

EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY: HISTORY, STRUCTURE, AND IMPLEMENTED POLICY MEASURES

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ABSTRACT

The objective is to provide an overview of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). Focus will be on the history of the ENP and its goals, the institutional structure of the ENP, and the policy measures that have been carried out through the ENP. The evolution of the ENP is traced from its origins in a 2003 European Commission communication to the broad and multifaceted policy that it is nowadays. Then the institutional dimension of the ENP, with both its thematic and spatial elements on a sub-national, national, regional and interregional level will be explored. Finally, we present the specific policy measures that have been implemented on an interregional, regional, and national level.

Key words: European Neighbourhood Policy, historical overview, policy implementation

INTRODUCTION

After the fifth enlargement round in 2004, the external borders of the EU shifted drastically. Suddenly a range of poorer, economically and politically less stable and less democratic countries bordered the EU. In response to these changing circumstances, the need was felt to create a unified policy towards the countries bordering the EU. This unified policy, the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), subsumed the patchwork of existing policy instruments. Its goal was to create a ring of countries around the EU with which the EU has close, peaceful and co-operative relations (COM 2004a).

In this paper, the origins and initial goals of the ENP will be examined, the institutional structure that underpins the ENP will be explored, the specific funding mecha-

nisms will be explained, and the implementation and evolution of the ENP will be traced from its inception, based on a thorough investigation of relevant official policy documents related to ENP. Over time, the ENP has transformed quite drastically, and it has acquired a range of new institutional components. These new components have often been developed in reaction to weaknesses in existing policies, and thus the structure of the ENP and the implementation of specific policy measures cannot be understood separately. Special attention will be devoted to the different scale levels in which these policies are implemented; at an interregional, regional, and bilateral level.

This paper starts out by tracing the origins of the ENP in order to understand the underlying motivation to start the ENP. We discuss the policy goals of the ENP, and the

incentives that are used to reach the policy goals. Then, the institutional structures that fund these policies are discussed, and finally, the actual policies that have been implemented are described.

ORIGINS AND GOALS OF THE ENP

During the fifth enlargement round of the EU, 10 countries joined the EU in 2004 and two in 2007. This shifted the borders of the EU drastically to the east, and created new outer borders in areas that are less stable and less prosperous. In preparation for this shift, the European Commission produced a communication in 2003 entitled: *The Wider Europe Neighbourhood, A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours* (COM 2003b). In this communication, they announced a proposal to unify the European Union's wide range of policies towards its neighbouring countries. The goal of this new unified policy would be to create a ring of friendly, stable and prosperous countries around the European Union in order to guarantee stability along the outer borders of the EU. This goal is coherent with the broader goals of the European Security Strategy, which strives to achieve a secure Europe by enhancing stability in its neighbourhood and around the world. The new policy would not offer accession perspective for these countries, as had been done before in order to drive reform in neighbouring countries. However, the policy would promote close political co-operation, close economic integration and ultimately access to the unified market, as a reward for convergence towards the EU *Acquis* on economic regulations and progress in the areas of border security, prevention of illegal migration, human rights and democracy.

After the European council approved of the direction set in this proposal of the European Commission, the policy was elaborated upon in a further communication with detailed recommendations for concrete steps needed to implement such a policy. It was decided that the new policy would be called the European Neighbourhood Policy. Further, it was decided that this policy would build on existing poli-

cies, not replace them. Because the EU uses longer term plans for strategic development of its policies, it was decided to allow for convergence between existing policies until the end of the multiannual framework in 2006. In the new multiannual framework from 2007–13, the ENP would incorporate all previous policies, and a new and unified funding instrument would be developed to guarantee a coherent institutional structure to support ENP (COM 2003a).

The ENP strives to be a broad and integrated policy framework, and it encompasses almost all themes in which countries can collaborate with the EU. Some other discrete policy instruments deal with select themes, like the Instrument for Nuclear Co-operation and Safety (INCS), but most other themes are dealt with by the ENP. This paper focuses on the areas of trade and FDI, labour migration, innovation, research and education, and institutional and cultural development and co-operation. Although the core focus of the ENP is on trade and economic reforms; migration policies, institutional reform and collaboration in research and higher education are also part of the ENP, and all these elements are meant to contribute to the ultimate goal of creating a ring of stable, friendly and prosperous countries around the EU (COM 2003a).

Prior to the launch of the ENP in 2004, the EU supported reforms either through direct funding or through promises of enhanced relations with a range of different but partially overlapping mechanisms that each had their separate functionality and procedures (see Table 1). These previous policy mechanisms were all developed to support specific reform goals, and their functionality was not completely coherent, which complicated creating a comprehensive neighbourhood policy. The INTERREG programme, for instance, was funded from Structural Funds. These funds can only be used for programmes inside the EU. This means that any cross-border activity with neighbouring countries had to be funded partially by other mechanisms which complicated project design.

Other programmes had a limited scope which created gaps in the foreign policy. The MEDA (Euro-Mediterranean Partnership Instrument) programme for instance was mostly

Table 1. *Policy mechanisms that preceded the ENP.*

Name	Function
INTERREG	to increase cross-border co-operation within the EU in order to enhance internal cohesion and dissipate borders
TACIS	to support commonwealth of independent states (CIS). ^a Regional, cross-border, and interstate elements, focused on technical assistance to enable political reform and transitioning to market economy
MEDA	to support co-operation between Mediterranean countries and EU. Decisions made through the Barcelona Process. Mostly regional, goal to support creating free-trade area by promoting reforms and investing
PHARE	to support East European countries in the EU accession process, mostly by providing support and funding for the adoption of EU Acquis. phased out after 5th enlargement in 2004–07
CARDS	to Support Balkan countries in economic reform, reconstruction

Note. ^aFormer Soviet republics.

