



ORIGINAL PAPER

The New European Neighbourhood Policy

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Abstract:

The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) underpins a new approach to the relations between the European Union and its neighbouring countries, which goes beyond the traditional cooperation approach. This policy provides a framework to strengthen the neighbourhood relations and to enhance cooperation with the neighbouring countries of the enlarged EU in order to create an area of prosperity and good neighbourliness, a “circle of friends” at the EU borders. The European Neighbourhood Policy Objectives: the ENP main objective is to share the benefits the EU enlargement of 2004 with its neighbouring countries. Furthermore, another central objective, which was established by the European Security Strategy of 2003, aims at increasing security in the neighbourhood of the enlarged Union.

The main axes of the new approach are: adaptation of the EU support to its partners in compliance with the progress recorded on political reforms and consolidation of democracy, further support for sustainable economic and social development as well as the establishment of regional partnerships, with each of its neighbours, according to a shared policy, based on mutual accountability. The main source of funding is the new European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI), which will provide most of the budgetary support to the partner countries, especially through bilateral, regional and cross-border cooperation programs.

Most partner countries have saluted this approach, and many of them have expressed an ever increasing commitment to further develop their political and economic reform and to cooperate even more intensely with the EU.

Keywords: *the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), the new European Neighbourhood Policy (NPVE).*

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The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) was set up in 2004 in order to prevent the emergence of potential new demarcation lines between the enlarged EU and its neighbours, thus aiming to strengthen the prosperity, stability and security of all partners involved. This policy framework is based on the values of democracy, rule of law and respect for human rights and it applies to the nearest 16 neighbours of the EU: Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Morocco Palestine, Syria, Tunisia and Ukraine. Essentially, the ENP underlies a bilateral policy between the EU and each partner country, enhanced by regional cooperation initiatives, i.e. the Eastern Partnership and the Union for the Mediterranean.

Legal background: Article 8 of the Treaty on European Union; Part **V of** the Treaty on European Union (**Union's External Action**) and Articles 206-207 (trade) as well as Articles 216-219 (international agreements) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU).

Through the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), the EU facilitates its neighbours a privileged relationship, based on a mutual cause in view of enhancing common values (democracy and human rights, rule of law, a good governance, market economy principles and sustainable development). The ENP endorses policy coordination and further economic integration, increased mobility and socio-professional networking. The degree of accomplishment of this relationship depends on the extent to which these values are shared. The ENP is distinguished from the process of enlargement, but does not affect the manner in which the relations between the neighbouring countries and the Union may evolve in the future. In 2010-2011, the EU has reviewed the ENP and reinforced the emphasis laid on the promoting of sustainable and deep democracy and the inclusive economic development. Deep and sustainable democracy includes above all freedom and fairness of choices, joint efforts to combat corruption, judicial independence, democratic control over the armed forces and freedom of expression, cooperation and association. In the same climate, the EU has also emphasized the role that the civil society plays in this process and put forward its “more for more” principle, according to which the Union shall develop closer partnerships with those neighbouring countries that achieve greater progress towards democratic reform. In two separate resolutions adopted on 7 April 2012, the EU Parliament welcomed this review and provided guidance for the European External Action Service and the Commission on the implementation of the ENP.

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In 2011 the EU completed the all-encompassing review of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), in response to the manifold challenges such as: the need to support the democratization process carried out in all countries of the EU southern neighbourhood, the European-oriented goals of some East-European partners, as well as the need to strengthen the Eastern Partnership and the new opportunities facilitated by the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty. The European Neighbourhood Policy package, which encompasses the two documents mentioned above, assesses the first year of implementation of the new approach. Likewise, it recommends a roadmap to revive the implementation of the Eastern Partnership, providing guidelines for the work undertaken in view of the next summit in autumn 2013. The new ENP builds on the achievements of the EU neighbourhood policy since its launch in 2004 and provides a rejoinder to the requirements of the partner countries to benefit from more freedom and a better life.

This novel policy offers new forms of support for various socio-economic sectors and introduces further incentives to continue the reforms. The climax of a review and of extensive discussions with governments and civil society organizations within the EU and the 16 ENP partner countries, found in the neighbourhood of Southern and Eastern Europe, is the proposal submitted in May 2011 by the European Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.

In Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions informed that: “the Lisbon Treaty has allowed the EU to strengthen the delivery of its foreign policy: co-operation with neighbouring countries can now be broadened to cover the full range of issues in an integrated and more effective manner. This was a key driver for initiating a review, in consultation with partner countries and other stakeholders, of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) in summer 2010. Recent events throughout the Southern Mediterranean have made the case for this review even more compelling. The EU needs to rise to the historical challenges in our neighbourhood”. (European Commission, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign affairs and Security policy, 2011)

The proposal, also based on Eastern Partnership, launched in 2009, established the main priorities and directions of the renewed ENP strategy which aimed to strengthen individual and regional relationships between the EU and its neighbouring countries by means of a “more funds for more reforms”- oriented approach, which consists in providing additional funding on condition of mutual accountability strengthening. In addition to the EUR 5.7 billion which have been already allocated for the period 2011-2013, supplementary funding in the amount of 1.24 billion euros were transferred from other current resources and made available to support the ENP. Moreover, the Lisbon Treaty has provided the EU further sustenance in the implementation of its foreign policy.

Admittedly, this proposal increases further development of the “Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity with the Southern Mediterranean”, adopted in March 2011, as a prompter action to the riots and the democratic aspirations that emerged in North Africa. The European Council also agreed the proposal of the High Representative to increase the loans granted by the European Investment Bank (EIB) to the Southern Mediterranean countries with 1 billion euros for the same period. The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) supported the request for the extension of banking operations in the Near East and North Africa, starting with Egypt. It is expected that annual loan volumes will have reached, by 2013, approximately 2.5 billion euros per year.

The results of the new European Neighbourhood Policy

In May 2011 Ștefan Füle, European Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy says that: “With so much of our Neighbourhood in a process of democratic change, this review is more important than ever. It is vital that we in the EU make a comprehensive offer to our neighbours and build lasting partnerships in our neighbourhood to reinforce democracy and inclusive economic and social development”. (European Commission, 2011)

The objectives of the new European Neighbourhood Policy as they were formulated in the 2011 Communication entitled “*A new response to a changing Neighbourhood*” are:

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- priority support for those partners who are committed to building sustainable and genuine democracy, ensuring respect for human rights;
- supporting the development of a joint economy so as the EU neighbours to be able to trade, invest and develop in a sustainable framework while reducing social and regional inequities, generating employments and improving the living standards of their residents;
- strengthening the regional dimensions of the European Neighbourhood Policy, especially the Eastern Partnership and the Union for the Mediterranean, developing coherent regional initiatives in areas such as trade, energy, transport, migration or mobility to complement and enhance bilateral cooperation with neighbouring partners;
- providing of appropriate mechanisms and tools to achieve these goals.

According Lăpădat L. C. & Lăpădat M. M. “utilising the instrument of spirituality to mitigate political, descent represents a personal contribution and communicational intervention from the very eloquent and powerful message generator”. (Lăpădat & Lăpădat, 2022: 152).

The main axes of the new approach are: adaptation of the EU support to its partners in compliance with the progress recorded on political reforms and consolidation of democracy, further support for sustainable economic and social development as well as the establishment of regional partnerships, with each of its neighbours, according to a shared policy, based on mutual accountability. The main source of funding is the new European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI), which will provide most of the budgetary support to the partner countries, especially through bilateral, regional and cross-border cooperation programs.

Most partner countries have saluted this approach, and many of them have expressed an ever increasing commitment to further develop their political and economic reform and to cooperate even more intensely with the EU.

In Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions informed that : “The EU does not seek to impose a model or a ready-made recipe for political reform, but it will insist that each partner country’s reform process reflect a clear commitment to universal values that form the basis of our renewed approach. The initiative lies with the partner and EU support will be tailored accordingly” (European Commission, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign affairs and Security policy, 2011).

One year after the launch of the Communication, the EU assess the results of its new policy, namely:

- EU has redirected its assistance programs and provided an additional EUR 1 billion for the period 2011-2013, which will be allocated via two innovative programmes, i.e. the “SPRING” Programme (Support to Partnership, Reform and Inclusive Growth) designed for the countries of the Southern Neighbourhood and the “EaPIC” Programme (The Eastern Partnership Integration and Cooperation) for eastern EU neighbours. This action has led to the increase of the borrowing ceilings of the European Investment Bank with 1.15 billion euros and secured the extension of the mandate of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development on the EU’s southern neighbours;

- having applied the principle of “more progress, more support”, the EU supported those partner countries who have undertaken political reforms. The EU financial assistance granted to Tunisia doubled, expanding from 80 million to 160

million in 2011. On the other hand, the EU has countered swiftly in view of suspending any cooperation relations with those countries responsible for serious human rights violations and imposed a wide range of sanctions against such regimes, while redirecting its entire support towards the civil society and the affected populations;

- in parallel with the resumption of the official 5 + 2 negotiations in view of resolving the Transnistrian conflict in the Republic of Moldova, the cooperation with the Government of the Republic of Moldova intensified, thus extensive EU measures to build up confidence were released while the EU sanctions imposed to Transnistria have been progressively revised; 30 years after the start of the Transnistrian war, explosions are heard again near the Dniester.

