

GREENING THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP: REGIONAL DIMENSION OF THE FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

Discussion paper

November 2021



**FRIEDRICH
EBERT
STIFTUNG**

This discussion paper was prepared with the support of the FES EU Office and the FES Regional Office «Dialogue Eastern Europe».

Copyright for this discussion paper stays with the Resource and Analysis Center “Society and Environment”. Any use of the information reflecting the content of this policy paper, except for the generally accepted academic forms of quotes, is prohibited without prior written consent. For quotations: “Greening the Eastern Partnership: regional dimension of the future perspectives. Discussion Paper. – Team of authors: Andriy Andrusevych, Nataliya Andrusevych, Zoriana Mishchuk (2021).”

Greening the Eastern Partnership: regional dimension of the future perspectives. Discussion Paper. – Andriy Andrusevych, Nataliya Andrusevych, Zoriana Mishchuk. – 2021– 32 p.



The publication was prepared with the support of the FES EU Office and the FES Regional Office «Dialogue Eastern Europe»

©Resource and Analysis Center “Society and Environment”, 2021

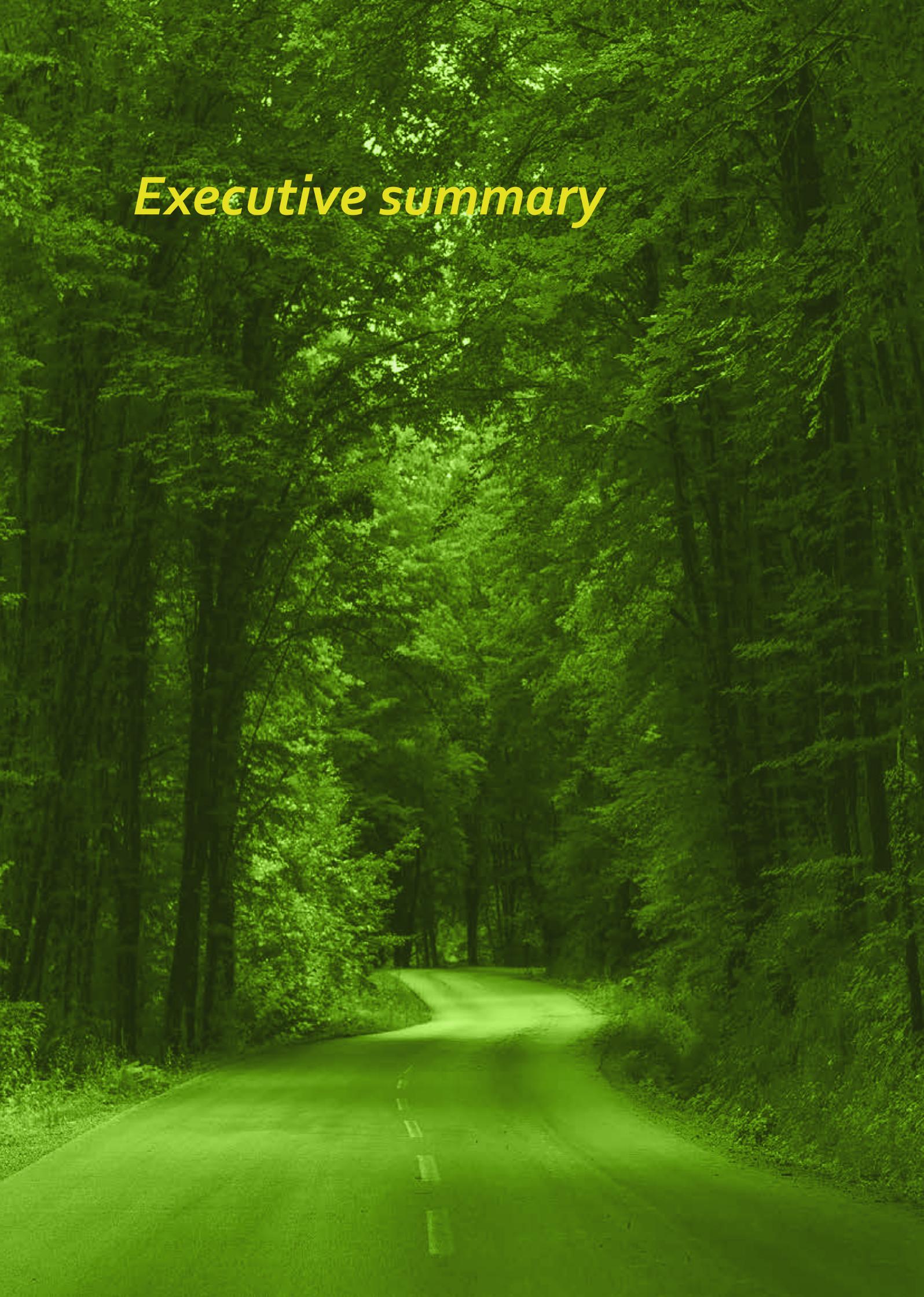
Fotos flickr.com

Design T. Mosienko

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	4
Introduction	8
Chapter 1. Post-2020 Eastern Partnership	10
1.1. Future green priorities of the Eastern Partnership policy	11
1.2. New Eastern Partnership multilateral architecture	14
Chapter 2. Bilateral dimension of post-2020 Eastern Partnership priorities	17
2.1. Proposed Eastern Partnership countries flagship initiatives	18
2.2. Outlook on the green agenda in the Eastern Partnership countries	19
Chapter 3. Ways to mainstream the European Green Deal into the Eastern Partnership regional agenda (conclusions and recommendations)	22
3.1. Filling the gap: Green Multilateral Eastern Partnership flagship initiatives	23
3.2. Greening the Eastern Partnership multilateral architecture	28
Annexes	30

Executive summary



The discussion paper “Greening the Eastern Partnership: regional dimension of the future perspectives” aims to propose ways to green the Eastern Partnership (EaP) policy beyond 2020, particularly its regional dimension. This document offers “a menu” for policy decisions to green the EaP and its regional dimension by recommending several green thematic priorities and EaP multilateral cooperation formats, as well as “ready to go” regional flagship initiatives. **It is meant to contribute to the discussion about the post-2020 EaP future, particularly during the upcoming EaP summit in December 2021.**

Our main discussion points

- How can the European Green Deal be fully integrated into the EaP post-2020 agenda?
- To what extent do the proposed country flagship initiatives reflect the green aspirations of the EaP countries?
- What formats for multilateral cooperation can effectively be promoted within the EaP to address specific environmental priorities?
- Is the EaP multilateral architecture sufficiently equipped to promote the European Green Deal and its priorities?
- Would the post-2020 EaP benefit from multilateral green flagship initiatives?

Proposed solutions

The future cooperation of the EU and the EaP countries **will primarily take place within a bilateral format.** The scale and success of the EaP cooperation on the regional level will depend on the status of the EaP and support of (sub-) regional format by the EaP states.

Our general conclusion is that the proposed post-2020 EaP agenda does not seem to fully reflect the European Green Deal’s objectives.

Our key recommendation relates to the benefit of identifying regional and sub-regional cooperation space. There are green agenda-related topics that, when coupled with specific cooperation formats, the EaP future process can pursue. This document proposes a set of multilateral cooperation formats (association trio, local partnerships, etc.), aligning with the green thematic priorities (e.g., green investment, greening the SMEs, etc.). Combining such formats and thematic priorities would constitute regional or sub-regional flagship initiatives, which we believe need to be integrated into the future EaP agenda based on discussions among the EU and its EaP partners.

In addition to proposing a “menu” of thematic priorities and cooperation formats, we suggest concrete multilateral flagship initiatives. The list of such initiatives serves the purpose of illustrating how coupling can be made and reflects our expert prioritization of potential future multilateral flagship initiatives:

- **Greening the Association Trio:** an initiative that supports green transformation and cooperation among the associated countries focused on Greening the SMEs, Sustainable energy and energy



efficiency, and Greening the trade thematic priorities;

- **Green Deal for all:** an initiative to engage citizens and all other stakeholders into transition to a climate-neutral economy in all EaP countries implemented via special partnerships, local partnerships, or association trio format;
- **Nature without borders:** an initiative to support cooperation in biodiversity protection implemented via various cooperation formats, including transboundary and trio; it may also include preserving sustainable livelihoods as a sub-initiative to support rural communities;
- **Focused partnerships initiative:** an initiative for countries' thematic cooperation via special partnership, focusing on good environmental governance, green jobs, greening the cities, green agriculture, and green investment.

There is also a need to have a fresh look at the proposed **new multilateral architecture**: as for now, it lacks a green component. There are ways to mainstream European Green Deal into the EaP by adjusting multilateral architecture. Greening the multilateral architecture can ensure the coherence of the EaP with EGD objectives.