Source: COM (2004b).

focused on regional economic reforms and investment in order to develop a free market area, but had a weak bilateral component. The TACIS (Technical Assistance for Commonwealth Independent States) programme also had its weaknesses: it was designed to help the transition of the Eastern ENP countries economies to market-led economies by giving technical assistance, and therefore had a much weaker focus on investment and on regional economic reforms (COM 2003a, 2004b).

The ENP was meant to rationalise and streamline this complex and sometimes overlapping set of programmes. This policy would be a one-stop shop for regional development and convergence in all partner countries that were not on track for accession to the EU. At first, the Balkan countries, supported through the CARDS (Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stability) programme, were also supposed to become part

of the ENP (COM 2004b). A later decision by the council shifted the CARDS programme to the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (EC 2006). This instrument, launched in 2007, was meant to unify the variety of existing policy mechanisms that support accession countries.

The ENP was initially supposed to incorporate Israel, Jordan, Moldova, Morocco, Palestinian Authority, Tunisia and Ukraine. All these countries had already formalised their contact with the EU in either association agreements (AAs) for the Mediterranean countries or partnership and co-operation agreements (PCAs) for the Eastern ENP countries. Belarus, Libya and Syria were offered the possibility of joining the ENP as soon as they carried out the internal political reforms that would allow them to sign AAs or PCAs (COM 2004a). Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, though they do not directly border the EU, also wanted to be included in the ENP. In June 2004, it was decided that these countries could indeed become part of the ENP (COM 2004c).

Russia was also asked to participate in the ENP, but in subsequent negotiations, it was decided that a separate policy instrument would be developed to guide Russian-European foreign policy (COM 2003a). This separate policy instrument, called the EU-Russia strategic partnership, has similar goals to the ENP and is funded through the same funding instrument, but differs in terminology. Russia, for instance, did not sign an action plan but developed a roadmap. Later on, even more countries requested or were invited to join the policy. Table 2 gives an overview of the countries participating in the ENP with details on the dates of important ENP milestones, and the extent of collaboration the EU has with these countries.

POLICY MECHANISMS

The goal of the ENP is to create a ring of countries around the EU that are stable and friendly to the EU. The EU asks the ENP countries to reform their political systems in order to align with EU democratic and humanitarian standards. Countries are also asked to adapt an extensive range of EU regulations in order to

Table 2. Overview of countries that are part of ENP and ENP milestones (situation 2011).

	Country	Initial EU contract (PCA or AA)	Ratification action plan	CFSP invitation ^a	FTA provisions ^b
Southern countries	Algeria	2005	Roadmap, negotiations pending for AP	No	No
	Egypt	June 2004	March 2007	No	No
	Israel	June 2000	May 2005	No	No
	Jordan	May 2002	January 2005	Yes	No
	Lebanon	April 2006	January 2007	No	No
	Libya	Negotiations pending	No action plan yet	No	No
	Morocco	March 2000	July 2005	No	No
	Occupied Palestinian territories	July 1997	May 2005	No	No
	Syria	ratification pending	No action plan yet	No	No
	Tunisia	March 1998	July 2005	No	No
Eastern Countries	Armenia	July 1999	November 2006	Yes	Yes
	Azerbaijan	July 1999	November 2006	Yes	Yes
	Belarus	No negotiations until human rights situation improves.		No	No
	Georgia	July 1999	November 2006	Yes	Yes
	Moldova	July 1998	February 2005	Yes	Yes
	Ukraine	March 1998	February 2005	Yes	Yes
	Russia	December 1997	Roadmap adopted May 2005	No	No

Notes. ^aCFSP = Common Foreign Security Policy statement (Section 3), ^bFTA = Free trade agreement (Section 3).

Source: European Commission (1997, 2011g).

comply with EU internal market standards. They further need to develop a range of institutions that can guarantee the implementation of the reforms, on a political and economic level. Finally, the EU demands resolution of a number of ongoing conflicts in the ENP countries (COM 2003b). The EU incentivises these reforms through different mechanisms. The EU directly funds the implementation of legislation and the development of institutions, and extends technical support to programmes that initiate reforms. The EU also extends the promise for enhanced relations to ENP countries that carry out extensive reforms. Finally, the EU invests in the ENP countries through different facilities of the European Investment Bank (EIB). These three types of mechanisms are further discussed below.

The technical assistance that the EU can provide runs either through twinning, TAIEX (Technical Assistance and Information Exchange instrument) or SIGMA (Support for Improve-

ment in Governance and Management). Twinning entails the institutional collaboration between governance structures in the EU and ENP countries. The ENP supplies funding for a specific twinning advisor to work at least twelve months in an institution in a partner country to support with the implementation of legislation that approximates the *Acquis Communautaire* (*Acquis*) of the EU. Projects can be carried out at different institutional levels, and are funded by the respective bilateral funding envelopes (European Commission 2011b).