In an article signed by Simion Ciocină, Viorel Cibotaru says: “March 2 - 1992, 2022 - is a conventional number. For me, the war started as a conflict, because the phenomenon of separatism was born gradually. From the beginning, it took shape as a movement to reject the process of social emancipation of the citizens of the Republic of Moldova and the process of national rebirth that began in 1988. At that time, on the left side of the Dniester there were over 100 enterprises of union importance, with a number impressive of specialists from different corners of the Soviet Union. This blanket was conservative enough, including towards the process of national rebirth” (Ciocină, 2022)

Concurrently, substantial progress has been registered on the political association with partner countries. Thus, further negotiations were launched concerning an Association Agreement (AA) with Moldova, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan. Also, considerable progress with regard to the economic integration has been registered (the so-called complex and comprehensive Free Trade areas are also part of the Association Agreements). In this climate, negotiations with Moldova and Georgia opened and in the foreseeable future negotiations with the Armenia will open as well. At the turn of the year, similar negotiations may be opened with Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia.

The European Union has also contributed to the makeup of sustainable democracies having organised election observation missions in Tunisia and Algeria, it also delegated field experts for the elections in Morocco, provided technical support to Egypt and accepted the Libyan invitation to observe its future election and agreed to delegate an election assessment team for all Libyan main cities.

Despite the concluding negotiations on an association agreement with Ukraine (including a complex and comprehensive Free Trade area), followed by the initialling of the agreement in March, current concerns that still persist in the internal political situation of Ukraine could prevent the rapid signing and ratification of this agreement, unless there are solutions to this problems. Significant progress has been also registered with regard to the mobility area.

Thus, prospective measures towards visa liberalization with the Eastern partners, i.e. with Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia have been taken. A mobility partnership was recently established with Armenia and negotiations on a Mobility Partnership with Azerbaijan could be launched in the foreseeable future. Also, Belarus was made a special offer in this respect. Regarding the southern neighbouring countries, further dialogues on migration, mobility and security have been opened with Morocco and Tunisia, thus smoothing the way towards mobility partnerships. The Communication proposes a dialogue with Jordan. Following the request formulated by the European Council in March 2012, the Commission Staff Working Paper on “Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity” underpins a roadmap to specify the

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objectives, the instruments and the actions necessary for the implementation of the EU policies in the southern Mediterranean partner countries. Also, the Project of the European Foundation for Democracy was initiated, focusing, in the first instance, on the neighbouring countries and on the paramount goal line to grow considerably scholarship funding in education as well as on the European programmes and initiatives with view to the civil society and especially to the involvement of women in politics and society.

The key feature of the new European Neighbourhood Policy is highlighted by the importance allotted to mutual accountability. In this context, surveillance reports and recommendations for each partner country have been drawing on. These recommendations aim to encourage the partner countries to defend the freedom of expression, regular associations and meetings and to promote women's rights and equality between women and men. They also recall the establishment of independent and effective judicial system and highlight the sustained efforts to combat corruption and implement reforms in the field of security.

The Eastern Partnership

As agreed on the event of the Eastern Partnership Summit, held in Warsaw in 2011, a Joint Communication recommends a roadmap until the summit of the Eastern Partnership, which will take place in autumn 2013. The Communication describes for the first time the full range of bilateral and multilateral activities of the Eastern Partnership. In the same spirit, the roadmap reaffirms the shared commitment of the EU and of the partner countries in Eastern Europe with reference to democratic reforms and economic makeover, setting out an ambitious agenda with a view to the following-year-summit, which will be held in Vilnius. This initiative will secure the achievement of the objectives established within the Eastern Partnership, i.e. political association acceleration and strengthening of the economic integration of the EU partner countries, increased mobility of citizens within a safe and well-managed framework, as well as the promoting of cooperation in various sectors.

