

**Communication to the Commissioner Johannes Hahn
in view of the Riga Summit on Eastern Partnership (EaP) - May 2015**

On behalf of LADDER, the EU-funded DEAR project coordinated by ALDA and implemented by 46 Associations of Local Authorities and CSOs from 35 EU & non-EU countries

18 May 2015

On May the 18th 2015 we, representatives of Associations of LAs and CSOs within the LADDER project coordinated and implemented by ALDA, met in Dnipropetrovsk (Ukraine) within the EaP working group of the LADDER project, to discuss the joint communication paper “Towards a new European Neighborhood Policy”. The consultation comes timely and we would like to use this opportunity to share some elements before the Summit of this week in Riga:

- We fully agree that a new Neighborhood Policy shall be based on the principle of differentiation and concentration. However, such differentiation shall not exclude the partner countries that are not signatories of Association Agreements. Moreover, Local Authorities and Civil Society Organisations from those countries shall have full access to the ENP facilities and programs that are focused on human rights, rule of law, good governance and economic cooperation. At the same time countries aspiring for EU accession shall be given a full-fledged access to the better targeted EU integration financing tools and instruments such as IPA, ENPARD, specific EU funds and programs (such as Europe for Citizens for example) in order to be able to implement commitments coming from EU Association agreements;
- We urge the European Commission to pursue good practices of consultation with Association of Local Authorities and Civil Society Organisations, further expanding this practice on ENP Action Plans and Progress Reports. It is critically important to involve citizens at the stage of draft elaboration rather than in discussions of already adopted final documents. In addition, the European Commission shall ensure that National Implementation Plans for Association Agreements are subject to a wider consultation and the Association agenda is visible to and understandable by the general public in the Associated states;

1

LADDER

LOCAL AUTHORITIES AS DRIVERS FOR DEVELOPMENT
EDUCATION AND RAISING AWARENESS

- We recognize the regional cooperation as a driver of the European Neighborhood policy. Moreover, we believe that sustainable regional cooperation starts from grassroots. To that end, the new European Neighborhood Policy shall promote active cooperation and partnership between LAs and CSOs from the Eastern Partnership countries.

We, representatives of the LADDER project and ALDA, support the reform, the differentiation and consolidation of the European Neighborhood Policy as an opportunity for the promotion of European values and democratic standards in our countries.

LADDER & ALDA- the European Association for Local Democracy
Meeting in Dnipropetrovsk – Eastern Ukraine

www.ald-europe.eu

http://www.ald-europe.eu/newSite/project_dett.php?ID=75