TAIEX was launched in 1996 to help the CEE countries in adopting relevant EU legislation and harmonising regulation in anticipation of the 2004 accession. Since 2006 TAIEX has broadened its goals to also include technical support for the ENP countries. TAIEX differs from twinning because it involves short-term technical assistance, whereas twinning supplies long-term assistance. TAIEX programmes can, for instance, involve seminars

or training programmes for government officials of partner countries, but it also functions as a source of information on legislative approximation issues (European Commission 2011k).

SIGMA is the final tool that the ENP can use to supply technical support. It was founded in 1992 to support the transition in five former Soviet republics through the development of good governance and management. Since 2008, SIGMA also includes the ENP countries. Whereas the previous two mechanisms are mainly directed at support for legislative approximation, SIGMA is mainly involved in strengthening governance and management structures. Its assistance is short to medium term, and it is directed at high-level government officials, both decision makers and civil servants (SIGMA n.d.).

The enhanced relations that are offered through the ENP are economic, political, and also cover a range of other thematic topics, but the economic relations are central in the policy.

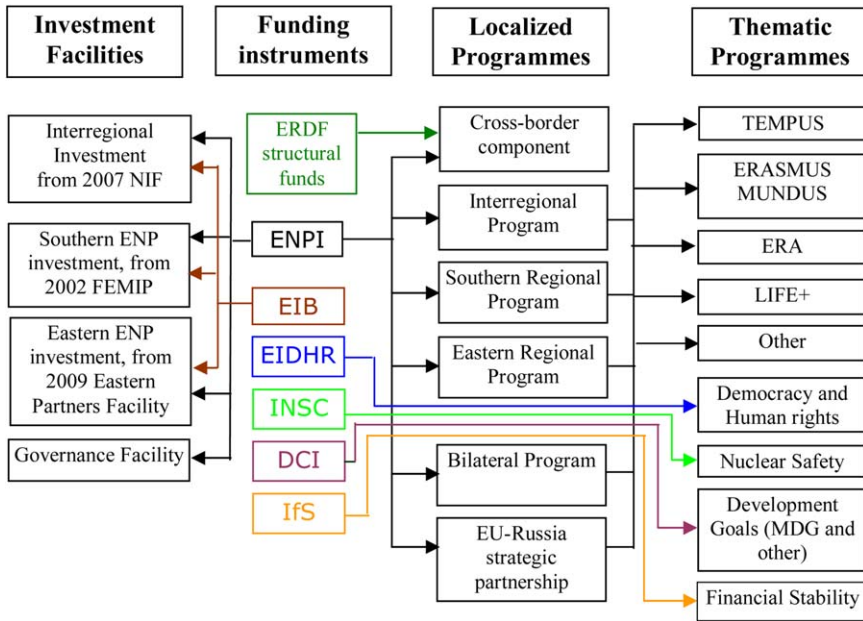
First and foremost, free access to the internal market is an important component of the promise of the ENP. This free access can be extended on different levels. An example is offered by the FTAs that have been agreed upon through the Barcelona process and are being phased in between the Southern ENP countries and the EU. These FTAs reduce tariff barriers for manufactured goods and agricultural products over a twelve year period. Enhanced FTAs could go beyond the reduction of tariff barriers for goods and also liberalise the trade in the service industry. An even more extensive agreement could be reached by signing agreements on conformity assessments and acceptance of industrial products (ACAAs). These agreements would allow industrial products from ENP countries to enter the internal market without any further testing, and would therefore remove most non-tariff barriers (SEC 2005). The concluding step would give ENP countries similar ties with the EU as the countries in the European Economic Area. The policy would in effect offer anything but accession in economic issues (COM 2003b). Moreover, there is increasing focus on developing a common knowledge and innovation space between the

EU and the ENP countries, through joint programmes such as Horizon 2020 and the Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area (PRIMA) (Boschma & Capone 2015; COM 2015).

The ENP also offers enhanced relations in the political sphere. The EU has a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) which deals with trade, aid and security. Through this policy regular statements are issued, and ENP countries can be invited to support these CFSPs on a case-by-case basis. Being invited to join the CFSP is a significant sign of political cooperation and trust. Action based on these statements is carried out through the European Security Strategy (ESS) and the European Defence and Security Policy (EDSP). ENP countries can also be asked to join these institutes.

The possibility also exists to invite the ENP countries for a range of other EU programmes, or to enter specific agreements that would enhance relations in a thematic area. These mechanisms can be used to create a broader integration between the EU and ENP countries in multiple thematic areas, and can be used as an extra incentive for further reforms. It is possible to accept ENP countries to thematic programmes like TEMPUS (Trans-European Mobility Scheme for University Studies), which supports collaboration between universities to realise a common European research area and supports researcher mobility, or programmes like LIFE+ or Erasmus Mundus, which respectively work on environmental protection and student mobility (COM 2004a). It is further possible to create specific collaboration networks that enhance a specific collaboration network. These mechanisms should ensure cooperation on a broad range of themes beyond strict economic and political collaboration.

Finally, the ENP has the possibility of investing in ENP countries through the European Investment Bank. Investment facilities exist on both an interregional level for all ENP countries, and on a regional level for either the Southern or the Eastern ENP countries. The Neighbourhood Investment Facility (NIF) was founded in 2007, and leverages funding from the ENP to invest in interregional projects. The FEMIP (Facility for Euro-Mediterranean Investment and Partnership) was founded in 2002, and before the launch of the ENP, it invested



Sources: European Commission (2007a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, j, k, l, m), EaPCommunity (2011).