Political context

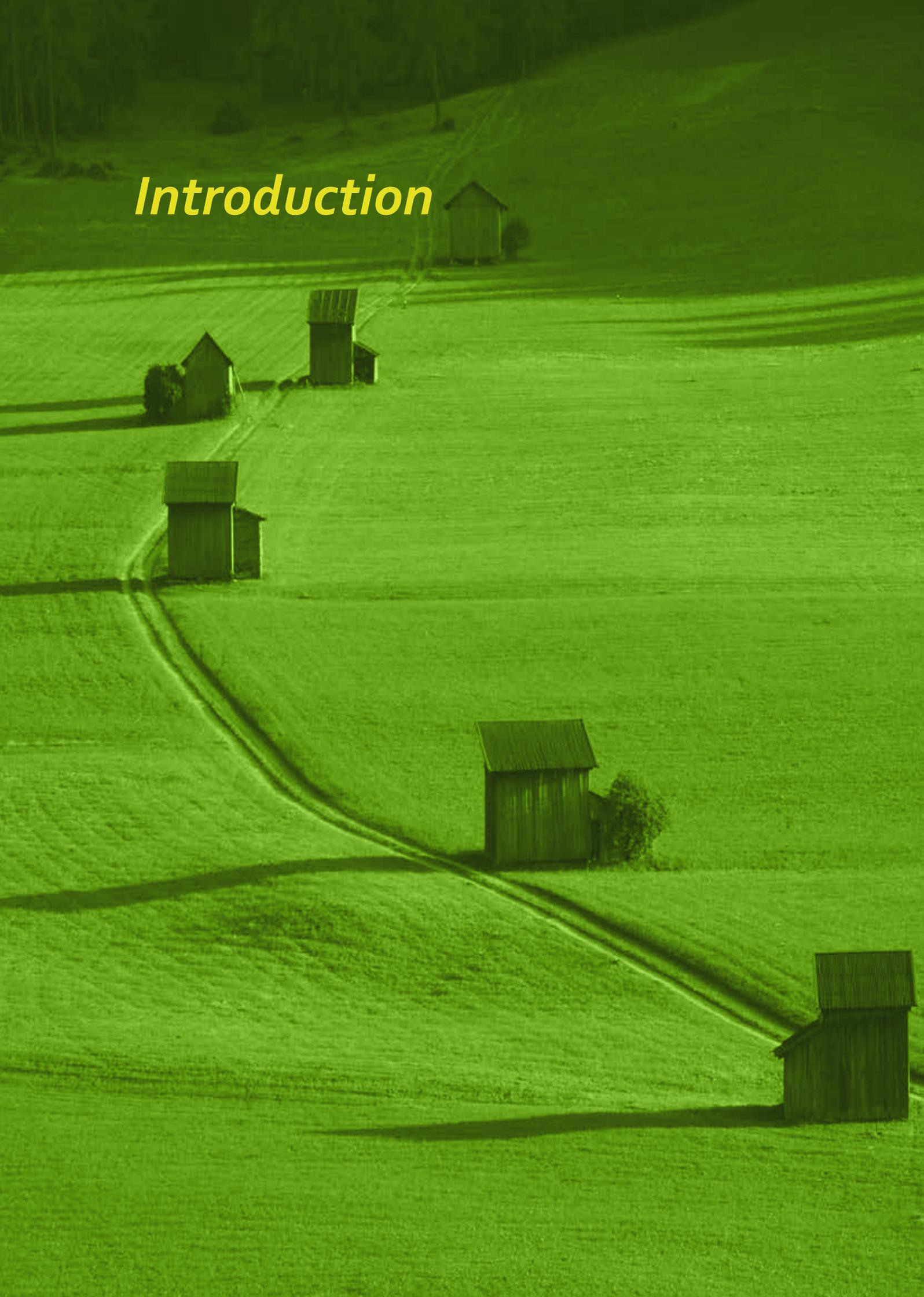
The Eastern Partnership, a joint initiative launched in 2009 by the European Union, its Member States, and the partner countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, and Ukraine), **is now in the process of transformation**. The proposed priorities, new multilateral architecture, and economic and investment plan for EaP are reflected in two documents: the Joint Communication “Eastern Partnership Policy beyond 2020: Reinforcing Resilience – an Eastern Partnership that delivers for all” and the Joint Staff Working Document “Recovery, resilience and reform: post-2020 Eastern Partnership priorities”. Future EaP agenda shall be the subject of discussions and agreement at the EaP summit in December 2021.

The European Green Deal is a new EU policy that aims to make Europe climate-neutral by 2050. It sets the path to decarbonization and

more robust environmental and nature protection in virtually all areas of the economy and daily life. Its global dimension necessarily affects each EU foreign policy, including the Eastern Partnership.

The EaP countries have different views towards EaP cooperation. Association countries (Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine) promote their sub-regional and bilateral cooperation with the EU. In general, the EaP countries do not have an active green agenda, but they still face many common or transboundary environmental challenges.

Introduction



The Eastern Partnership, a joint initiative launched in 2009 by the European Union, its Member States, and the partner countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, and Ukraine), is now in the process of transformation. The latest greening policies and legislation in response to the implementation of the European Green Deal with its ambitious goal to reach a climate-neutral Europe by 2050 have already impacted the EaP agenda.

The Joint Communication “Eastern Partnership Policy beyond 2020: Reinforcing Resilience – an Eastern Partnership that delivers for all” (March 2020) identified “environmental and climate resilience” among five long-term objectives of the post-2020 EaP agenda.

The recently developed Joint Staff Working Document “Recovery, resilience and reform: post-2020 Eastern Partnership priorities” provides clear messages about the expected results of the upcoming EaP summit (December 2021). The identified Top Ten Targets for 2025 include investing in sustainable energy (250 000 households shall reduce energy consumption by at least 20%) and investing in environment and climate (another 3 million people gain access to safe water services quality monitored and improved in 300 cities). In addition, several proposed country flagship initiatives reflect the European Green Deal priorities.

Nevertheless, the future EaP agenda lacks a clear green component in the new multilateral architecture and regional / sub-regional flagship initiatives, which can ensure the comprehensive EaP policy development and implementation, including reaching the EGD goals and priorities.

The EaP countries have different green aspirations. General public debate on the European Green Deal (EGD) issues is almost absent, except in Ukraine. Nevertheless, green concerns are

still parts of the public discourse in each of the countries. Green agenda issues could become a good ground for cooperation within the EaP initiative. Combined with the flagship initiatives on EGD-related topics in the regional and/or sub-regional format would help the EU reach its ambitious goal on climate neutrality.

The discussion paper “Greening the Eastern Partnership: regional dimension of the future perspectives” was prepared on the eve of an EaP summit and proposes several solutions on how to integrate the green component into the multilateral dimension of the EaP. We hope it will facilitate and contribute to the public discourse on the future EaP policy and its possible regional dimension.

The methodology used to produce this paper included: the desk research to map green elements of the political document shaping the future of the EaP; questionnaires to help national and international experts to identify green and EGD agenda in each EaP country; expert discussions to identify possible formats of regional cooperation and thematic priorities to frame recommendations on multilateral flagship initiatives and the post-2020 EaP architecture.

We would like to express our gratitude to Manana Kochladze (Green Alternative, Georgia), Andrei Isak (EU4Environment, Moldova), and Maria Falaleeva (EKAPRAEKT, Belarus) for their input to the discussion paper.

The discussion paper was prepared by the Resource and Analysis Center “Society and Environment” (Ukraine) with the support of the FES EU Office and the FES Regional Office “Dialogue Eastern Europe”.

A photograph of a road lined with trees, overlaid with a green tint. The road is paved and has a double white line down the center. The trees are dense and lush, creating a canopy over the road. The overall color scheme is a monochromatic green.

Chapter 1.
***Post-2020 Eastern
Partnership***

1.1. Future green priorities of the Eastern Partnership policy

Throughout the whole existence of the Eastern Partnership initiative, environmental issues occupied a secondary position on its agenda. Environment and climate change were traditionally placed together with transport and energy, forming a common “miscellaneous” priority, called Stronger Connectivity in the most recent EaP programming documents¹. The environment and climate change panel within EaP’s Platform 3 was the only place where relevant reforms were discussed on the EaP level. The failure to make progress with implementing such reforms was never brought to the attention in the high-level meetings. This compartmentalization of green transformation, despite its cross-cutting nature, together with the financial support that is not comparable with the scope of necessary reforms, has contributed to the slow progress in the transformation and further lagging of the EaP countries behind the EU member states.

Yet, a change of discourse in Brussels, with the EGD becoming a center of EU institutions’ focus, has already affected the EU-EaP agenda – from discussions in multilateral meetings to new programming documents. The so-called “greening” of the Eastern Partnership agenda was already visible in the first outlook into the post-2020 EaP priorities – the Joint Communication “*Eastern Partnership Policy beyond 2020: Reinforcing Resilience – an Eastern Partnership that delivers for all*”², issued on March 18, 2020. The document named environmental and climate resilience among the five key objectives

of the EU-EaP cooperation for the next period. Regarding the EU’s goal of making Europe the first climate-neutral continent, the Joint Communication promised the EU’s help to Eastern partners in reducing their carbon footprint and moving towards climate neutrality, while supporting the transformation of the regional economies into “modern, resource-efficient, clean, circular and competitive” ones. Among the issues to be in the focus of the forthcoming EU-EaP “green” cooperation, the Joint Communication mentioned energy efficiency, renewable energy, circular economy, environmental governance and awareness-raising, biodiversity, sustainable agriculture and fisheries, and green transport.

The Joint Staff Working Document “*Recovery, resilience and reform: post-2020 Eastern Partnership priorities*”, issued in July 2021, further elaborated on the green prioritization, emphasizing that it is not only about paying more attention to cooperation in the sphere of environment and climate change but rather about mainstreaming environmental priorities into all sectors of the economy and public life. The “Do no harm to environment and climate” principle should be integrated into economic growth strategies and considered during decision-making on investments, with the overall objective of decoupling economic growth from resource use and environmental degradation and progressing towards climate neutrality by 2050.

The Document named five cooperation areas within the general environmental and climate resilience priority:

- Benefits for people’s health and well-being;
- Circular economy, climate neutrality, and green growth;
- Biodiversity and economy’s natural assets base;
- Strengthening energy security and nuclear safety;
- Accelerating the shift to sustainable and smart mobility.

¹ European Commission and High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. Joint Staff Working Document “Eastern Partnership – 20 Deliverables for 2020: Focusing on key priorities and tangible results”. Brussels 9.6.2017. SWD (2017) 300 final

² OIN/2020/7 final, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=JOIN:2020:7:FIN>.



