

Consultation: "Towards a new European Neighbourhood Policy" Position of CORLEAP Bureau adopted on 23 April 2015

The Conference of Regional and Local Authorities for the Eastern Partnership (**CORLEAP**) is the political forum of local and regional authorities from the European Union and the Eastern Partnership countries.

CORLEAP aims to:

- coordinate the representation of the local and regional authorities within the Eastern Partnership;
- complement and support the effort by the EU institutions and other participating stakeholders in delivering the European Neighbourhood Policy;
- spread the concepts that will bring partner countries closer to the EU and foster the internal reform and capacity building at the local and regional level.

The CORLEAP is expressing following points in response to the consultation on the revision of the European Neighbourhood Policy.

CORLEAP recalls the significant role of local democracy and citizen participation in pursuing the goals of the ENP. The principles of local democracy represent a universal European value corroborated by the European Charter of Local Self-Government. Local democracy and the role local and regional authorities were highlighted in the conclusions of the Vilnius Eastern Partnership Summit and must be strongly supported within the ENP.

The EU support for decentralization policies was confirmed by the EC Communication “Empowering Local Authorities in partner countries for enhanced governance and more effective development outcomes” COM (2013) 280. CORLEAP suggests that decentralisation including fiscal decentralisation has to become and be recognised as one of the main objectives/priorities/conditions for national development in the Neighbourhood countries along with justice and anticorruption.

CORLEAP encourage a multi-stakeholder approach to local and regional development within the ENP policy, based on close cooperation between local and regional authorities, civil society organisations and citizens. They invite the European Commission to draft specific programmes for local and regional authorities in partner countries that provide direct and accessible support for such multi-stakeholders approach.

CORLEAP requests the provision of EU support such Local Administration Facility (LAF¹) to facilitate the exchange of best practice regarding capacity building and institutional efficiency of Eastern Partners' local governments. CORLEAP advocates that local governments and communities should get access and eligibility to major EU programs as for example Europe for Citizens.

CORLEAP calls on European institutions to facilitate the involvement of the associations of local and regional authorities in the ENP policy and ensure an appropriate support to assist the associations of local and regional authorities in their role in pursuing the goals and objectives of the ENP. Local governments associations are one of the strongest constituency-based actors in society and their capacity building and consolidation supports decentralisation, democratisation and public administration reforms.

Adopted in Brussels on 23 April 2015 by the Bureau of CORLEAP.

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¹ Local Administration Facility is a TAIEX programme currently available to candidate and pre-candidate countries to promote knowledge about the EU and its procedure,