Figure 1. Structure of the ENPI.

in countries of the Barcelona Process. Since 2004 it has invested in the countries of the ENP, and it also receives some funding from the ENP to leverage investments. The EIB has invested in the Eastern region through the leverage of EU funds and with an investment mandate, but since 2009 it has a special facility, the Eastern Partners Facility (EPF) (EIB 2011a).

FUNDING INSTRUMENTS

Three types of mechanisms are the core drivers of reform for the ENP: technical and financial support, promise of enhanced relations, and investment facilities. This section explores the specific structures that underlie the ENP.

As explained above, the ENP had a transition period from 2004 until 2006, in which previous policies had time to work on convergence and harmonisation, and complete institutional integration was launched during the new multi-annual framework from 2007–13. This was also when the funding instruments for the ENP were harmonised. Previ-

ously, all policy instruments as mentioned in Table 1 had their own funding instrument. From 2007 on, most of the funding was centralised in the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI). Figure 1 shows the funding structure of the ENPI. The ENPI funds a range of localised programmes, and it funds investment facilities. The thematic programmes that concern ENP countries are partially funded by the localised programmes, and partially by separate funding instruments.

The ENPI funds all localised programmes; it funds inter-regional programmes, regional programmes, bilateral programmes, and the EU-Russia strategic partnership. The cross-border programme is co-funded by the structural funds, because cross-border programmes also involve areas within the EU. The parts of cross-border programmes that take place within the EU are funded by the structural funds. The bilateral programmes attract the vast majority of funding.

The EU has a range of thematic programmes that are open for the ENP countries. Most of these thematic programmes do

not have an independent funding instrument, but they are funded by the appropriate localised programme. This means that any student exchange activities in, for instance, Armenia are funded through the Armenian bilateral programme (COM 2004b). For some thematic programmes, however, it is deemed necessary to have independent instruments, either because they are not dependent on bilateral or regional co-operation, or because the goals of the instrument do not overlap with the broader goal of the ENP. The European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), for instance, has its own instrument so it can approve of projects that are not necessarily approved by the receiving country (EuropeAid 2011). The Instrument for Nuclear Safety and Co-operation (INSC) also has its own funding instrument, and it is mainly active in Russia and Ukraine. Because some ENP countries are relatively poor, even the Development Co-operation Instrument (DCI) has some activities in ENP countries. Finally, the Instrument for Stability is meant to ensure economic stability in the EU, and if necessary, it also supports neighbouring countries.

Finally, the ENPI also encompasses a range of investment facilities. Leveraging grants from the ENPI, the EIB invests in interregional or regional projects through either the interregional or regional investment facilities. The NIF (Neighbourhood Investment Fund) was launched in 2007 to enable interregional investment. The Southern regional investment facility is called the FEMIP, and it has existed since 2002. Before 2002, the EIB did have an investment mandate for the region. In the Eastern region, the EIB also had an investment mandate, but since 2009, it has its own investment facility, called the Eastern Partners Facility (EPF).

The specific level of funding received by the different localised programmes and investment facilities is surprisingly difficult to trace. The EU has published indicative programmes that project the budget for the different localised programmes over the 2007–10 period, and for the 2011–13 period. However, some of these documents cannot be found in the EU document repository,

like the indicative programme for the southern ENP countries in the 2011–13 period, or the indicative programme for the EU–Russia strategic partnership over the same period. To complicate matters, data given on the websites of the localised programmes sometimes contradicts data in the indicative programmes. This could be due to the fact that actual expenditure can differ from projected budgets, especially with demand-driven programmes like TAIEX, but this is not clearly stated.

The EU does publish yearly accounting data, but the data is only given on an aggregated level, in which the ENPI has a single budget line, or on a highly disaggregated level. This means that it is by no means trivial to reconstruct actual commitments and payments of the different programmes and investment facilities within the ENPI. Since this paper only aims to give an overview of the ENP, an accurate reconstruction of spending within the ENP is not attempted, and only the projected budgets as mentioned in the indicative programmes are given till 2013. Other sources, when used, are clearly marked. Therefore, the data in Table 3 should be seen as indicative only, and be treated with caution.

The previous funding instruments that dealt with ENP countries had a total budget of 8.4 billion euro for the 2000–06 framework period. The ENPI budget for the 2007–13 framework period is around 12 billion, which gives a 32 per cent increase in real terms (European Commission 2011f), and the ENPI budget has increased further to over 15 billion for the period 2014–20 (COM 2015). As shown in Table 3, the lion's share of the funding is earmarked for bilateral programmes. There is also some funding for cross-border, regional and interregional co-operation. In Table 3, the first column covers 4 years and the second column 3 years, which means that yearly funding slowly increases during the 2007–13 period. The funding for the Russia–EU strategic partnership was 120 million euros for the 2007–10 period. It is not clear, however, how much funding goes to the EU–Russia strategic partnership in the 2011–13 period (EEAS 2011a).

