

## **Greening the Eastern Partnership**

The European integration process is much wider than simply joining up EU structures. First, it is the sharing of European values by those countries in the continent which have yet to become EU members.

The EU's Eastern Partnership (EaP) programme, which was launched in 2009, can be seen in the long term as a framework for the accession preparation process for the participating countries.

However, in the short term, it must serve as an important political tool to ensure the implementation of high European standards and norms – environmental in particular – despite the reality of participants' chances of being granted EU membership.

The European Union should use its tools, including the EaP, to support its core values of human rights, democracy, cooperation and sustainability in participating countries and strengthen all actors, who pursue these values. The current situation in many of the EaP countries underlines such a need for active participation of the EU.

Despite many issues in the area of peace, democracy and human rights, the EaP should not forget about its goals in the environmental cooperation. One of the obstacles here is the fact that environment is not stated as being a special area of joint activity of the EU and the participating states.

European Greens have welcomed the intention of the President of the European Commission to include the climate and sustainability issues in the EaP activity framework, which is due to be discussed on the EU summit, scheduled for March 2021, and demand that environmental protection is mentioned as a special area within the partnership.

European Greens also insist on the integration of environmental and climate elements into the existing components of the EaP (economy, energy, transport, etc.).

European Greens support the mainstreaming of environmental issues, as suggested in the Council Conclusions on Eastern Partnership policy beyond 2020 of May 2020, and call on the Commission to facilitate EaP countries' participation in the European Green Deal.

European Greens call on the European Commission to reflect European Green Deal tasks in the renewed EaP cooperation plans.