information on 131 EU-funded projects active in Azerbaijan. "The EU4AZERBAIJAN.EU website opens the world of partnership. It presents in pictures, numbers and words the plenitude of implemented and ongoing projects aimed to help people. Visit, explore, benefit and give us your feedback! Let's partner together for the better future, for Azerbaijan!" said Kestutis Jankauskas, EU Ambassador to Azerbaijan.

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EU strengthens its direct support to the people of Belarus

On 11 December, 2020, the European Commission adopted a €24 million assistance package, which will benefit directly the Belarusian people, in particular civil society, youth and small and medium-sized enterprises, and improve health capacities.

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The EU4Digital Initiative

EU4Digital: e-commerce pilot between Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Germany to increase volumes

EU4Digital is an initiative that aims to extend the European Union's Digital Single Market to the Eastern Partner states, developing the potential of the digital economy and society, in order to bring economic growth, help businesses, generate more jobs and improve people's lives. Harmonisation of digital markets through EU4Digital helps

to eliminate barriers to pan-European online services for businesses, citizens and public administrations.

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Partner News

Dear partners,

We would like to encourage you to contribute to this digest with news items on topics that are of relevance to CORLEAP. We welcome news articles about successful regional and cross-border projects, studies on local governance and regional authorities, calls for project partners and announcements of workshops and informative conferences. Please, submit your proposals to corleap@cor.europa.eu. The next issue will be published in autumn 2021.



A new online tool bE-Open was launched in March 2021 with the aim of supporting local and regional governance actors in their efforts to improve the quality of local democracy and provides quick and easy access to relevant international standards and domestic context, legislation, case law, guidelines and good practices in Armenia, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, and Ukraine.

[Read more](#)



More than 40 members of the Community of Practice on public integrity and ethics in local governance in Armenia gathered during an online meeting held on 30 March 2021 to discuss and identify challenges faced by national and local authorities in Armenia in terms of corruption, public ethics, transparent governance and citizen participation in decision-making processes.

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On 25 February 2020, Congress Secretary General Andreas Kiefer addressed the highest political leadership of the Ukraine, including Volodymyr Zelenskiy, the President of Ukraine, Dmytro Razumkov, the President of the Parliament of Ukraine, as well as members of the Council for the Development of Communities and Territories on the occasion of the creation of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities in Ukraine.

[Read more](#)



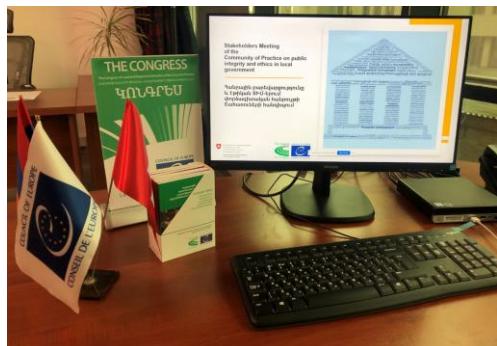
The findings and recommendations of the Baseline assessment of the institutional position and organisational capacities of the Congress of Local Authorities from Moldova (CALM) were discussed during an online meeting held on 21 December 2020 with members of the decision-making bodies of the Association.

[Read more](#)



An online course on “Gender mainstreaming at local level in Ukraine” was launched in December 2020. It focuses on understanding gender issues in local communities and presenting strategies and good practices that local authorities and their national association can implement to advance gender equality.

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Congress main co-operation partners in Armenia, members of the Community of practice on public integrity and ethics in local governance, met remotely on 8 December 2020 to take stock of the results achieved in fighting corruption at local level, as well as making local governance and public procurement more open and transparent

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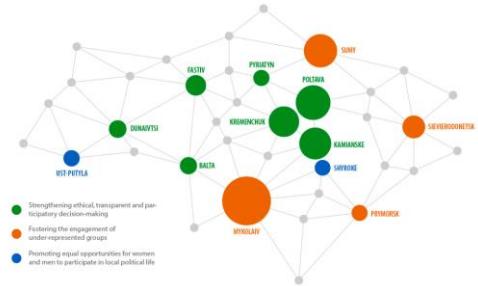
On 3 December 2020, the Congress organised, jointly with the Secretariat of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine and the Association of Ukrainian Cities (AUC), an online round table to establish a Platform for National – Local Consultation on Open Government in Ukraine, in line with the OGP Local Strategy.

[Read more](#)



On 1 December 2020, the Congress organised, jointly with the Congress of Local Authorities from Moldova (CALM), a webinar on "Advocacy for policy change - experiences of local government associations". The event provided an opportunity to exchange on strategies for advocacy with national associations of local and regional authorities from Bulgaria, Latvia, Norway, Romania and Ukraine.

[Read more](#)



During October and November 2020, the Congress held a series of thematic webinars for Ukrainian local authorities implementing [local initiatives on ethical, innovative and inclusive policies and practices at local level in Ukraine](#):

Youth engagement [Read more](#)

e-Democracy tools [Read more](#)

Engagement of under-represented groups [Read more](#)

Gender-sensitive policymaking [Read more](#)



On 20 October 2020, three [Ukrainian](#) municipalities (Khmelnytskyi, Ternopil and Vinnytsya) and two [Armenian](#) communities (Vanadzor and Gyumri) were selected to join the Open Government Partnership (OGP) Local programme and promote globally the innovation they have demonstrated in making their governments more open, accountable and responsive to citizens.



40th Congress Session was held remotely on 23-24 March 2021 when renewed member state delegations elected its President, the Presidents and Vice-Presidents of its chambers, adopted priorities for the next five years, as well as a report and recommendations on respecting the European Charter of Local Self-Government in times of crisis. The Congress priorities put the emphasis on responses to the health crisis, environmental and social sustainability, digital revolution, as well as citizen engagement in a democracy.

[Read more](#)



Congress Information report on the local elections in Ukraine was presented to major election stakeholders by the Congress Spokesperson on the Observation of Local and Regional Elections Stewart Dickson on 9 December 2020 during the [5th Local Self-Government Forum in Ukraine](#) and on 27 January 2021 during the national virtual conference “2020 Local Elections: Lessons Learned and Recommendations”

[Read more](#)



The Congress carried out the monitoring of Azerbaijan's compliance with the European Charter of Local Self-Government from 23 to 25 February 2021. Two rapporteurs on local and regional democracy in Azerbaijan focused on the developments since the last monitoring in 2012. [Read more](#)



The Congress carried out a remote observation procedure of local elections in Ukraine held on 25 October 2020. The Congress delegation, in particular, welcomes the fact that, for the first time, internally displaced persons (IDPs) were allowed to vote in local elections in Ukraine.

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On 26 November 2020, the Bureau of the Congress adopted an information report on the observation of local elections in Ukraine.

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Publications



Decentralisation and Local Self-government in Eastern Partnership countries

EaP CSF COVID-19 POLICY PAPER



Decentralisation and Local Self-government in Eastern Partnership countries

All Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries face great challenges related to strategic planning, transparency, accountability in budget spending decisions, and civil society's participation in decision-making. In the past year, the COVID-19 pandemic slowed down the implementation of the European principles of decentralisation and local self-government in the EaP region. This policy paper, prepared by the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum, analyses the successes and challenges in the process of decentralisation and local self-governance in the EaP countries, and offers a set of recommendations for strengthening decentralisation processes.



More info
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