Table 3. *Budget of localised programmes and investment facilities (in millions of euro).*

Instrument	2007–10	2011–13
Interregional Programme	273.9	307.7
Southern Regional Programme	343.3	288 ^a
Eastern Regional Programme	223.5	262.3
Bilateral Programmes	3034	2783.4 ^b
EU-Russia strategic policy	120	c
Cross-border Component	277.1	535.2
Neighbourhood Investment Facility	250	450
Southern Regional investment Facility	128	c
Eastern Regional Investment Facility	21.5	c

Notes: ^a European Commission (2011f), ^b Incomplete because data missing on Tunisia and Russia, ^c Data missing because indicative programme of this period was not published, or did not mention budget.

Sources: European Commission (2007a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, j, k, l, m; 2011a,b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, j, k).

The direct support of the investment facilities by the ENPI is also limited in scale, but due to leveraging quite a significant sum can still be invested. Again, the exact level of investment by the EIB is difficult to determine, but the FEMIP has invested over 12 billion euro between 2002 and 2010. In the Eastern region, the mandate of the EIB over the 2007–13 period covers 3.7 billion euro, plus an additional 1.5 billion euro due to the launch of the EPF (EIB 2011b).

POLICY MEASURES AND INSTITUTIONAL CHANGES THROUGH TIME

Over the years, the ENP has been subject to regular evaluations which have led to a constant development of the policy and of the mechanisms used to reach the goals. This section describes the policy measures that have been carried out within the ENP through an interpretation of the regular evaluation reports that the European Commission authors, and the changes in institutional structures that have happened over the years. The ENP explicitly recognises the need for geographic targeting of policies at the right scale level, by incorporating a cross-border, bilateral, regional and interregional component. That is why it is important to describe the ENP instruments on all different scale levels. The policy will first be discussed on an

interregional level, after which the Eastern and Southern regional policies will be described. We conclude with a short general overview of bilateral implementation of ENP policies.

Interregional policies – when the ENP was launched in 2004, it was decided that other regional policies would have two years to work on convergence and harmonisation before they would be subsumed under the new ENP structure. The previous policies did not have an explicit interregional component, so in the first two years the ENP did not have a programme that focused on interregional policies. However, in 2005 and 2006 the European Commission did carry out evaluations of the complete ENP programme on an interregional level.

The 2005 evaluation report concluded that most of the first reforms of the ENP had been carried out in the area of trade, regulation harmonisation, and economic reforms (SEC 2005). The Southern ENP countries at that time already had FTAs that phased out tariff barriers over a twelve-year period. The intention of the ENP was to strive for further reforms and eventually reach enhanced FTAs. In this light, the Southern countries of the ENP committed to realising agreements on conformity assessments and acceptance of industrial products (ACAAs). These agreements would allow industrial products from

partner countries to enter the internal market without any further testing. The first negotiations also started with selected countries to expand existing FTAs to the market for services and establishments.

The 2006 evaluation of the ENP reaffirmed that most reforms that were carried out due to the ENP were in the area of trade and economic reforms, but progress on democratic and human rights reforms was slow and haphazard. The evaluation blamed the particular structure of the ENP for the slow uptake of reforms. The ENP does support short-term reforms with funding and technical support, but in the end the strongest motivation for reform is the potential enhanced access to the internal market. However, it was unclear what reforms countries need to carry out in order to become eligible for this type of access, and formal negotiations for access treaties would not even start before a large part of the regulatory harmonisation has taken place. This means that the costs for partner countries of the ENP are front-loaded, while the rewards of the ENP are back-loaded. Aligning the policies of a country towards the *Acquis* is a very costly and time-consuming affair, but the benefits regarding enhanced market access can only be reaped once these alignments have been made. This creates little impetus for politicians to follow up on the promises of the action plans (COM 2006). The European Commission also commissioned a report by the TEPSA offering a more detailed analysis of specific bottlenecks in the ENP (Avery & Nasshoven 2008).

Based on this evaluation, the Commission launched a series of discussions in order to strengthen the ENP. These discussions resulted in a series of non-papers, which analysed the possibilities for improvement of the ENP in different areas to make the policy more effective. This resulted in a final communication which sets forward a range of proposals to strengthen the ENP (COM 2007a). Two of the suggested reforms would improve the enhanced relations that the ENP promises the ENP countries, and the other reforms would create more short-term benefits for reform.

The first proposed change to the enhanced relations would be to introduce the possibility of deep and comprehensive free trade agreements (DCFTAs). A DCFTA is a specific form of an enhanced FTA in which industry, agriculture and services are incorporated. Further, it does not only remove tariff barriers, but also on non-tariff barriers to trade. By striving for DCFTAs with the ENP countries, the benefits of the ENP would become larger, which should enhance the power of the ENP to create incentives for reform (European Commission 2006b).

It was also concluded that free movement of people should be a more central focus of the ENP (COM 2007a). At that time even officials from ENP countries who travelled to Brussels for negotiations often encountered problems with acquiring temporary visa, and partner countries often mentioned difficult visa procedures as a major disincentive for further integration (COM 2006). It was decided that visa negotiations should be started with most ENP countries in order to make the ENP a more attractive policy for partner countries. Most of the Southern ENP countries are already part of special visa regulations and Ukraine and Moldova had just started visa negotiations with the EU, so this issue was most relevant for Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan. However, there was still significant space in the existing treaties to further decrease the barriers for mobility (European Commission 2006c).

