

Eastern Partnership

Platform 2 "Economic Integration and Convergence with EU Policies"

Panel on Transport

1. In accordance with the General Guidelines and Rules of Procedure of the Eastern Partnership Multilateral Platforms (adopted on 5 June 2009), an "Eastern Partnership Transport Panel" is established.
2. The Directorate General for Mobility and Transport of the European Commission chairs the Transport Panel at the level of Head of Unit. The Directorate General for Development and Cooperation takes the lead for issues under its competence.
3. The Commission Communication "The EU and its neighbouring regions: A renewed approach to transport cooperation" (COM (2011) 415) provides a framework for the Transport Panel. The key policy objective as outlined in the Communication is to strengthen transport connections with neighbouring countries.
4. The Panel will facilitate implementation of measures set out in the Communication to strengthen transport connections with the EU's neighbours covered by the Eastern Partnership. The Panel will address reforms underpinning gradual market integration, the planning of transport networks and the preparation of a pipeline of infrastructure projects.
5. Activities of the Panel may include:
 - discussion on policies and reforms that are needed for closer market integration
 - identification of possible regional actions;
 - discussion on regional transport networks;
 - preparation of a pipeline on priority projects that could be co-financed by the EU and the International Financial Institutions (IFIs);
 - sharing of information and best practices between the EU and partner countries;
 - organisation of meetings (seminars, conferences) when needed;
6. The Panel will coordinate and streamline the technical working groups of the relevant existing frameworks and receive input from other existing transport initiatives in the region, such as TRACECA programme and the EU Strategy for the Danube Region. The work of the panel will be complementary to work done under bilateral tracks.
7. Partner countries will be represented at the Panel meetings at the Head of Unit or equivalent level. They will be accompanied by experts as required. Participation will vary depending on the specific subjects covered.
8. IFIs will be invited to participate in the Panel meetings. Other stakeholders, from industry and professional organisations from Partner countries, can take part, provided that they are identified by the Partner government, and attend as part of the Partner's Delegation.
9. The Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum can be invited to participate in the work of the Panel where relevant and when needed.

10. Experts from the Member States, EU agencies, other organisations other neighbouring countries than those covered by the Eastern Partnership can be invited to the panel meetings to share experience, information and best practices.
11. The Panel will be meeting at least once every 6 months and whenever circumstances require. The first meeting will take place on 14 October 2011. The Panel will be formally launched at the Platform 2 meeting on 13 October 2011.
12. The Panel is established initially for an unlimited duration of time, but its work and progress will be reviewed in winter 2012/2013. After the review all actors involved will decide whether the Panel has proved useful and can be continued.
13. The Panel will work under the Platform "Economic Integration and Convergence with EU policies". Following each meeting key decisions will be summarised in operational conclusions and distributed to all participants for follow up in view of the next meeting and to Platform 2 for information.
14. The Panel Guidelines and Rules of Procedure of the Eastern Partnership Multilateral Platforms are applicable, in particular point 6 on Eastern Partnership Panels.

Brussels, 23 September 2011