Under these five sub-priorities, various specific thematic cooperation issues are raised, covering both the reforms that have been subject to past cooperation and the new ones like greening the cities.³ An analysis of the range of topics listed within the environment and climate resilience priority is good evidence that the EU Commission has sought to bring most of the EGD thematic priorities to the EaP ground. Circular economy, pollution reduction, biodiversity preservation, energy efficiency, development of renewable energy sources, smart mobility, greening the cities, digitalization, and other related issues are well integrated into the new EaP priorities paradigm while fully correlating with the goals and objectives of the EGD.

Thus, we can conclude that the Joint Staff Working Document effectively extends the EGD implementation to the EaP region: the Partners commit to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation and to strengthen climate policies and green investment to contribute to climate neutrality by 2050. The cross-cutting inclusion of the EGD issues on the EaP agenda will, on the one hand, help the EU to implement its global EGD dimension. On the other hand, it will enable EaP countries, especially those that do not have deep integration with the EU

through association agreements, to synchronize their policies and legislation with the EGD's objective and strengthen green transformation in the whole region.

However, unlike the EGD reforms in the EU with their specific ambitious targets, the EaP green agenda is flexible. The Joint Staff Working Document does not indicate specific commitments, except for **ten top targets until 2025** formulated for all priorities of regional cooperation. Out of those ten, two targets belong to the green agenda: 1) 250 thousand households in the region are expected to reduce energy consumption by at least 20% thanks to energy efficiency; 2) another 3 million people will gain access to safe water services, and air quality will be monitored and improved in 300 cities. These numbers are hardly comparable with the scale of EGD ambitions.

To understand the perspectives of the green transformation, it is also essential to analyze the available funding options. The Joint Staff Working Document is supported by the *Economic and Investment Plan for the Eastern Partnership: Investing in Resilient and Competitive Economies and Societies*, which clarifies the modalities and the expected amount of the forthcoming EU financial support. According to the document, the Commission "may decide to mobilize up to €2.3 billion of funding for investment in the next five years". Part of this funding could extend guarantees of up to €5.8 billion under

³ See Annex 1 for a detailed overview of the reform issues to be covered by the EaP policy under the environment and climate resilience priority, as specified in the Joint Staff Working Document.



the European Fund for Sustainable Development Plus to help reduce the cost of financing for both public and private investments and mitigate the risks for investors.

Up to €17 billion of further public and private investments are expected to be mobilized to support the proposed transformations. Inter alia, mobilization of up to €3.4 billion is expected for promoting **sustainable energy**, with a particular focus on improving energy efficiency in buildings. For this purpose, the EU will use the existing platforms, such as the High-Level Energy Efficiency Initiative, the Green for Growth Fund, the Covenant of Mayors, and the Eastern Europe Energy Efficiency and Environment Partnership. Investments will also be channeled for an additional increase of the proportion of renewables in the energy mix by 10% and for other energy-sector reforms.

In the area of **environmental and climate resilience**, the *Economic and Investment Plan* makes an emphasis on healthy water ecosystems and the integrated management of water resources, with €750 million of investments to be provided for upgrading water supply and sanitation and implementing measures identified in river basin management plans (with the goal of 30% of river basin surface managed according to EU's principles and standards). Further €485 million investments are expected to improve other municipal services, air quality, and green urban areas. EU support will also help restore degraded land and improve forest management, including ensuring better tim-

ber traceability and reduced illegal logging. At least €100 million will be given to boost the circular economy and support decarbonization efforts, including improved waste management.

Green investment priorities could be seen in other thematic areas. For example, the expected €1.5-billion support to SMEs in the region, inter alia, may prioritize promoting a change-over to sustainable, resource and energy-efficient production models. In addition, potential investments of up to €1.4 billion in the green economy are expected to be mobilized by issuing green bonds. One of the financing priorities in the transport area is the preparation and implementation of sustainable urban mobility plans in 30 key cities. Further, potential investments of up to €1.3 billion are foreseen for a just transition to the decarbonization of coal regions.

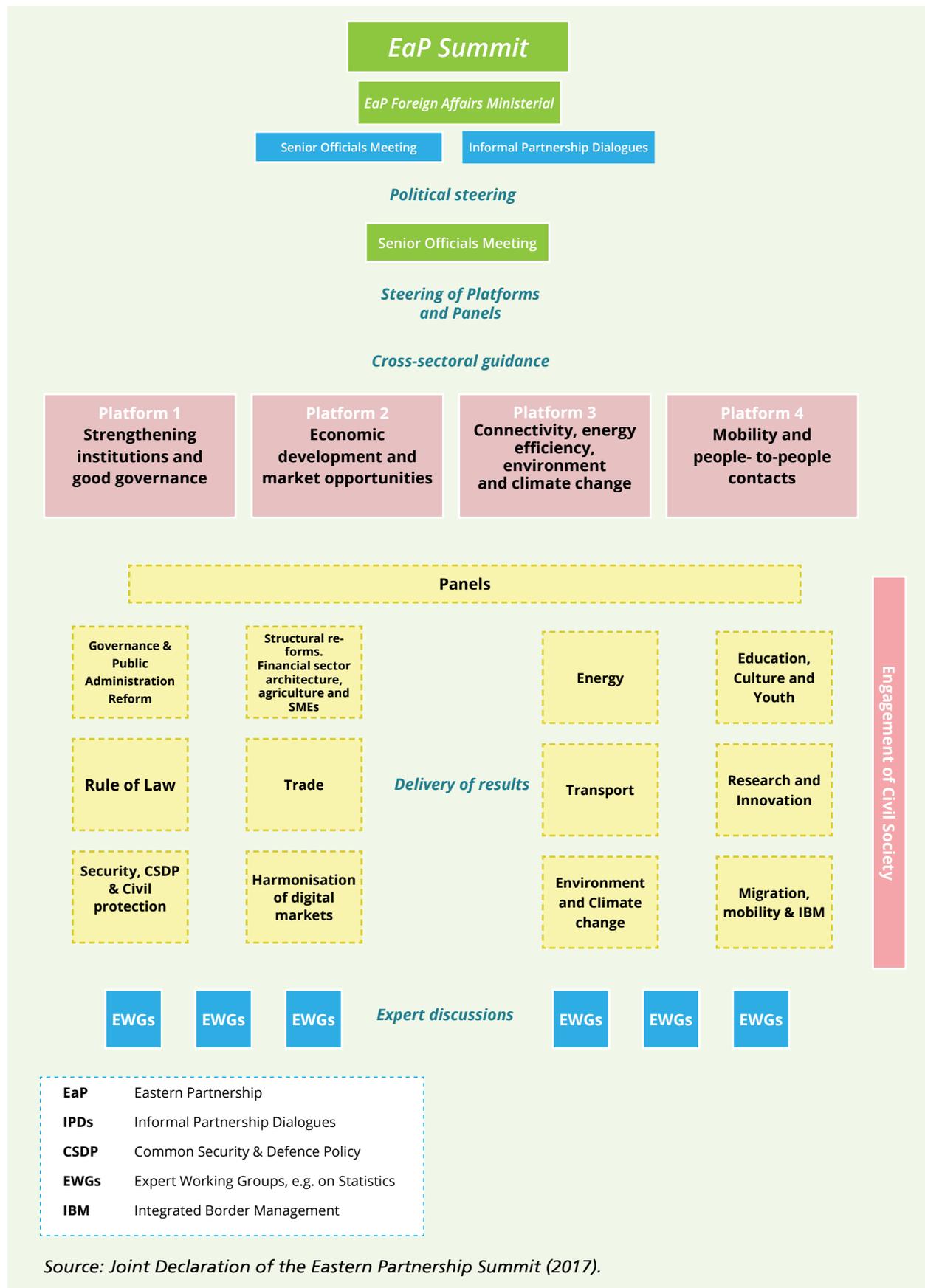
While not specifying any regional-level flagship initiatives in environmental and climate resilience, the Plan, however, includes the national level initiatives along these lines.

1.2. New Eastern Partnership multilateral architecture

The current multilateral architecture was revised and officially adopted at the 2017 EaP Summit to “closely and regularly monitor the implementa-

tion of the agreed deliverables in a result-oriented, comprehensive and systematic manner, ensuring common ownership and joint commit-

Figure 1. **Current EaP multilateral architecture.**



ment and complementarity with bilateral priorities”⁴.

EaP Multilateral Architecture represents a multi-layered process, which includes EaP Summits, EaP Foreign Affairs Ministerial, Sectoral Ministerial, Senior Official Meetings, four thematic Platforms, twelve Panels, and various expert discussions. It also provides for civil society engagement *through the EaP Civil Society Forum*.

Following the consultations in 2019, the European Commission developed a proposal for a revised EaP multilateral architecture in July 2021.⁵ It is further discussed with the EU Member States and partner countries with a view of its validation at the EaP Summit in December 2021.

Underpinning the proposal is the assumption that “the architecture would benefit from: (i) further streamlining; (ii) better operational arrangements (e.g., as regards the preparation and follow-up of meetings); and (iii) more flexibility”⁶. The EC also indicated that some adjustments are *required* to accommodate the new priorities outlined in the Joint Communication of March 18, 2020, and the proposed targets under post-2020 EaP priorities.

In short, the proposed revised EaP multilateral architecture aims to:

- **reinforce** the mandate and role of the **senior officials meeting**;
- **include a system of focal points** and “**chefs de file**” to ensure continuity and increase ownership;
- **widen and strengthen cooperation with key stakeholders** via existing formats and expanding to others (including Think Tank Forum and IFIs);
- **increase the post-2020 efficiency of meetings organization** (including responsible actors, meetings management, and long-term planning).