The first change to the ENP that would create stronger short-term incentives for reform was the governance facility. The governance facility was suggested as a method to create short-term reform incentives. This facility would yearly reward the country or countries that had been carried out the most extensive reforms. The specific norms used to decide what countries are entitled to the governance facility were further described in a note of the European Commission (European Commission 2008). Each year this facility would reward the countries that have made most progress in reforming the political system to become more democratic and human rights oriented. This reward for the countries that had progressed the most would free up extra money for reforms for

those countries that have the most goodwill and perspective to advance, while at the same time motivating other countries to prioritise their reforms (COM 2006).

It was also decided to develop a new funding mechanism that would increase the impact of the ENP. It was concluded that the funding of the ENP was relatively limited in comparison with its goals. In order to leverage the impact of the funds, it was decided to start the Neighbourhood Investment Facility (NIF) through the EIB. The ENP funding, combined with voluntary country contributions, can be used as a loan guarantee that would enable the EIB to invest a multiple of this amount in projects in the ENP countries (COM 2007a).

Finally, the ENP launched the InterRegional Programme (IRP) in 2007. This programme would fund all projects with an interregional character. In the strategy paper of this programme, it was decided to extend the TAIEX thematic programme to all ENP countries, in order to speed up the implementation of reforms. It was further decided to implement a specific scholarship programme for the ENP countries within the Erasmus Mundus programme, because experience with earlier student mobility programmes had shown the effectiveness of those programmes for furthering co-operation (European Commission 2007h).

In 2008 and 2009, few structural reforms on an interregional level were initiated, most notably the extension of Support for Improvement in Governance and Management (SIGMA) to nine of the ENP countries in 2008. Many of the changes proposed in the 2007 evaluation were implemented. Initial studies were done for the viability of DCFTAs in Georgia, Armenia and Ukraine. Enhanced visa agreements were implemented with Ukraine and Moldova, and discussions for further trade liberalisations were executed with Egypt, Israel, Morocco and Tunisia. The conflict between Russia and Georgia showed that ENP's capacity of resolving existing territorial disputes is still limited. However, the EU did support the cease-fire process and continued further reform negotiations with Georgia. Overall, as in previous years, most progress was made in trade and

economic reform, and politically little to no reform was visible (COM 2009, 2010).

The political turmoil in the spring and summer of 2011 took the European Commission by surprise. One of the primary goals of the ENP was political reform, but all yearly evaluations suggested that the ENP was largely ineffectual in reaching this goal. The drastic political shifts that were not related to any ENP policy in the Middle East underscored the weakness of the political dimensions of the ENP. This could explain why the communication that should review the implementation of the ENP on interregional level in 2010 is completely focused on the political turmoil in the spring of 2011 in the Mediterranean area, and does not give information about the implementation of the ENP in 2010 at all (SEC 2011c). Together with the communication: *A New Response to a Changing Neighbourhood A review of European Neighbourhood Policy* (COM 2011) it gives an analysis of the primary weaknesses in the ENP in effecting political change, and suggests some immediate policy responses and structural changes to the ENP.

Some of the direct policy responses included increasing the investment mandate of the EIB in the Southern ENP countries by 1 billion euro, and proposing that the EBRD would also open up its lending facilities to the Southern ENP countries. Further, the indicative programmes of the countries where political unrest erupted were screened, and adjustments were made to projects that could not or should not be carried out. A humanitarian mission was launched for the affected countries. The military intervention in Libya was carried out through the EDSP, so the ENP does not have documents relating to this intervention (SEC 2011c).

A number of more structural changes were also proposed. In order to further incentivise reform, it was proposed that for future funding rounds, the level of funding for a country would depend on the level of reforms that had been carried out in the years before (COM 2011). The European Commission also invented the term 'deep democracy' as a goal for future reforms. Deep democracy goes beyond elections and includes strong provisions for free press, an independent

judiciary, strong systems to fight corruption, and democratic control over armed forces. In order to promote deep democracy, the European Endowment for Democracy was launched, which would yearly reward an organisation that had done the most to enable democratic reform. Finally, a dedicated Civil Society Facility would be launched to strengthen civil society in ENP countries (COM 2011). To support these ambitious steps, funding in the ENPI has been increased to more than 15 billion euros in the period 2014–20 (ENPI Info Centre 2011; COM 2015).

A 2011 report (SEC 2011a) focused on the way in which the economic incentives in the form of enhanced relations could become more tangible for ENP countries and therefore more effective in instating reforms. Previous evaluations criticised the vague and undefined pathway of reforms that countries need to traverse before they can even start negotiations on enhanced relations. In this report, a clear pathway is defined which countries need to work through in order to become eligible for DCFTAs, ACAAs, and other enhanced trade agreements (SEC 2011a).

Since 2011, the ENP is trying to confront and respond to the many large-scale developments that have hit the ENP countries. These concern in particular: the Arab Spring in 2011 that has caused a lot of political turmoil since then, especially in countries like Libya and Egypt; the military conflict in Eastern Ukraine since 2012, leading to the annexation of Crimea and Sebastopol in 2014 by the Russian Federation, and that has also led to a deep crisis in the relationship with Russia (including an energy crisis); the civil war in Syria, resulting in unprecedented refugee flows and border problems in the EU as a whole but particularly in some ENP countries like Lebanon and Jordan where millions of Syrian refugees fled to; increasing threat of terrorism, especially following the attacks in Paris in 2015. In their communications, the EU reports that these dramatic developments have frustrated many ENP initiatives (like reversing democratic reforms achieved in previous years), and that the economic and political situation in many ENP countries has deteriorated as a result (COM 2013, 2014).

