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ПАРЛАМЕНТСКАЯ АССАМБЛЕЯ ЕВРОНЕСТ

**JOINT STATEMENT BY THE CO-PRESIDENTS,
MEP Rebecca HARMS and MP Borys TARASYUK**

on the 10th anniversary of the Eastern Partnership

Brussels, 13 May - “Today, we had the honour, in our capacity as Co-Presidents of the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly, to address the Foreign Affairs Ministerial Meeting that marked the 10th anniversary of the Eastern Partnership.

Launched in May 2009 as a common endeavour of the EU Member States, the EU Institutions and the Eastern Neighbours, the Eastern Partnership has been founded on our common values and mutual interest, in a spirit of shared ownership and responsibility, to bring tangible benefits to our citizens across the continent. We now boast a decade of joint achievements, and look forward to the further deepening and strengthening of these relations.

Our future efforts should focus on achieving the 20 deliverables for 2020 in the areas of economy, governance, connectivity and society. Needless to say, the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly will continue to bring added value by providing a sustained framework for inter-parliamentary co-operation at multilateral level, giving an indispensable democratic legitimacy to the Eastern Partnership, and complementing the valuable contacts that already exist, at bilateral level, between the European Parliament and the Eastern Partners’ national Parliaments. We are confident that, after the European elections, the European Parliament will remain highly engaged in the support to the Eastern Partners’ democratic process and reform efforts and in the monitoring and evaluation of the progress made as well as the EU assistance to them.

While fully acknowledging the importance of the Eastern Partnership for the stability and prosperity of our continent as a whole, we also wish to reiterate our specific support for the European aspirations of the three Associated Eastern Partners - Georgia, Moldova and

Ukraine. Any European State may apply to become a full member of the EU, provided that it upholds the Copenhagen criteria. We believe that the Association Agreements signed with these countries do not constitute the ultimate goal of their relation with the EU but that their implementation is the way to the EU, and we have to underline in this regard the importance of the “Eastern Partnership Plus” (EaP+) model advocated by the European Parliament.

Also we would like to stress that the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement with Armenia announces the deepening of EU-Armenian relations. Besides, the launching of negotiations on a new comprehensive agreement with Azerbaijan demonstrates that the Eastern Partnership is effective whilst maintaining the necessary emphasis on our core values.

Last but not least, we are convinced that the continuation of the “critical engagement” policy vis-à-vis Belarus is vital for the inclusiveness of the Eastern Partnership and look forward to seeing the conditions emerge to welcome Belarus to the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly.”

For further information, please contact:

Office of Ms Rebecca HARMS, tel. +32 2 284 56 95, e-mail: rebecca.harms@ep.europa.eu

Office of Mr Borys TARASYUK, email: protasenko@rada.gov.ua

Secretariat of the Euronest PA, tel. +32 2 284 26 43, e-mail: DEPA@ep.europa.eu