Replacement of platforms by strategic conferences seems to be one of the significant changes proposed. The thematic titles of the conferences reflect the proposed “two pillars” of the “new agenda”: investment and governance⁷. The strategic conferences aim to provide a forum for public and expert discussions, not to make decisions. The replacement of four platforms by two conferences is likely to result in fewer meetings and less participation.

It can be assumed that the Joint Staff Working Document proposes to increase the number of panels to 15 and group them by five long-term objectives for the post-2020 period (as identified in the Joint Communication *Join (2020) 7 final*). It is unclear, yet, what that grouping means in practical terms. It also remains to be further clarified how and whether the two strategic conferences will be somehow linked to thematic panels or their groupings.

Lastly, the proposal for a new EaP multilateral architecture aims to raise the role of the meetings between senior officials. This may be understood as an attempt to operationalize better the EaP process in light of the decreased interest by some partner countries.

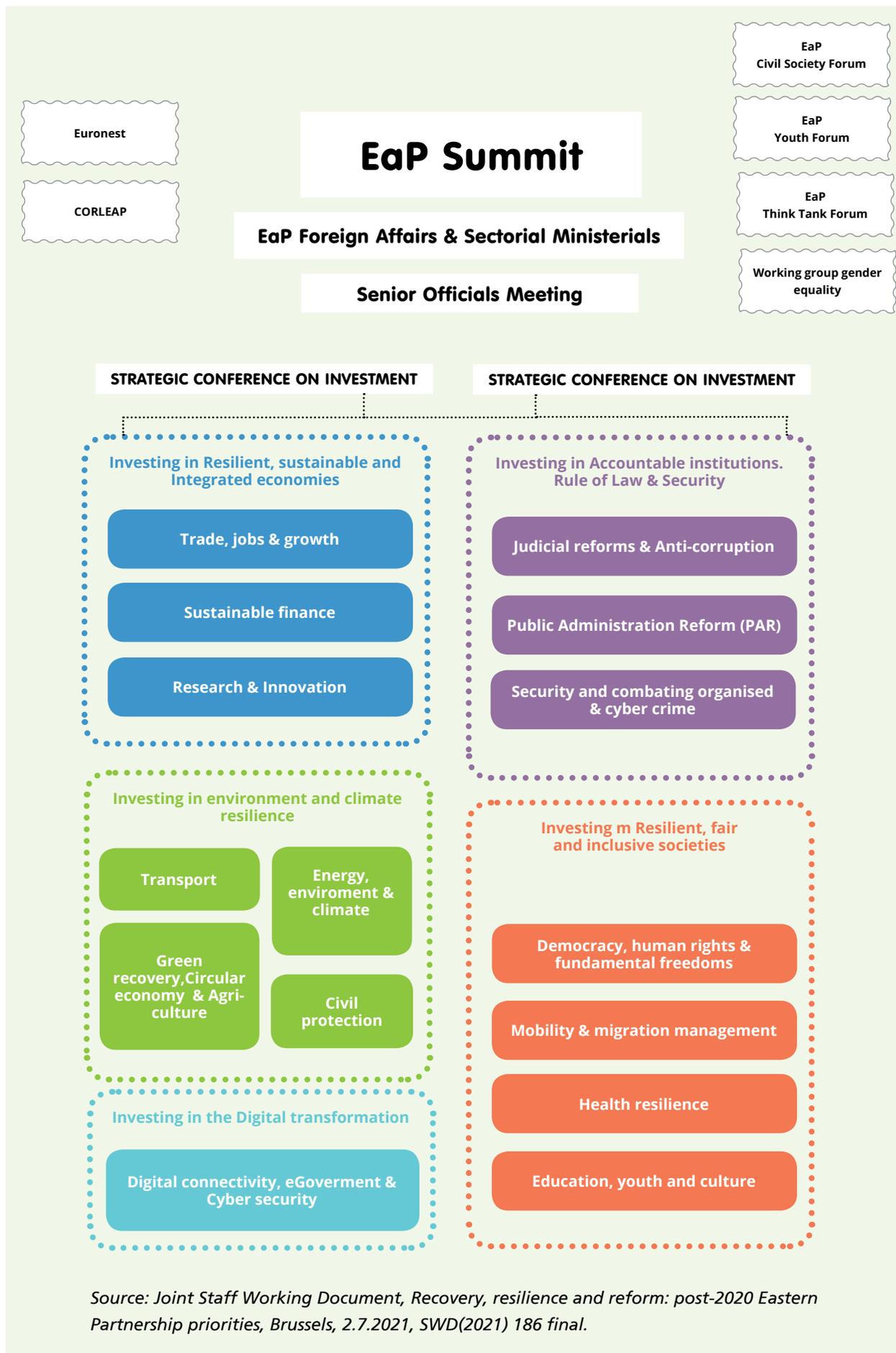
⁴ Joint Declaration of the Eastern Partnership Summit (Brussels, 24 November 2017), Annex I.

⁵ Joint Staff Working Document, Recovery, resilience and reform: post-2020 Eastern Partnership priorities, Brussels, 2.7.2021, SWD(2021) 186 final, Annex II.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Joint Staff Working Document, Recovery, resilience and reform: post-2020 Eastern Partnership priorities, Brussels, 2.7.2021, SWD (2021) 186 final, Annex II.

Figure 2: **Proposed EaP multilateral architecture.**





Chapter 2.
***Bilateral dimension
of post-2020
Eastern Partnership
priorities***

2.1. Proposed Eastern Partnership countries flagship initiatives

Based on the common goals and priorities after 2020, the EaP initiative proposes separate areas of cooperation for the EaP countries, the so-called “flagship initiatives”. **Flagship initiatives** are concrete projects with tangible results that reflect the specific priorities and ambitions of the countries. Such initiatives were identified jointly with the EaP countries (see Annex II for an overview).

According to the Joint Staff Working Document “Recovery, resilience and reform: post-2020 Eastern Partnership priorities”, five flagship initiatives are identified for each country. For Belarus, the proposals are indicative and fall under the condition of effective democratic government and restored relationships with the EU.

The flagship initiatives for all EaP countries can be divided into four groups according to the goals and priorities of the European Green Deal:

- (1) “green” initiatives aimed at implementing a particular European Green Deal priority, including at the city level;
- (2) socio-economic or infrastructure initiatives that have a green component;
- (3) cross-cutting initiatives to promote the implementation of the European Green Deal (e.g., digitalization);
- (4) initiatives without any green component.

An initiative to **directly support small and medium-sized enterprises** is proposed for all six countries of the EaP (for Armenia – 30 thousand enterprises, for Azerbaijan and Belarus – 20 thousand for each country, for Georgia – 80 thousand, Moldova – 50 thousand, Ukraine – 100 thousand). This support primarily aims to facili-

tate economic recovery after the pandemic and the importance of small and medium-sized businesses for the economy of most EaP countries.

The support to SMEs in Armenia is focused on export capacities of small and medium-sized enterprises with the priority to “green” their activities. Support for SMEs within the EaP initiative reflects the priorities of the European Green Deal, as one of the areas of industrial policy is the actual “green” orientation of small and medium-sized businesses. In Georgia, the support for SMEs is provided in the context of assisting their access to EU markets under DCFTA and integration with EU value chains, and much of the support will go to SMEs in the agri-food sector. In the case of Moldova, the green and digital transitions of enterprises are the priorities. In Ukraine, the emphasis is on the need for the sustainable competitiveness of enterprises to be able to enter markets and develop business models that will stimulate the development of climate neutrality, sustainable and circular economy.

Another cross-cutting issue of the European Green Deal, which is reflected in the flagship initiatives for all EaP countries, is **digitalization**. For Armenia, it is e-government, digital skills development, access of ICT companies to financing; for Azerbaijan – digitalization of transport corridors; for Belarus – rebuilding and expanding the IT sector. In Georgia, the emphasis is on the digitalization of rural areas. In Moldova, the issue of digitalization is considered in connection with the modernization of the educational system. In Ukraine, the priority in this area is to modernize the public IT infrastructure.

Several flagship initiatives are related to **infrastructure projects and support for the socio-economic development of individual regions**, such as the north-south corridor and the development of the southern regions in Armenia (among the priority sectors are renewable energy sources); support for the green port in Baku (the first certified eco-port in the region); improving transport infrastructure in Belarus to facilitate trade at the EU-Belarus border; Black Sea connectivity (data and energy) and transport connectivity with the EU via the Black Sea for

Georgia; construction of an inland freight terminal in Chisinau to boost trade between the EU and Moldova; improvement of roads and railways in Moldova; upgrading border crossing points between Ukraine and the EU.

Several green projects related to a **clean environment, energy efficiency, and waste management** are also proposed for the EaP countries. For Belarus – support for a green Belarus (energy efficiency, waste management). For Ukraine – support for energy efficiency and renewable hydrogen production (linked to Ukraine’s aspirations to join the implementation of the European Green Deal). For several other EaP countries, such flagship initiatives are related to **greening the cities**. For example, the issues of energy efficiency and green mobility in Yerevan; green and sustainable cities in Azerbaijan (energy efficiency, sustainable urban mobility, waste management); clean air in Tbilisi (air monitoring equipment, investments in green and sustainable transport); strengthening energy efficiency (refurbishment of district heating systems in residential buildings in Chisinau and Balti).

Several flagship initiatives target the **agriculture sector**. For example, in Azerbaijan it is innovative rural development (access to credit for small and medium-sized farms, food safety standards, sustainable irrigation practices, sustainable tourism in rural areas, green growth investment); in Ukraine – economic transformation of rural areas (assistance to more than 10 thousand small farms for the development of sustainable agricultural production and adaptation to consequences of climate change).

2.2. Outlook on the green agenda in the Eastern Partnership countries

The EaP needs to consider the essential distinctions between the EaP countries. These include their commitments in reduction of the greenhouse gas

emissions, the available special bilateral formats, and the related obligations to implement the EU environmental acquis, membership of countries in the Energy Community, the scope of the targeted funding and technical assistance from the EU, and trade relations with the EU.