This has led to a belief that the ENP should intensify its efforts to give security a more prominent place in ENP (COM 2015; Council EU 2015). At the same time, ENP should also play a more pragmatic role, acknowledging more than ever a need for a differentiated, tailor-made policy that accounts for the specific challenges and needs, commitment to reform, level of aspiration and political environment in each ENP partner country (COM 2015).

Eastern Regional Programme – when the ENP was launched in 2004, few regional programmes existed for the Eastern ENP countries and Russia. The TACIS programme gave technical support for the transition of CIS countries to market economies, but no integrated regional efforts existed. The implementation of the ENP changed this state of affairs drastically. The Eastern countries suddenly experienced a strong upsurge of EU support on both a bilateral and regional level (COM 2006).

Because the EU imports a lot of oil and gas from Eastern ENP countries, it is not surprising that energy policy is at the heart of the most important regional programmes launched from within the ENP. In 2004, the Baku initiative was launched with a meeting which included representatives from the Eastern ENP countries, Russia, and five central Asian countries. This initiative has the goal of unifying the energy markets of the EU and the other participating countries through the harmonisation of environmental, safety and efficiency standards, and a gradual liberalisation of the energy markets. A 2006 meeting reaffirmed the goals as set out in the 2004 meeting (European Commission 2006a). Although elements of the roadmap developed in this meeting were adopted by Inogate, the organisation that manages energy co-operation of the EU (Inogate 2010), and by national indicative programmes, the Baku initiative as a regional co-operation programme did not receive further attention within the ENP.

The second Eastern regional policy initiative launched from within the ENP was the Black Sea Synergy (BSS) in 2007. This regional platform tries to form a basis for

resolution of common problems suffered by the countries around the Black Sea in the areas of environment, transport, and energy. Since it is recognised that the existing institutional structures are already active in these areas, the main purpose of the initiative would be to: 'focus political attention at the regional level and invigorate ongoing co-operation processes. The primary task of Black Sea Synergy would therefore be the development of co-operation within the Black Sea region and also between the region as a whole and the European Union' (COM 2007b). Two main initiatives have followed from this initiative: the Black Sea Environmental programme, which focuses environmental policies of national governments and ENP on regional environmental problems (European Commission 2011d), and the Black Sea Research Network, which tries to focus attention on the regional research infrastructure using the Framework Programme of the European Research Area (ERA) (BlackSeaScene 2011). However, the BSS as overarching policy is receiving limited attention (COM 2008).

This lack of attention could stem from the high-profile launch of the Eastern Partnership (EP) in 2009, as yet another regional partnership. A total of 350 million euro was pledged above the funds already available for Eastern regional co-operation, which might have contributed to the rapid institutional development of this initiative. New elements in this policy are comprehensive institution building programmes (CIBs) which try to create synergy between TAIEX, SIGMA and twinning programmes to maximise reform potential, and an Eastern civil society forum which enables regional civil society co-operation. Reports of the ministers of foreign affairs meetings suggest that the EP lacks focus and clearly measurable results (European Commission 2010b), but there is commitment to strengthen the EP, as confirmed during the 2015 Riga Summit (COM 2015).

Although the individual country reports show that some Eastern ENP countries have made considerable progress in reforms, overall the evidence for the effects of regional collaborations is weak.

Southern Regional Programme – the EU has a long history of close collaboration with the Southern ENP countries. The first formal regional collaboration, the Euromed collaboration, was launched during the Barcelona process in 1995. This process started negotiations for trade reforms within the area and culminated in the signing of FTAs by the participating countries. These FTAs would gradually lower the tariff barriers on industrial products and some agricultural products over a period of 12 years. The collaboration also supported political reforms and social and cultural partnership, although the evidence for the success of these collaborations was weaker (European Commission 2007m).

With the launch of the ENP, the Barcelona process and the Euromed collaboration were kept intact. They became the regional co-operation structures of the ENP, while further bilateral collaboration was developed separately through the ENP. A 2005 summit reaffirmed the importance of the Euromed collaboration for regional co-operation and development, and set out a five-year plan in which further economic integration and political co-operation were central (EEAS, 2011b).

For the European Commission, security and control over migration flows are also a very important topic of collaboration. Because the majority of illegal migrants enter the EU in the Southern member states, and many ENP countries are transit countries for illegal migration from Sub-Saharan Africa, the commission emphasised the importance of initiatives to control these flows. Core goal in these policies is the control of illegal migration through readmission agreements with neighbouring countries, while at the same time reducing the barriers for legal migration through visa facilitation agreements (European Commission 2007m).

Because regional evaluations showed that progress on most contentious issues was weak at best, it was decided in 2008 that the regional co-operation needed to be revitalised. This revitalised programme would first be called the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean, and was later renamed: Union for the Mediterranean (UfM). The UfM is a regional initiative that incorporates

the Southern ENP countries, the accession countries, Turkey and Croatia and the Balkan countries. The UfM did not get extra access to funding, but it would be completely dependent on the existing Southern regional programme funding of the ENP. The UfM did introduce new institutional structures by creating a new dedicated institution specifically to enhance regional co-operation. The UfM has a European president and a president from one of the partner countries, who are chosen every 2 years. The UfM also has a secretariat, a number of thematic working groups, and meets bi-annually to re-focus attention on regional development issues (UfM 2011).

