



**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**

**PRESS RELEASE**

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## **New EU funding to improve border management and regional cooperation in the Eastern Partnership**

The European Commission has approved a new support package for the EU's Eastern Neighbourhood of just over €23 million that will help to improve security, boost trade and increase mobility for people living in the region by implementing border management rules and adopting best practices on the Armenian-Georgian and Ukrainian-Belarus borders in line with EU standards.

As part of the Eastern Partnership Flagship Initiative on Integrated Border Management (IBM), this project will, in addition, provide training, equipment, infrastructure and advice; helping to reduce corruption, smuggling and people trafficking in the area and making it safer as a result.

*"Making borders more efficient not only helps making countries more secure, it also opens up trade and job opportunities. I am pleased that thanks to this new package of support, we are providing millions of people in Eastern Partnership countries with more opportunities to make a living and be more mobile in their daily lives", Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy Štefan Füle said.*

The new funding will also support multilateral activities of the Eastern Partnership; a partnership between the EU and countries on its Eastern borders. The support will be provided for various meetings and seminars of the Eastern Partnership platforms ( fora for open discussion and exchange of best practices with partner countries, in line with EU norms and standards) and the Civil Society Forum (bringing together civil society organisations from the Eastern Partnership countries and the EU Member States).

Other regional cooperation initiatives in the Eastern Neighbourhood, such as the Northern Dimension (a common policy between the EU, Norway, Iceland and the Russian Federation to promote dialogue and cooperation) and the Black Sea Synergy (a forum for countries bordering the Black Sea to tackle common problems while fostering political and economic reform) will also receive EU support.

### **Background:**

The Eastern Partnership, the Eastern dimension of the European Neighbourhood Policy, was launched in 2009 to further support Eastern European countries' sustainable reform processes with a view to accelerating their political association and economic integration with the European Union.

The Eastern Partnership countries are: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine.

Today's new support makes up the second part of the 2012 Regional Action Programme for the Eastern Neighbourhood. The funding comes from the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI); the main financial and cooperation instrument through which assistance is given to the Eastern Partnership countries and Russia.

The ENPI East Regional Action Programme 2012 is expected to be adopted in successive tranches throughout the year. The first part of the programme was worth €22 million. With a total allocation of €23,249,500 million, this, the second part of the Programme, is made up of four components:

1. Support for the multilateral dimension of the Eastern Partnership.
2. Integrated border management pilot project "Provision of equipment and infrastructure for the Bagratashen-Sadakhlo border crossing point between Armenia and Georgia and enhancement of their capacities". This will aim to increase security on the borders and facilitate the movement of people and goods.
3. Integrated border management pilot project "Support for the creation of an electronic system of pre-arrival information exchange between the customs authorities of the Republic of Belarus and Ukraine".
4. Funding for information activities and programme preparation.

For more information:

To download the Regional Action Programme 2012:

[http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/ap/aap/2012\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/ap/aap/2012_en.htm)

On the Eastern Partnership and regional cooperation in the East:

<http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/easternpartnership>

[http://eeas.europa.eu/eastern/index\\_en.htm](http://eeas.europa.eu/eastern/index_en.htm)

EU Neighbourhood Info Centre:

<http://www.enpi-info.eu/indexeast.php>

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