Further building of long-term regional policy will be difficult: the interests and ambitions of the partner countries have changed tremendously over the last ten years. On the one hand, Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova signed the Association Agreements with the EU and are engaged in large-scale reforms and committed to implementing 70% of the EU acquis within ten years. Unlike the three associated countries that have repeatedly declared their EU membership aspirations, three other EaP states, including Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Belarus, are aiming at cooperation rather than integration into the EU.⁸ Recently, Belarus announced that the country will not participate in the EaP. Even though the EU has announced its desire to continue to cooperate with Belarusian society, any further cooperation is subject to change in the Belarus government’s position.

2.2.1 EGD in the public discourse of the EaP countries

We looked **for references to EGD in general public debate in EaP countries**. In general, there are significant differences among the EaP countries in the level of EGD-related public discussions.

In **Armenia**, there are signs that the issue has been raised at the level of responsible officials – at least in March 2020, it was discussed at the EU-Armenia Subcommittee on Energy, Transport, Environment, Climate Action, and Civil Protection. In 2018, the previous government approved a program to promote the green economy for 2018-2020. However, the governmental program in 2019 contains no mentioning of the

⁸ European Green Deal: shaping the Eastern Partnership future. Environmental policy of the Eastern Partnership Countries under the EGD. Policy Paper. – Team of authors: Andriy Andrushevych, Nataliya Andrushevych, ZorianaKozak, Zoriana Mishchuk. – November 2020. – 64 p.

green economy, climate change, etc., and environmental issues were not raised during the recent parliamentary election campaign.

In **Azerbaijan**, there has been no public discussion on EGD. Yet, some of the related topics, like hydrogen production, wind energy development, and promotion of other renewables, have been discussed by the government and/or are subject to international support to the country. Karabakh has been announced as a “green energy area.” Other EGD-related topics are not discussed.

In **Belarus**, the current political situation and the crisis in the EU-Belarus relationship, including suspension of Belarus’ participation in the EaP in June 2021, drive away public attention from the green development and climate agenda and cooperation with the EU on the environment and climate policy. There is a general awareness of EGD among a limited group of experts, yet there is no governmental, public, or media discussion. Several independent expert groups have initiated relevant analytical studies. However, these activities mainly involve the expert/NGO community, and the ongoing repressions against the non-governmental sector put even these first steps to a halt. Despite the lack of a national discussion on EGD, there is a growing concern about the mechanisms and potential impacts of CBAM among businesses. Yet, the officials provide no comments or information.

In **Georgia**, government, political parties, and/or CSOs have so little if any discussion on the Green Deal. None of the government plans include the elements relevant to the EGD agenda. We identified one single reference to the EGD by the Deputy Minister of environmental protection and agriculture during a recent hearing of the Parliamentary Committees on European Integration and Environmental Protection and Natural Resources, yet there was no follow-up. The EU local delegation actively works to promote the green economy and EGD within the government and among the public, including through the integration of the EGD priorities into its financial support. However, these efforts generate almost no interest among the target audiences. Currently, the

Georgian internal political crisis overshadows green topics.

In **Moldova**, there is some discussion regarding EGD. For example, the EGD provisions have been included in the Association Agenda for 2021-2027 – as a part of the Chapter on Climate and Environment. EGD and related policy documents have been presented in the meetings of the Inter-ministerial Working Group on the promotion of sustainable development and green economy (co-chaired by the Ministry of Economy and Environment) in 2020-2021. Integration of EGD provisions is planned within the elaboration of the Program on Green Economy Promotion 2022-2027 and included in the Government’s Action Plan for 2021-2022 (ongoing). The EGD and the state of the Moldovan green transition are discussed at the EU High-level Policy Advisors Mission (the EU High-Level Adviser on Green Transition activities started in April 2021). EGD was also a central topic in many official events with a high level of participation: the European Green Week in 2020 and 2021, the 6th National High-Level Round Table “Green Economy. Made in Moldova: from Green Economy to the European Green Deal,” National Environmental NGOs Forum, etc.

Ukraine is the only EaP country showing an active public discourse on all EGD aspects, including specific sectoral priorities. The key changes envisaged by the EU in its documents, implementing and enforcing EGD, are fully or partially reflected in Ukraine’s strategic documents (governmental program, action plans, strategies, etc.) for most of its sectors. Two interdepartmental coordinating bodies (general and CBAM) have been established. Active consultations with the EU are underway, and the Ukrainian government proposes a roadmap.

2.2.2 General green agenda in EaP countries

While EGD itself is not widely discussed in some EaP countries, green issues are part of the public discussion in each country. To map the green agenda in the EaP countries, we looked for **green issues in the public discourse** in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine.

Using available means, our experts have studied public statements and media for references to specific thematic issues: climate change, adaptation to climate change, green energy, energy efficiency, green agriculture, decarbonization, circular economy, greening of the transport sector, zero pollution, biodiversity conservation, green finance, and waste. Based on the results of our desk research and the input provided by country experts, we have mapped the green agenda in every EaP country and summarized it below (from both country and thematic perspectives).

What needs to be highlighted from the outset is that the **green issues comprise a tiny part of the general public discourse** in all EaP countries.

Armenia seems to have the fullest green agenda among its Caucasian neighbors, with many green issues discussed. In **Georgia**, we witnessed a few green discussions, rare statements of the national and local governments mainly related to the development of environmental infrastructure (water, sanitation, waste management), the need to decrease air pollution, and the prospects for the development of agriculture and tourism. Similarly, the green agenda in **Azerbaijan** is limited to renewable energy-related finance and, to some extent, green agriculture. In **Moldova**, the most discussed by public authorities are green and circular economy, climate change and adaptation to climate change, energy efficiency, and green energy. The green agenda rarely becomes part of the public discourse in **Belarus**, even though sustainable development and SDGs are determined as official development priorities. Biodiversity conservation, energy efficiency, green urban development, and, to a lesser extent, air quality, waste management, and climate change just started receiving media attention. **Ukraine** reveals the widest green discourse with all issues covered.

In most countries, the NGO community has a much broader green agenda and contributes to the overall public debate on all of these issues.

Few **cross-border green priorities** were identified in EaP countries. Integrated management of transboundary waters is highly relevant for Belarus, Ukraine, and Moldova. Supporting bio-

diversity protection, including via green networks across the countries, is another possible priority. To finish, cooperation and exchange of experience among cities seem to be a common interest for some EaP countries. We could not identify any cross-border green priorities in the Caucasian countries.

Finally, there are significant differences among EaP countries in the level of **political support for green transformation**. The associated countries seem to form a special group demonstrating a willingness to discuss and take the road towards green transformation. It is connected to several factors. As associated countries, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine have taken broad legal and political commitments on implementing environmental acquis of the European Union and aligning their environmental policies with those of the EU. The Association agreements provide an extensive list of specific legal acts of the EU environmental acquis, which the associated countries must implement, ranging from horizontal environmental assessment and public participation to specific directives and regulations, such as water framework or industrial pollution control directives. These three associated countries are also members of the Energy Community and thus have additional environmental commitments (such as developing the integrated national plans on energy and climate.) The rest of the EaP countries are not members of the Energy Community⁹. These examples allow us to conclude that there is significant political support for green transformation among the associated countries, based on robust national environmental policies and laws reforms.

⁹ European Green Deal: shaping the Eastern Partnership future. Environmental policy of the Eastern Partnership Countries under the EGD. Policy Paper. – Team of authors: Andriy Andrushevych, Nataliya Andrushevych, Zoriana Kozak, Zoriana Mishchuk (2020), page 36, <https://www.rac.org.ua/uploads/content/593/files/webeneuropean-green-dealandeapen.pdf>.

An aerial photograph of a lush green agricultural landscape. A narrow, light-colored path or road runs vertically through the center of the frame, dividing the fields. In the upper right quadrant, a single, dark green tree stands on a small rise. The overall scene is vibrant and represents a rural, agricultural setting.

Chapter 3.

***Ways to mainstream
the European Green
Deal into the EaP
regional agenda
(conclusions and
recommendations)***

We realize that the cooperation of the EU and the EaP countries will primarily take place within a bilateral format, while the scale and success of the EaP cooperation in the framework of the EGD on the regional level will depend on the status of the EaP and support of regional formats by the leading states.

Our key recommendation relates to the benefit of identifying common regional and sub-regional cooperation topics. While EaP countries have different ambitions and priorities in their relationships with the EU and among themselves, there are topics and formats for regional or sub-regional cooperation which the EaP future process can pursue.

There is also a need to have a green look at the proposed new multilateral architecture: as for now, it lacks a green component. There are ways to mainstream European Green Deal priorities and objectives into the EaP multilateral architecture. A truly green multilateral architecture can ensure the coherence of the EaP with EGD objectives.

3.1. Filling the gap: green multilateral Eastern Partnership flagship initiatives

3.1.1. Proposed formats for multilateral cooperation in EaP

The proposed approach of national flagship initiatives should be coupled with a clear intention to promote multilateral cooperation within the EaP. Such cooperation may be supported in several formats: association trio, local partnerships, cross-border cooperation, and special partnerships.

The **Association trio** refers to supporting cooperation and dialogue among the three associated countries (Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine). These countries have very similar reform agendas: aligning their national policies and legislation with the EU *acquis*. They have gained considerable experience in designing and implementing European integration reforms. They could benefit from sharing experiences and best practices and promoting and sharing their success stories with other EaP countries.

