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**EU-EaP ACADEMY:
SUPPORTING NEXT GENERATION OF SCHOLARS IN EUROPEAN STUDIES**

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Organized by Ukrainian Association of Professors and Researchers on European Integration
European Community Studies Association, Moldova
European Union Studies Association, Georgia
Kyiv, Ukraine. February 11-15, 2019

Press release

The first **“EU-EaP Academy: Supporting Next Generation of Scholars in European Studies”** was held in Kyiv on February 11-15, 2019. This is a joint initiative co-organized by three academic associations in European Studies from Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine and supported by the Erasmus+ Jean Monnet Project.

In response to the Call for participation, the organizing committee received 124 applications from 17 countries, and selected 36 participants from 6 EaP countries and 5 participants from the EU countries. Thanks to the Erasmus+ Jean Monnet Project, 30 scholarships were provided to participants from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.

The content and structure of the program reflected both needs and interests of the candidates identified through collected applications at the preparatory stage of the project. Therefore, a balanced and comprehensive range of topics was offered to the participants at EU-EaP Academy aiming at providing them with an in-depth understanding and first-hand expertise on the relations of individual EaP countries with the European Union. The organizing committee brought together outstanding speakers and experts from the EU and all six EaP countries to offer participants a genuine comparative perspective on the current state and future prospects of the bilateral and multilateral tracks of the Eastern Partnership.

The Head of the EU Delegation to Ukraine Mr. Hugues Mingarelli shared his views on the relations between the EU and its Eastern European neighbors. The audience appreciated a lot this exclusive opportunity to engage in conversation with the EU Ambassador to Ukraine.

Svitlana Shytikova, Director of the EU Project National Erasmus+ Office in Ukraine outlined the opportunities for the audience for their research and academic activities within the projects of the Erasmus+ Programme.

Prof. M.Emerson, senior researcher from a Brussels-based think-tank Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) proposed its vision on Wider Europe as a valid alternative to further enlargement. Prof. Tom Casier from the University of Kent (Brussels campus) and Prof. A.Tyushka from the College of Europe (Natolin campus) discussed innovative conceptual/theoretical tool-box needed to understand better the analytical challenges of studying EU and the EU-Eastern European neighbourhood-related topics.

Special emphasis was put on sharing accumulated experience on implementing Association Agreements in Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine. The invited speakers focused on a variety of subjects, underlying specificities within respective countries. The case of Ukraine was of particular interest to the participants. Ms.V. Movchan, academic director of the Kyiv-based Institute for Economic Research and Policy Consulting provided a detailed analysis of deep and comprehensive free trade area with the EU. Mr. H. Maksak, the national coordinator of the Ukrainian National Platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum stressed the key importance and unique role of the civil society in bringing closer Ukraine to the European Union and compared the situation with the other EaP countries. The presentation on the Association4U Project, made by Marc van den Muijzenberg, the project leader attracted a particular attention among participants as the project has been implemented only in Ukraine.

Lecturers from academic institutions from Moldova and Georgia provided a comprehensive first-hand account of achievements and drawbacks in the process of implementation of Association Agreements in both countries. In turn, lecturers from Armenia, Azerbaijan and Belarus discussed different formats of interactions of their countries and highlighted that each country opted for their own way to cooperate with the European Union.

A series of research workshops and interactive discussions within the thematic sessions were organized to provide the participants with opportunities to present their research projects/proposals, to improve their research skills, to share their research interests and to discuss the possibility of joint research initiatives.

In fact, networking was one of the core elements of the EU-EaP Academy and was aimed to address the lack of any other sustainable framework for cooperation among young scholars from the EaP countries in the field of European Studies. Therefore, two sessions were dedicated to the Erasmus+ Jean Monnet Programme in order to familiarize junior scholars with its opportunities and share best practices of Jean Monnet initiatives from Ukraine. Participants from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus and Georgia were particularly interested in Ukrainian experience in this field.

A series of follow-up activities is planned in each country, including thematic workshops in Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. The final Conference "Reflecting on the future of the EU- EaP relations: Young Scholars' Voice" is planned for June 2019 in Kyiv.