

Joint Statement by the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine on Support for the Development of Rural and Agricultural Advisory Systems

Riga, 16 April 2015

Referring to the International conference “Rural and Agricultural Advisory Systems (RAAS): Best Practices and Experience in the Eastern Partnership”, held on April 15-16, 2015 and organized within the framework of the Latvian Presidency of the Council of the European Union and the Eastern Partnership Panel on Agriculture and Rural Development, we, the Ministers responsible for agriculture and rural development, jointly state that:

We reaffirm the importance of the Eastern Partnership initiative and its contribution to cooperation in the field of agriculture and rural development, in particular by sharing best practices and experience in development and implementation of inclusive, sustainable policies and other solutions for the sector.

We emphasize the priority of development of rural and agricultural advisory systems as they provide professional expertise and support, as well as life-long learning opportunities that are all crucial for the economic growth. To this objective, we recognise the importance of a conducive and transparent regulatory environment for successful and efficient functioning of the advisory services. We recognise the need to further strengthen institutional capacity of rural and agricultural advisory systems.

We look forward to promoting exchanges between the public authorities in charge of RAAS and to facilitating exchanges and networking between the advisory services, be it public or private, among our countries and the EU Member States to benefit from one another best practices and potential synergies.

Moreover, we consider as important the following aspects of the Eastern Partnership cooperation in the field of agriculture:

- Further deepening relations and cooperation in the field of agriculture and rural development between the European Union and its Member States and our countries,
- the European Union’s assistance to support our reform agendas in the field of agriculture and rural development,
- Strengthening the business dimension of the Eastern Partnership by working together for development of agricultural entrepreneurship.

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