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## **Impact of Culture Projects on Social Development in Countries in Transition – case of the Eastern Partnership**

Culture and multicultural dialog play a huge role by building understanding between nations. The strategic role of culture for social, human and economic development is especially important for countries in transition. Therefore the Eastern Partnership recognises the value of cultural cooperation and inter-cultural dialogue as an integral part of all external policies. The Eastern Partnership (EaP) is an EU foreign policy launched in 2009 and addressed to six countries in Eastern Europe: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. The support for democratic changes is to strengthen the capacity of the cultural sector in the re-

gion and enhance the role of culture as a force for reform, promotion of tolerance. Involvement in cooperation civil society, local and regional institutions, and non-governmental organization (NGOs) is an additional value here. Therefore the Eastern Partnership is being built as a cultural project, which makes the EaP reliable and capable of dynamic development. The aim of the paper is to present the role and significance of cultural projects for social development of the states in transition. Experience of the Central European states such as Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary shows that all of them experienced culture sector crisis during the transition period at the turn of the 1980s and 1990s. Support for cultural initiatives, for broadly understood cultural sector

seems to be equally important as well as support for political and economic changes. The following assumptions will be analysed: the Eastern Partnership Culture Programme, its possibilities for development of a civil society in six countries. Strengthening of bilateral cooperation between the partners is the main objective of EaP , therefore cooperation at the bilateral level will be analyzed on the example of Poland, which has relied on its own experiences of economic, political and social transformation. Polish initiatives of cultural and educational cooperation with the EaP states will be also shown (for example: Eastern Partnership Cultural Congress, grant Ministry of foreign Affairs for NGOs from East Europe). Moreover, difficulties, which mainly result from the historic events, stereotypes and prejudice, will also be indicated.