An ENP strategy report (COM 2011) suggested that the UfM should be revitalised, which suggests that in the first three years, the UfM affected relatively little change. The general evaluation of the effectiveness of the ENP also devotes relatively little attention to the UfM. Bi-annual general summits were supposed to take place in 2010 but were postponed twice, which further strengthens the suggestion that the UfM has relatively low effectiveness (SEC 2011b). A main goal of the UfM was to support regionally relevant projects. The first project that was supported through the UfM was launched in June 2011, the construction of a desalination plant in the Gaza Strip in the occupied Palestinian territories. The two other projects that have been initiated subsequently are relatively minor, which also suggest that the UfM has not significantly influenced regional policy in the Southern ENP countries. Further details about the progress in collaboration and reforms can be found in Lannon and Martin (2010), and details about the economic and financial dimensions of this regional collaboration can be found in Lannon (2009).

Bilateral policy programmes – the bulk of the ENP is bilateral. The EU strives for a differentiated policy in which each country is supported to reform in its own speed, and with its own priorities. In order to achieve such a differentiated bilateral policy, it is necessary to have independent policy objectives for each partner country. That is why, after the launch of the ENP, the European Com-

mission drafted a range of country reports that described the state of different institutions and sectors within the different countries, and the gap between the respective countries and the EU. Based on these country reports, action plans were negotiated that describe key priority areas for policy reforms. The first action plans were mutually recognised in February 2005. Based on these action plans, the EU has also drafted a strategy paper for almost each country for the 2007–13 budget framework, and indicative programmes for the 2007–10 and 2011–13 period. The Commission yearly evaluates the policy and publishes a progress report (SEC 2005). This need for a differentiated policy is felt more than ever, to acknowledge that not all ENP countries have the same aspirations and capabilities, and that the national circumstances may be very different from country to country (COM 2015).

The nature of these bilateral policies precludes a simple summary. Some bilateral policies have been successful and progressively developed into programmes with a wide scope and strong reform agenda, like in Armenia where ENP funding has doubled from 2011–13 relative to 2007–10 (European Commission 2007a, 2011a), and there have been serious steps towards signing a DPCTA (SEC 2011d). In other countries like Lebanon, the ENP has only slightly increased its funding (European Commission 2007i, 2011j), the scope of the ENP is mostly limited to a few core areas and steps towards reform have been hampered by political turmoil (SEC 2008, 2009).

CONCLUSIONS

The EC announced in 2004 the formation of the ENP. This policy was aimed to create a ring of friendly, stable and prosperous countries around the European Union in order to guarantee stability along the borders of the EU. This policy would not offer accession perspective for these countries, but would promote close political co-operation, economic integration and ultimately access to the unified market. It was decided that this policy would build on existing policies, not replace them. The ENP was characterised by

a transition period from 2004 until 2006 in which previous policies had time to work on convergence and harmonisation. Complete institutional integration was launched during the 2007–13 framework period. Also the funding instruments became harmonised. Previously, all policy instruments had their own funding instruments. From 2007 on, most funding was centralised in the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument.

The EU asked the ENP countries to reform their political system in order to align with EU democratic and humanitarian standards. Countries were also asked to adapt an extensive range of EU regulations in order to comply with EU internal market standards. They further needed to develop a range of institutions that can guarantee the implementation of the reforms, on a political and economic level. The EU supports these reforms through different mechanisms. The EU directly funds the implementation of legislation and the development of institutions, and extends technical support to programmes that initiate reforms. The EU also extends the promise for enhanced relations to ENP countries that carry out extensive reforms. Finally, the EU invests in the ENP countries through different facilities of the European Investment Bank. The enhanced relations that are offered through the ENP are economic, political, and also cover a range of other thematic topics, but the economic relations are central in the policy.

The ENP explicitly recognises the need for geographic targeting of policies at the right scale level, by incorporating a cross-border, bilateral, regional and interregional component. There is policy focus on Eastern ENP countries and Southern ENP countries. The nature and focus of policies differ among these group of countries, due to different historical relationships with EU countries (like the long history of close collaboration between the EU and Southern ENP countries) and different political challenges (like the Southern ENP is more focused on blocking illegal immigration). The bulk of the ENP is, however, bilateral. The EU strives for a differentiated policy in which each country is supported to reform in its own speed, and

with its own priorities. Based on country reports, action plans are developed that describe key priority areas for policy reforms.

Since 2011, ENP is under a lot of pressure since major political developments (Arab Spring, military conflict in Ukraine, political confrontation with Russia, civil war in Syria, massive refugee and migrant flows to the EU, terrorist attacks and radicalisation) hit many of the ENP countries. These dramatic events have frustrated many ENP initiatives, and the economic and political situation in many ENP countries has seriously deteriorated as a result. The main objective of the new ENP is to ensure ‘stabilisation’, in economic, political, but above all, security terms, which makes it key for the EU’s Common Foreign and Security Policy. Due to all these major challenges, it is expected that ENP will intensify its efforts and shift its attention more to security and migration issues, while, at the same time, the new ENP will play a more pragmatic role, as exemplified by its differentiated policy at the country level.

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