

Context:

The Eastern Partnership (EaP) is a joint initiative involving the EU, its Member States and six Eastern European Partners: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine. It aims at building a common area of shared democracy, prosperity, stability and increased cooperation. The EaP Brussels Summit in November 2017 endorsed an ambitious workplan centered around "20 Deliverables for 2020" and adopted a revised EaP multilateral architecture to support the implementation of the 2020 EaP Agenda.

The EaP Business Forum is a traditional event with the aim of evaluating the achievements of the EaP from the perspective of business communities and to further develop EaP cooperation, mainly focusing on the promotion of bilateral and multilateral economic connections between the EU and the six Eastern partner countries of the EU.

EaP Business Forum provides the framework for political and business debates between EU27/+UK and EaP countries. The fifth (previous) edition of the EaP Business Forum took place in Wien, December 2018, during the Austrian Presidency of the EU Council.

Objectives of the 6th EaP Business Forum

The Business Forum will address contemporary challenges facing the business world - with a special focus on SMEs and **marking the 10th anniversary of the EaP by:**

- **Stimulating trade and economic cooperation** among partner countries and between them and the EU, at governmental and business level.
- **Evaluating the results** achieved so far in the implementation of the *20 deliverables for 2020* with a focus on trade perspective for EU-EaP Partners, with a special evaluation of 5 years of DCFTAs.
- **Contributing to the objective related to the improvement of the investment and business environment** and unlocking SMEs growth potential in EaP region.

Participants: Ministers of the six Eastern European partners, entrepreneurs from the EU 27/+UK and EaP region, other countries interested in the region, relevant stakeholders from international financial institutions

Structure:

One-day event, divided in two parts:

- A. Discussion session consisting in: one opening session, 2 consecutive panel discussions and one concluding intervention, with coffee and lunch breaks.
- B. B2B and B2G meetings, according to individual arrangements.

The opening and concluding interventions will focus primarily on the political/governmental component, while the panels will have an economic/business profile.

The two panel discussions will focus on the following topics:

1. IT - Industry 4.0-converging to a digital future:

The panel will focus on the evolution of the IT sector and its influence in changing trade, success stories from the EaP region, as well as developments in the IT sector, especially in the area of SMEs. Furthermore, the panel will try to identify current bottlenecks and difficulties. It will address possible ways forward through innovations and e-solutions in the logistics sector and its modernization as well as ways to ease the access to finance and incent young entrepreneurs

2. E-commerce – value beyond the borders:

The panel will focus on success stories from the EaP region, and on developing the sector, as well as barriers to digital trade, in the margins of the current EU Digital Single Market and the ongoing work on E-commerce in the WTO. Its objective will be to identify current challenges, opportunities and development possibilities for SME's in EaP countries to reach international markets. Furthermore, the panel will try to identify new ways for the EaP countries to extend international markets and the dynamics of this activity, especially with the help of EU institutions and programs (e.g. EU4Digital).

Working language: English with simultaneous translation in Romanian and Russian

Agenda

The 6th Eastern Partnership Business Forum

25 June 2019, Bucharest, Romania

8:30 – 09:30 *Registration and welcome coffee*

9:30 – 10:30 **Opening session**

Welcome remarks

- Vasilica-Viorica DĂNCILĂ, Prime minister of Romania;
- Ștefan-Radu OPREA, Romanian Minister for Entrepreneurship and Business Environment;
- Teodor MELEȘCANU, Romanian Foreign Minister (TBC)

Opening speech

COM (Commissioner Hahn/Malmstrom) (TBD)

Five years of DCFTA

Lucian Cernat, Chief Trade Economist (DG Trade)

10:30 – 10:45 *Coffee break*

10:45 – 12:15 **IT - Industry 4.0-converging to a digital future:**

- Evolution of Industry 4.0. How is IT shaping trade?
- Industry 4.0-The Factory of the Future: Success stories from EaP countries
- Limitations of the current technologies in use today; current bottlenecks and difficulties
- Improvement of start-up initiatives and incentives for young entrepreneur initiatives

Moderator: (TBD)

Panelists: Business (Armenia, Belarus, Republic of Moldova) / Government officials / COM representatives

12:15 – 12:30 *Coffee break*

12:30 – 14:00 **E-commerce – value beyond the borders:**

- Tearing Down the Borders: Success stories in EaP countries
- Challenges, and development opportunities for SME's in EaP countries
- Improvement and incentives for start-up initiatives
- Facilitation of cross-border trade and SME export capabilities

Moderator: eMAG

Panelists: Business (Azerbaijan, Georgia, Ukraine) and Government representatives; IFIs, COM representatives

14:00-14:15 - **Concluding remarks - CCIR**

14:15 – 15:30 Lunch

15:30 – 18:00 B2B / B2G sessions (CCIR)