The High Representative, Catherine Ashton, declared“...the Roadmap will help partner countries accelerate their transition towards democracy and market-oriented economy by providing a monitoring tool in support of their reform process. The more partner countries achieve tangible progress in their reform efforts, the more the EU will be prepared to support them. It is also vital that partners make renewed efforts to resolve the conflicts which have blighted the region for far too long. The EU stands ready to strengthen its support to those who are ready to take courageous decisions and turn the page”. (European Commission, 2012)

This policy tool has been developed in consultation with the European Member States, the Eastern European partners and the civil society. The Roadmap illustrates, transparently, for all partners, the Eastern Partnership objectives, the policy actions that the partners should adopt and the EU sustenance to achieve these objectives as well as the results that may be attained until the following summit on Eastern Partnership that will be held in autumn 2013. The Communication examines the current situation of certain partners, the values and principles that the Eastern Partnership underpins: freedom, democracy, human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law. Furthermore, bilateral partnership progresses within the Partnership are examined. With reference to the political association and the economic integration, the Association Agreement between the EU and Ukraine has been completed with a view to establishing a complex and comprehensive Free Trade area. Similar advanced negotiations are

ongoing with the Republic of Moldova, Georgia, and Armenia, and with Azerbaijan in an early stage. With regard to the mobility of citizens, Moldova and Ukraine have already established action plans concerning visa liberalization, while a similar dialogue has been initiated with Georgia. Similarly, ongoing negotiations are in progress with Armenia and Azerbaijan on agreements to facilitate the issuing of visas and readmission, while a similar offer is put forward by the EU to Belarus. In the same climate, the agreements with Moldova and Ukraine on visa facilitation have been amended, a fact which will facilitate the issuing of visas for the residents of these two countries. As to the multilateral approach of the Eastern Partnership, four thematic platforms have been established, i.e.: the launching of further cooperation in novel areas such as public administration reform, transportation, migration and asylum. Thus, new programs of integration and cooperation within the Eastern Partnership have been recently adopted, thus providing additional financial support amounting to 130 million euros for the period 2012-2013 for those countries that have made significant progress on issues of democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

Within the Eastern Partnership, particular attention was attached to the involvement of all the elements of the society. In order to facilitate the involvement of civil society organizations in the implementation of the partnership, the Civil Society Forum was established in 2009, its role was acknowledged by the EU Member States and the Eastern European countries following the decision to invite its representatives to permanently participate to the four Eastern Partnership multilateral platforms. The Roadmap is designed as a practical toolkit for the monitoring and the assessing of the Eastern Partnership progress, encompassing a single set of documents for the EU Member States as well as for the Eastern European countries, which frame the objectives agreed and the policy measures undertaken by each partner country as well as the EU support for the implementation of these measures and deliverables. The Road map also outlines the measures designed to ensure the concrete progress by autumn 2013. The progress on the implementation of the Eastern Partnership objectives will be assessed by the EU and the partner countries on the occasion of annual meetings of the foreign affairs ministers of the Eastern Partnership member countries.

In Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions informed that: “The partnership will develop with each neighbour on the basis of its needs, capacities and reform objectives. Some partners may want to move further in their integration effort, which will entail a greater degree of alignment with EU policies and rules leading progressively to economic integration in the EU Internal Market”. (European Union, 2015)

The civil society grew thus aware that there is a need of complete engagement and commitment in supporting democracy, a sustainable socio-economic development, a good governance and the rule of law, for as it is expected to facilitate the transition process of the partner countries while stimulating reforms and promoting the values of the Eastern Partnership.

However, we must be aware that countries must preserve their own identity, their own values and cultures beyond any social, economic or political advantage that any kind of agreement could facilitate.

As Burtea-Cioroianu also states: “National identity plays an important role in defining us in relation to others from other cultures and nationalities, because through it we express our dignity, our essence, the fact that we belong to a territory and a people.

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Economic, political, social and even psychological aspects can have major implications in the discourse on an individual's national identity” (Burtea-Cioroianu, 2022:137)

Conclusions

There are several types of agreements between the states of the world - they can be peace agreements signed by mutual consent, they can also be territorial agreements by establishing fixed borders between states. There may also be trade agreements, customs, financial, legal, investment agreements, health agreements, education agreements.

In general there can be no states without any signed agreement with neighbors or other states on the same continent.

Free movement and human rights to travel freely anywhere in the world have generated the need for various types of agreements between states.

Authors' Contributions:

The authors contributed equally to this work.

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