There is clear political, expert, and civil society support to strengthen cooperation among these countries. Just recently, on May 17th, 2021, these three countries signed a Memorandum of Understanding (between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of the Republic of Moldova, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine) “On Establishing Enhanced Cooperation on European Integration – the “Association Trio”.¹⁰ The memorandum, in particular, refers to the green economy as a “new thematic area for enhanced cooperation” with the EU.

¹⁰ Full text available at <https://mfa.gov.ua/en/news/association-trio-memorandum-understanding-between-ministry-foreign-affairs-georgia-ministry-foreign-affairs-and-european-integration-republic-moldova-and-ministry-foreign-affairs-ukraine>

The memorandum envisages various formats (“modalities”) of cooperation: consultations, “coordinators” of the trio, coordination meetings at expert, senior and ministerial levels, new dialogue platforms with regional initiatives, etc. These formats can and should have a link to the EaP process, which is acknowledged in the memorandum itself: trilateral consultations are designed to, among others, “discuss specific issues in the framework of their integration with the EU, as well as cooperation within the Eastern Partnership.”

Local partnerships refer to the multilateral cooperation between some EaP countries and some EU member states, building on and expanding various existing cooperation platforms, such as the so-called “Lublin Triangle.”¹¹ Local partnership could cover themes and priorities previously covered by transboundary cooperation programs, involving EU member states neighboring EaP countries (e.g., Hungary, Romania, and Ukraine).

Local partnerships have enormous potential for providing added value to EaP efforts, gaining political support and additional (national) funding for such initiatives.

Cross-border cooperation refers to a special kind of local partnership, which aims to address cross-border issues. These could include the collaboration of border areas of the neighboring countries to facilitate human contacts, trade, and cohesion, joint efforts to address the challenges related to cross-border rivers or protected areas, cultural cooperation, etc.

Special partnerships refer to cooperation initiatives united by a very specific area of interest. These could include Black Sea partnership, Carpathian partnership, or – building upon the “interest” approach – migratory birds partnerships or climate mitigation partnerships (some EaP countries are more vulnerable to climate change mitigation measures than others). Such special partnerships could significantly complement the

existing efforts and initiatives currently implemented to address specific needs in such areas.

3.1.2. Thematic priorities for multilateral initiatives

Greening the EaP agenda after 2020 will be possible not only by setting priorities and advancing them through initiatives at the country level. The promotion of green goals at the regional level and the green transformation of the region in general are necessary to implement the EGD and promote the green transition of the EaP countries. Multilateral flagship initiatives can be the best tool for such promotion. The first step toward identifying the regional flagships is the determination of the possible thematic priorities.

In proposing thematic priorities for regional flagship initiatives, we considered three main factors:

- Policy priorities of the post-2020 EaP on the green-related issues, like reducing air pollution, rural water supply, bringing nature back to cities, green and climate change public awareness, circular economy, environmental governance, sustainable agriculture, green financing, biodiversity preservation, energy efficiency, smart mobility, digitalization, etc.
- Main objectives and targets that are set in various documents (strategies, action plans, legislation) implementing the EGD in the fields of climate, zero pollution, biodiversity, green agriculture, smart mobility, green industrial policy (including circular economy), energy and energy efficiency, green financing, and digitalization as a cross-cutting component.
- Green agenda and priorities of the EaP countries, focusing on those issues that are more effectively addressed not at the country level but the regional or sub-regional one.

We have identified several topics/issues (thematic priorities), which may be relevant for multilateral cooperation within the EaP future

¹¹ “Lublin Triangle” is a cooperation platform among Lithuania, Poland, and Ukraine.

activities and reflect current priorities of the EaP countries (as identified in our research). These thematic priorities are described below and include:

Greening SMEs*

- Sustainable energy and energy efficiency*
- Green Deal for all (European Climate Pact) *
- Greening the trade
- Green agriculture
- Green investment, finance, and just transition*
- Green cities*
- Promoting the development of rural communities
- Good environmental governance
- Nature without borders
- Green jobs opportunities

* These priorities directly contribute to the climate change-related objectives of the EGD.

Greening SMEs is an umbrella thematic priority to be directly linked with SME support. Supporting SMEs is one of the top priorities for EaP's future implementation. As it stands now, the EU proposes €1.5 billion support to 500,000 SMEs in the region. However, only some national flagship initiatives have a green element (Armenia, Moldova, and Ukraine). There is a clear need to synchronize all these initiatives and prioritize a switch to sustainable, resource, and energy-efficient production models. As an umbrella initiative, Greening SMEs would cover all EaP countries and shape the support to SMEs: either by directly prioritizing proposed funding to support green growth or by introducing a horizontal mechanism to ensure that any support provided is in line with the environmental sustainability vision and decarbonization, or both.

Sustainable energy and energy efficiency are a clear priority for most of the EaP countries. As discussed above, the proposed post-2020

priorities for EaP, including national flagship initiatives, indeed reflect this (energy efficiency and renewable energy). However, some key barriers include the lack of access to planning tools, insufficient knowledge, and lack of financing, common for EaP countries, making it challenging to achieve such a priority. These elements may be subject to regional initiatives to avoid duplication and enable experience sharing. Since some EaP countries (Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine) are members of the Energy Community, the association trio format is also relevant for this thematic priority to consider the specific needs they have in this context.

Green Deal for all reflects the need to engage citizens and all other stakeholders in the transition to a climate-neutral economy. This thematic priority covers all EaP countries and may be focused on greening the daily life of citizens to enable behavioral change and adoption of sustainable practices (from waste sorting to products choice). In a general sense, this may be implemented by expanding European Climate Pact implementation activities to the EaP countries. Since some countries have explicitly supported "joining" the EGD, this thematic priority may also be relevant for local partnerships and/or the association trio.

The **Greening the trade** priority reflects, on the one hand, high national importance given by most EaP countries to increasing trade with the EU and, on the other hand, the need to ensure that trade between the EU and EaP countries supports green transition at both sides and does not result in severe adverse environmental consequences in the EaP countries. Azerbaijan, Moldova, and Ukraine have over one-third of the EU's foreign trade (36.7%, 54%, and 40%, respectively¹²). According to the EU requirements, the EU's trade with the countries under the DCFTAs should be subject to ex-post evaluation.

¹² European Green Deal: shaping the Eastern Partnership future. Environmental policy of the Eastern Partnership Countries under the EGD. Policy Paper. – Team of authors: Andriy Andrushevych, Nataliya Andrushevych, Zoriana Kozak, Zoriana Mishchuk (2020). <https://www.rac.org.ua/uploads/content/593/files/webeneuropean-green-dealandeapen.pdf>

On the one hand, **Green agriculture** is a direction that appeals to most EaP countries, which have a high share of agricultural production in their economies and thus are interested in increasing agricultural export to the EU. It is also an opportunity to introduce EGD's "Farm to Fork Strategy" elements to the EaP countries. With the high potential of organic farming, and a proper boost to green agriculture through investments, innovative technologies, and awareness-raising, countries like Ukraine can have considerable economic gains while lessening environmental pollution and avoiding biodiversity loss. A particular focus should be made on supporting good agricultural practices (reducing excess fertilization and use of pesticides, promoting organic farming, improving animal welfare, etc.) among small farmers.

Green investment, finance, and just transition is a thematic priority aimed to help those EaP countries, which have clearly expressed their commitment to the decarbonization of national economies and the transition to green economies. Since this thematic priority directly addresses the need for increased climate and green financing (and may focus on municipal infrastructure, sustainable urban transport, the energy sector, and SMEs as proposed by the EU), it may also be implemented as an umbrella initiative with a cross-cutting effect of other initiatives to ensure that any financing includes "green" conditions and promotes a just transition.

The Green cities thematic priority reflects a need to engage and work with EaP partners at the local level. Such a regional thematic priority would aim to build cooperation and best practices exchange at the city level (some proposed priorities for post-2020 EaP already include cities). Energy efficiency, climate adaptation, and bringing nature back to cities are among the top priorities. It may also involve building a network of climate-neutral cities and using the instruments for cities proposed by the EGD (European Climate Pact, Green City Accord, New European Bauhaus).

Promoting the development of rural communities is a thematic priority important for local communities regarding their development, setting better conditions for their life, including

environmental quality of life, digitalization, and access to the Internet. Creating and preserving sustainable livelihoods would be one of the possible key approaches to support the sustainable development of rural communities. There are many new livelihood opportunities where poor rural communities can compete, from ecotourism schemes to organic agriculture, watershed protection contracts, and carbon farming¹³.

Good environmental governance is a thematic priority strongly supported by the expert community and civil society in EaP countries. Given the differences in the EaP countries, this thematic initiative would be open for joining but may not cover all EaP countries from the start. It would also include further promotion of environmental assessment mechanisms (strategic environmental assessment, environmental impact assessment) in all EaP countries and associated countries in particular (as they have obligations to implement the corresponding EU directives under their Association Agreement). It may also include a component on institutional capacity building and better integration of environmental considerations into all sectors of the economy. It could also be the core idea of a regional initiative specifically aimed at building a more robust environmental civil society in EaP countries and its more effective participation in decision-making processes on environmental matters.

Nature without borders is probably the most "non-political," entirely environment-focused priority identified in all EaP countries. It has enormous potential for cross-border cooperation. Transboundary rivers, protected areas at border areas, and migratory birds are just a few possible practical issues it could cover. A Green EaP without such a component will be deficient.

Green job opportunities are a cross-cutting thematic priority related to the change of the economic model and approaches to climate change issues in the EaP countries. The green and circular economies, development of rene-

¹³ Sustainable livelihoods and ecosystems management, IUCN, https://www.iucn.org/sites/dev/files/import/downloads/gov_livelihoods.pdf.

wable energy sources, greening the activity of the SME, supporting green rural development open the potential for creating decent green job opportunities, which would contribute to ensuring prosperity for people living in the partner countries.

