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RECOMMENDATIONS

for improving the EU-Belarus relations, adopted at the Workshop (WS) for civil society representatives and civil servants of the Republic of Belarus Gomel, Belarus, 14-15 May 2010

The participants of the WS have, after analysing different aspects of the EU – Belarus cooperation, adopted the following recommendations on how to improve the EU-Belarus cooperation in the context of the ENP and Eastern Partnership:

1. The EU and the Belarus government should make efforts without delay to overcome the current obstacles for elaborating political solutions and adequate legal basis for further development of EU-Belarus relations, which are in the benefit of people concerned and of Europe as a whole. The EU and the government of Belarus should confirm its readiness for improving the cooperation not only by words but also by deeds.
2. The EU should liberalize the trade regime and apply the generalized system of preferences with the Republic of Belarus in the same way as it has been doing in regulating the economic relations with some others EP's partner countries.
3. It will be commendable to increase, in the frame of ENP and EP, the role of regions in the EU-Belarus cooperation and to provide them with opportunities to take part in EU-Belarus macro projects, also by implementing some mutually beneficial projects related to regional economy.
4. In order to provide adequate conditions for the declared policy of cooperation with Belarus has the EU to undertake further steps towards the liberalization of visa regime by harmonizing the visa policy, reducing the cost of visas, simplifying the list of required documents and by increasing and decentralizing the consular facilities in

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Belarus. The participants supported as well the liberalization of the registration regime for foreigners, among other by enabling them to register at the airport on their arrival.

5. The government of Belarus should provide civil society organizations and institutions with the opportunity to develop EU-Belarus projects and especially those related to contacts between people, human rights and development of democracy. In this context should the EU support contacts of civil society's organizations with local communities, in order to develop local programs of self-organization and to encourage the work of consultative groups of local authorities as well.

6. The participants supported the proposal to explore possibilities to establish in Gomel "The European Centre for Radiation and Environmental Safety", as a common EU-Belarus project. It could be an important meeting point for implementing positive European experiences in this field and for giving to EU countries the opportunity to use the unique technologies in the area of radiation and environmental safety, which has been developed after the Chernobyl tragedy.

The participants of the WS authorized Prof. Dr. Silvo Devetak, the BRIDGE Coordinator and the "Belarusian Trade and Economics University of Consumer Cooperatives" to distribute these recommendations to the EU structure and to the competent bodies of the government of Belarus as well.

Gomel, Belarus, 15 May 2010