

**Programmatic Cooperation Framework for
Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus**



1st Meeting of Community of practice on local democracy

14-15 January, 2016 – Strasbourg, Palais de l'Europe, Room 10

Context

The thematic programme “Strengthening institutional frameworks for local governance” is part of the CoE/EU Eastern Partnership Programmatic Co-operation Framework (PCF) during 2015 – 2017 in the Eastern Partnership countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus). It is implemented by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe (the Congress), in close co-operation with the Directorate General for Democracy.

A study on the roles and responsibilities of mayors and local councillors in the Eastern Partnership countries will be disseminated in the countries concerned and serve as a basis of the future activities of the programme.

The main objectives of this study are:

- to analyse the actual situation of local government in the participating countries, based on the review of the respective national legislation and their practical application;
- to determine common problems and obstacles and to develop policy recommendations to improve local self-governance;
- to promote mutual learning at the local level.

Community of practice on local democracy in the Eastern Partnership countries will be established with the aim to strengthening capacities of local elected representatives to implement best practices in their communities, and in particular:

- to advise on potentials for implementation of the study recommendations;
- to provide a model for mayors and local authorities to share examples of good practices, initiate peer exchange and network between themselves – **(networking)**;
- to support mayors in promoting more ethical and transparent governance, especially using new modalities, tools and techniques which will foster active citizen participation in local decision making processes – **(ethics and participation)**;
- to guide mayors to successfully apply “lessons learnt” through implementation of the pilot projects on efficient, transparent and ethical governance – **(coaching)**.

The Community of practice will include experts in the fields of local governance and ethics, representatives of the local and regional associations, Congress members and others.

The ethics in local authorities and anticorruption measures will be in the focus of the work of the community, as well as the dialogue with citizens. Importance of ethical behaviour in local authorities will be promoted as a basic condition for enhancing trust and citizens’ engagement. Finally, mayors will be enabled to use these models and policies in reinforcing the accountability of their local authorities.

Agenda

Thursday, 14 January 2016

- 14:00 – 14:30 **Introduction**
- objective of the meeting
 - update of the project activities and plans for 2016
- 14:30 – 16:00 **Community of practice**
- presentation of concept, approach and objectives: the link between project activities, work plan and need for support of the Community of practice
 - feedback from participants and proposals on potential membership – open discussion
- 16:30 – 18:00 **Study on roles and responsibilities of mayors and local councillors in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus**
- presentation of the findings and recommendations
 - overview of the consultative process
 - discussion on the recommendations

Friday, 15 January 2016

- 09:30 – 11:30 **From capacity building to improved local democracy**
- brief overview of part 1 “Mayors, leaders for change” workshops held in Moldova, Georgia and Armenia in 2015
 - Part 2 workshops (continuation) – recommendations
 - regional seminar on ethics
- 11:30 – 12:00 **Public Ethics benchmark**
- Presentation by the Centre of Expertise (DG II)
- 12:00 – 13:30 *Lunch break*
- 13:30 – 15:30 **Grants and coaching scheme**
- presentation of the grants model and the coaching scheme
 - results of the grants in Armenia (bilateral project)
 - open discussion
- 15:30 – 16:30 Wrap-up session: next steps, date and topics of 2nd Meeting