3.1.3 Shaping multilateral EaP flagship initiatives

To shape specific multilateral flagship initiatives, we propose to couple thematic multilateral cooperation priorities, discussed in section 3.1.2, with specific cooperation formats, as mentioned in section 3.1.1. This combination (thematic priority + format) would constitute a multilateral flagship initiative:

Multilateral flagship initiative = thematic priority (-ies) + cooperation format(-s).

The table below offers some viable options for such coupling and discussion.

	Association Trio	Local partnerships	Cross-border cooperation	Special partnerships
Greening the SMEs	○			●
Sustainable energy and energy efficiency	○		○	●
Green Deal for all	○	●		●
Greening the trade	○			●
Green agriculture		○		○
Green investment, finance, and just transition				●
Green cities		○	○	●
Promoting the development of the rural communities		○	○	
Good environmental governance		○		●
Nature without borders	○		●	
Green jobs opportunities	○	●		●

Applies to:

○ selected EaP countries

● all EaP countries

Any final list of multilateral flagship initiatives should result from the prioritization and multilateral dialogue, not a mechanical exercise, and consultations with stakeholders. It should also consider financial resources needed and those currently earmarked within EaP, including the proposed Economic and Investment Plan for the Eastern Partnership.

We would propose the following indicative list of concrete flagship initiatives for further discussion, based on our expert opinion:

- **Greening the Association Trio:** an initiative that supports green transformation and cooperation among the associated countries focused on Greening the SMEs, Sustainable energy and energy efficiency, and Greening the trade thematic priorities;
- **Green Deal for all:** an initiative to engage citizens and all other stakeholders into transition to a climate-neutral economy in all EaP countries implemented via special partnerships, local partnerships, or association trio format;
- **Nature without borders:** an initiative to support cooperation in biodiversity protection implemented via various cooperation formats, including trans-boundary and trio; it may also include preserving sustainable livelihoods as a sub-initiative to support rural communities;
- **Focused partnerships initiative:** an initiative open to countries' thematic cooperation via special partnership focusing on good environmental governance, green jobs, greening the cities, green agriculture, and green investment.

3.2. Greening the Eastern Partnership multilateral architecture

The proposed revision of the EaP multilateral architecture reflects climate change and related EGD priority only at a panel level. There seems to be no intention to explicitly integrate climate change or EGD into other elements of the architecture, such as cross-cutting formats or strategic conferences. In practice, this makes integration of climate change mitigation, adaptation, sustainability, and resilience dependent on political developments preceding specific meetings or conferences.

There are several ways to address current green gaps in the proposed multilateral architecture:

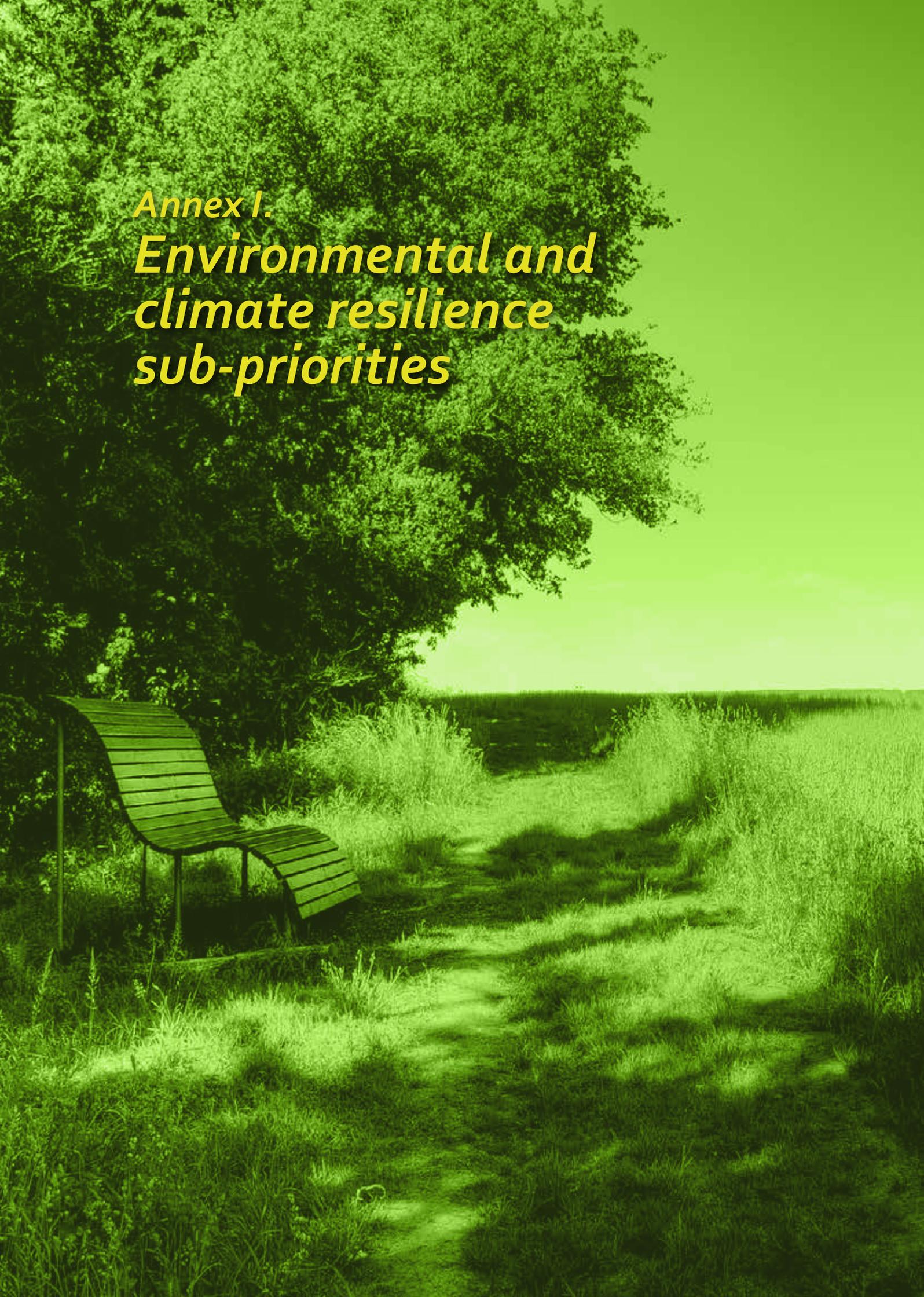
- First, the architecture could benefit from a special green strategic conference (in addition to the two proposed). As it stands now, the two strategic conferences focus only on "investment" and "governance." This potentially leaves them open to green issues; however, the lack of explicit reference to the green agenda gives a wrong political signal to EaP leaders. Another "green" conference would therefore balance the existing two conferences' thematic areas. There is a possible disadvantage of such an approach: this may separate the green agenda from other topics (investment in particular).
- Second, *alternatively to the above*, the two proposed strategic conferences could integrate green priorities from the outset: this can be achieved by renaming them into "green investment" and "green governance." Such renaming has an obvious political benefit by (a) pri-

oritizing the green issues on conferences agendas and (b) giving the proper political signal to EaP countries. This approach, however, has an inherent weakness: renaming “governance” can be interpreted to be too narrow and leave aside other vital issues of a general character (such as the rule of law, accountability, elections, justice, etc.).

- Third, the architecture could include a crosscutting thematic green element at one of the higher levels of the multilateral architecture. If accepted in principle, further considerations are needed to shape such an element that could play the mainstreamer’s role for green issues within the EaP architecture.
- In addition to decision-making elements of the architecture, it should have a mechanism to avoid greenwashing of the EaP process. Such a mechanism could be based on a sustainability checklist or evaluation to ensure that any initiatives supported within the EaP, including flagship initiatives, strengthen resilience and are climate oriented. It could also be part of the third option described above.

The proposal for a new multilateral architecture does not elaborate on possible changes in the formats of civil society or other stakeholders’ engagement, except for briefly suggesting “to reinforce cooperation and exchanges with key stakeholders via existing formats (EURONEST, CORLEAP, EaP CSF, EaP Youth Forum, Media Conference, EaP Business Forum) and expand to others (e.g., the Think Tank Forum, strengthened links with IFIs).” Given the cross-sectoral nature of the EaP green agenda, the importance of substantial involvement of different stakeholders for the success of the green transformation and risk of “greenwashing” reforms, the following could be recommended: EaP institutions such as EURONEST, the EaP Civil Society Forum, and CORLEAP should reflect the prioritization of EGD issues in their institutional settings by establishing particular cross-sectoral formats for an exchange of opinion on the progress in the green reforms. Civil society

(via EaP CSF) should provide an official channel for communicating their recommendations on streamlining green reforms or concerns about the misconduct of the reforms or using EaP funding for purposes contradicting environmental resilience goals to the governmental EaP institutions.

A green-tinted photograph of a park-like setting. In the foreground, a wooden bench with a curved backrest sits on a dirt path. To the left, a large, leafy tree casts a shadow over the bench. The path leads towards a body of water in the distance, with tall grasses and reeds lining the shore. The sky is a pale, clear blue.

Annex I.
*Environmental and
climate resilience
sub-priorities*

Thematic sub-priorities and specific reform issues to be covered by the EaP policy under the environment and climate resilience priority in accordance with the Joint Staff Working Document “Recovery, resilience, and reform: post-2020 Eastern Partnership priorities”

There are five cooperation areas within the EaP priority “Towards Environmental and Climate Resilience”:

- Benefits for people’s health and wellbeing;
- Circular economy, climate neutrality, and green growth;
- Biodiversity and economy’s natural assets base;
- Strengthening energy security and nuclear safety;
- Accelerating the shift to sustainable and smart mobility.

The first one, **Benefits for people’s health and wellbeing**, focuses on the goals with the most immediate impact on people’s lives, like reducing air pollution and ensuring universal access to clean water and sanitation. Other priorities within the block include “bringing nature back to cities”, improving environmental statistics, producing regular national environmental reports, raising public awareness on environmental and climate change, and ensuring the engagement of different private and public actors.

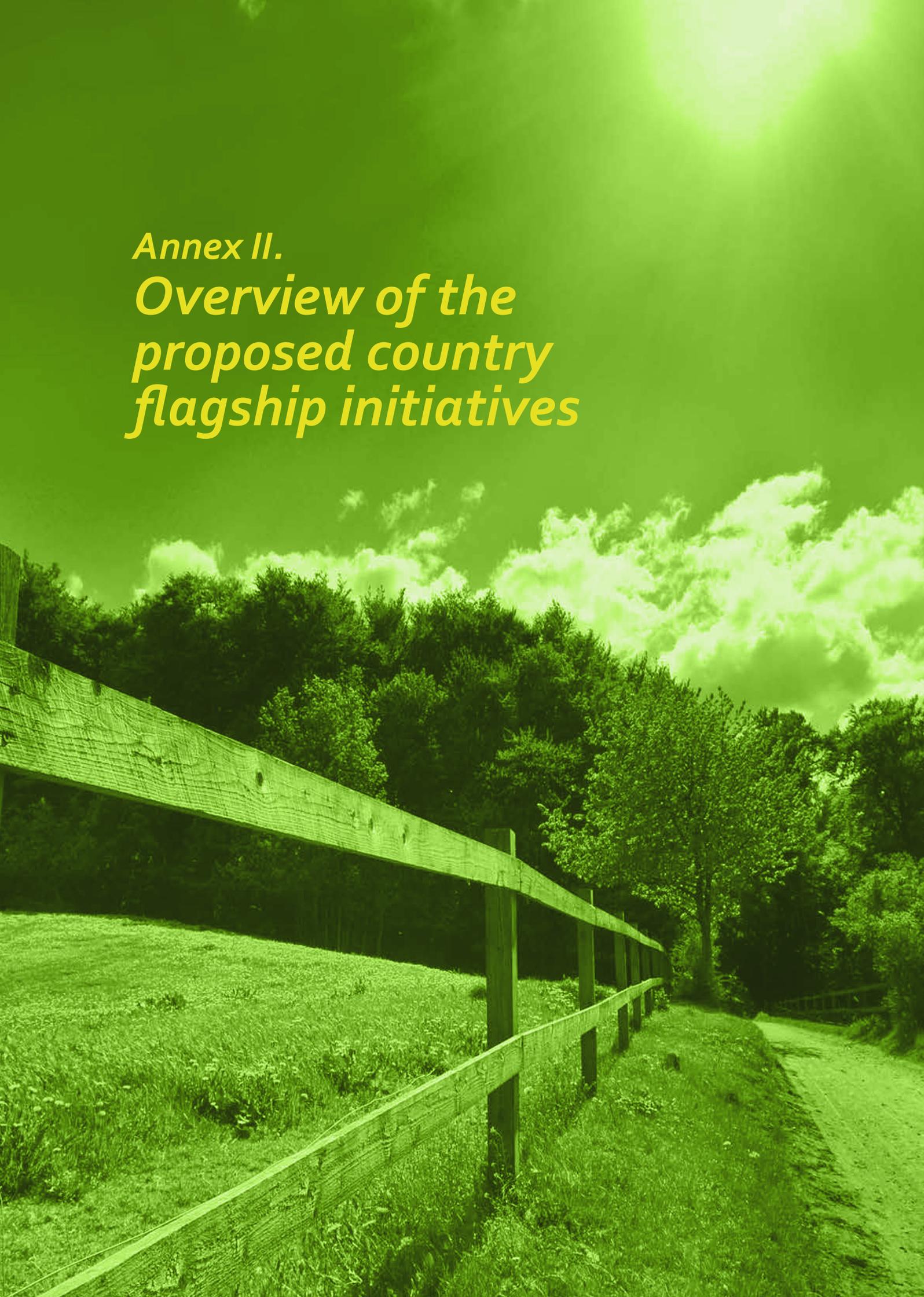
The second and the biggest block of green priorities is **Circular economy, climate neutrality, and green growth**, aiming at the EaP countries’ transition to less wasteful, more resource-efficient, and decarbonized production. Efforts will be made to strengthen climate policies and green investment in line with the European Green Deal, reduce carbon footprint and move towards climate neutrality by 2050. It should be ensured through mainstreaming climate and environmental policies into all economic sectors (energy, transport, construction, and the food chain), including through increased climate and green financing focusing on municipal infrastructure, sustainable urban transport, the energy sector, and SMEs; supporting waste management and increasing recycling; introducing carbon pricing tools and systematic measuring of emissions. The practice of investing in fossil-fuel-based energy will be discouraged; instead, support will be given to a just transition of mining-dependent regions. The EU will also help its Eastern Partners to promote environmentally friendly agricultural practices and ensure the transition towards sustainable food systems in line with the EU Farm to Fork strategy. Improving environmental governance will

remain among the EaP environmental priorities, focusing on the more systematic use of environmental assessments.

The third set of green priorities is called **Biodiversity and the economy’s natural assets base**. It includes preventing water scarcity and improving water management in line with the EU Water Framework Directive, adaptation to climate change and speeding up the implementation of river basin management plans; the restoration of ecosystems and extended protected areas; improving forests management, governance, and trade; as well as enhancing Black Sea marine ecosystems through alignment of national legislation with the EU marine legislation, maritime safety capacity building and notification of the Black Sea as an emissions control area.

In the framework of the **“Strengthening energy security and nuclear safety”** block, the EU will help EaP countries to make a transition to green energy and increase energy efficiency in line with the EU Green Deal. Here the focus will be on improving energy efficiency and introducing energy efficiency standards in buildings; increasing affordability of large-scale renovations of public and residential buildings; capacity building to develop economies of scale, etc. To ensure renewable energy development, partners will work on advancing relevant energy sector reforms and addressing barriers to investments; exploring options for renewable hydrogen generation and use and for environmentally sound investments in hydro, solar, wind, and geothermal sources; as well as reducing methane emissions throughout the whole energy value chain. The EU-EaP cooperation will also aim to improve energy markets’ functioning, strengthen clean and sustainable regional energy infrastructure development capacity, including cross-border connectivity, and improve national energy legislative and regulatory frameworks in line with the Energy Community treaty. In the field of nuclear energy, the EaP countries shall ensure the highest level of nuclear safety and radiation protection in countries operating nuclear installations and full transparency vis-à-vis their citizens and neighboring countries.

The fifth green cooperation area is dedicated to **Accelerating the shift to sustainable and smart mobility**. The main focus will be on improving sustainable urban mobility planning. At least five key cities in each partner country shall introduce sustainable urban mobility plans prioritizing low-emission public and private transport. Further support will be provided through new financing mechanisms to be developed with IFIs to allow cities to accelerate their shift to sustainable mobility.



*Annex II.
Overview of the
proposed country
flagship initiatives*

Armenia	Supporting a sustainable and innovative and competitive economy – direct support for 30000 SMEs 500 million	Boosting connectivity and socio-economic development – the north-south corridor 600 million	Investing in digital transformation, innovation, science, and technology 300 million	Building resilience in the southern regions 80 million	Investing in a green Yerevan – energy efficiency and green buses 120 million
Azerbaijan	Green connectivity – supporting the green port of Baku 10 million	Digital connectivity – supporting the digital transport corridor 10 million	Supporting a sustainable and innovative and competitive economy – direct support for 25000 SMEs 50 million	Innovative rural development 50 million	Smarter and greener cities 20 million
Belarus	Supporting an innovative and competitive economy – direct support for 20 000 SMEs 350 million	Improving transport connectivity and facilitating EU-Belarus trade 200 million	Boosting innovation and the digital transformation 20 million	Supporting a green Belarus – energy efficiency, waste management, and infrastructure 200 million	Investing in a democratic, transparent, and accountable Belarus 100 million

34 Greening the Eastern Partnership: regional dimension of the future perspectives

Georgia	Black Sea connectivity – improving data and energy connections with the EU	Transport connectivity across the Black Sea – improving physical connections with the EU	Sustainable economic recovery – helping 80 000 SMEs to reap the full benefits of the DCFTA	Digital connectivity for citizens – high-speed broadband infrastructure for 1000 rural settlements	Improved air quality – cleaner air for over 1 million people in Tbilisi
	25 million	100 million	600 million	350 million	100 million
Moldova	Supporting a sustainable, innovative, green, and competitive economy – direct support for 50 000 SMEs	Boosting EU-Moldova trade – construction of an inland freight terminal in Chisinau	Increasing energy efficiency – expanding the refurbishment of district heating systems in residential buildings in Chisinau and Balti	Improving connectivity – anchoring Moldova in the TEN-T	Investing in human capital and preventing “brain drain” – modernization of school infrastructure and implementation of the national education strategy
	500 million	30 million	300 million	780 million	25 million
Ukraine	Supporting a sustainable, innovative, green, and competitive economy – direct support for 100 000 SMEs	Economic transition for rural areas – assistance to over 10 000 small farms	Improving connectivity by upgrading border crossing points	Boosting the digital transition – modernising public IT infrastructure	Increasing energy efficiency support for renewable hydrogen
	1.5 billion	100 million	30 million	200 million	100 million (including Ukrainian contribution)

Marked with the green color are “green” initiatives aimed at implementing a particular European Green Deal priority, including at the city level.

Marked with the blue color are socio-economic or infrastructure initiatives that have a green component.

Marked with the red color are the cross-cutting initiatives to promote the implementation of the European Green Deal.

