

## **Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung's input to the consultation process "Towards a New European Neighbourhood Policy"**

### **Introduction**

The Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.v. (KAS) is a German political foundation active in the fields of governance, parliamentary support, rule of law, human rights protection, civil society development, free media promotion, decentralization and local democracy promotion. In more than 80 countries, branch offices are set up to coordinate and implement more projects in co-operation with local partners in more than 100 countries.

KAS initiatives focus on country-owned and locally driven approaches. The aim is to build of mutual trust among various stakeholders in development countries as true contribution for effective conflicts resolution. Among the core competences of KAS are dialogue skills and creating qualified forum for interaction between different communities, such as civil society, academia and policy makers in culturally very diverse environments. KAS offers platforms for dialogue on issues relevant for the future and touching on politics, economics, religion and society. Through its worldwide activities, the KAS has excellent access to local policy-makers as well as to other influential target groups.

To function as mediators KAS usually work with political parties and CSOs. In the highly polarized societies of transition societies the relationship between political parties and CSOs is often toxic. The rift between them often prevents any form of constructive dialogue and hampers the overall democratic reform process. Building bridges between state and society as well as working with political partners on the democratization of political parties, including peer-to-peer-approach, educating and promoting young democratic leaders as well as fostering ties with political counterparts in Europe and beyond, represents one of the foundation's major strengths.

KAS is present in the Maghreb (EU's Southern Neighborhood) with offices in Morocco and Tunisia. The overall aim of our project in the Maghreb is to foster the political and social dialogue between the countries of the region as well as with the EU. It is aimed at creating networks to support reform processes in society, policy, administration and economy. Our goals in detail are:

- To strengthen capacities of actors from political parties, parliament and administration to more actively engage in reforms and political decision-making;
- To strengthen the role of civil society organizations in actively promoting reform and their participation in policy-making processes;
- To raise awareness of the religions' social relevance through open discussions with civil society actors about the role of religion in politics and society;
- To analyze the current state of political order and to encourage exchange between politics, economics and science to improve framework conditions;

- To strengthen Euro-Mediterranean relations to reduce conflicts by exchange and visitor programs.

The Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung's office in Tunis has organized on 5 and 6 June 2015 a regional workshop on the occasion of the consultation process towards a new European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) including Tunisian, Moroccan and Algerian experts from mainly academia and civil society to elaborate a "Maghreb perspective". The following answers to selected questions drawn from the European Commission's joint consultation paper "Towards a new European Neighbourhood Policy" are based on the findings of the workshop and represents a preliminary synthesis of the workshop discussions. A more detailed policy paper will follow soon, in which the framework of the ENP will be further elaborated with recommendations for a stronger and closer cooperation, association and partnership with the countries in particular from the Maghreb region.

## Questions & Answers on the Future Direction of the ENP

### ***1. Should the ENP be maintained? Should a single framework continue to cover both East and South?***

No. The ENP did not live up to its promises and has tainted image in Southern partner countries. The ENP rhetoric and mechanisms are perceived as very much EU-dominated and heavily asymmetric. The notion of "neighbour" instead of "partner" (as it was the case within the Barcelona Process/EMP) has been felt as degradation. To demonstrate that the EU is ready for a new departure in its relations with the countries and societies of the Southern Mediterranean, a new "tonality" should be introduced. In doing so, the EU has to be aware of the importance of respect and trust. In the course of reconceptualizing and rebranding the ENP, the single framework should be abandoned. Among other, it leads to faulty comparison, for instance when it comes to the allocation of funds, between "neighbours" with a membership perspective (in the East) and those without such a perspective (in the South).

### ***2. Should the current geographical scope be maintained? Should the ENP allow for more flexible ways of working with the neighbours of the neighbours? How can the EU, through the ENP framework, support its neighbours in their interactions with their own neighbours?***

No, the geographical scope should not be maintained and instead become more flexible. Maghreb experts have pointed to the importance of other strategic references of their countries such as the Sahel. An exclusive EU-"neighbour" perspective is thus inherently insufficient. Instead, yes, the EU should encourage cooperation of its neighbours with their

own neighbours, by giving respective incentives, for instance via cross-border infrastructure projects or free trade zones in border regions.

### ***3. Would stronger co-ownership of the policy be preferred by partners?***

Yes, in principle. However, the inherent asymmetry of EU-partner country relations as well as the in some cases doubtful legitimacy of governments of partner countries makes this a difficult task to realize. At first, a change of the European basic conception and discourse is in order to make clear that Europe and the Southern Mediterranean share both common interests and have to work together to realize their respective interests. Acknowledging interdependence is the precondition for co-ownership. Europeans must integrate and pronounce such a mind-set on both the level of political discourse and on the technical policy implementation level.

### ***4. Are the Association Agreements and DCFTAs the right objective for all or should more tailor-made alternatives be developed, to reflect differing interests and ambitions of some partners?***

As AA/DCFTAs are in principal an important and adequate tool, Europeans should be aware of the social costs that partner countries have to bear in liberalizing their economy and of problems that might come along if an ill-led liberalization leads to “crown capitalism” instead of free market opportunities. The EU itself should thus thoroughly observe liberalization processes and, even more importantly, enable local civil society to do that, too. If the EU wants its DCFTAs to be accepted by its partner countries and in particular by local societies it must also be ready to signal the consistency of its approach and demonstrate its readiness to tear down its own trade barriers (such as for Tunisian olive oil).

### ***5. What further work is necessary in this area, which is regarded as key by all ENP partners? How can the ENP further support the management of migration and help to draw the benefits of mobility?***

Mobility is a key issue for the Maghreb countries, both on the practical level and as an important symbol for mutual respect and appreciation. Visa facilitation for selected groups, such as for students or temporary workers, is a very powerful incentive the EU and its member states have at its disposal to encourage and reward reform. Scholarships for students and apprentices should be multiplied. A lot can be gained here, not at least concerning trust in the EU, with relatively low costs.

***6. Should CFSP and CSDP activities be better integrated in the ENP framework?***

Yes. However, an “over-securitization” of Euromed relations should be avoided. Instead more efforts should be put into drawing a new narrative of cooperation and proximity between Europe and the Maghreb countries. In this context, more joint cultural activities and enhanced people-to-people contacts should contribute to the development of an unbiased perception of the Maghreb in Europe and vice-versa. The ENP as such has to become more visible and tangible in the daily life of the citizens in the Maghreb region.

***7. Should the ENP be given a strengthened focus on working with partners on the prevention of radicalisation, the fight against terrorism and organised crime? Should security sector reform be given greater importance in the ENP?***

Yes. The EU must urgently take into account the new security challenges that have arisen in the Southern Mediterranean. Better coordination between the EU and its member states is crucial in encouraging and supporting security sector reform and to address the common challenges such as the problem of foreign fighters. Moreover, more effective institutions for the cooperation are needed which sincerely encompass the more strategic approach of the EU towards the countries of the region underpinned by strong political support of the EU members states in a coherent way. It must be noted that the Union for the Mediterranean did not live up to these expectations, yet.

***8. How should the ENP further develop engagement with civil society in its widest sense? Can more be done to network different parts of the partner populations?***

The trend in ENP to better include civil society is positive and should be pushed further. The respective mechanisms how to do that must be adapted to the specific and very diverse situation in the partner countries. In any case, budget aid should be allotted to governments only if the civil society of the country can consult on and above all control the disbursement of this money.

***9. Should the EU gradually explore new relationship formats to satisfy the aspirations and choices of those who do not consider the Association Agreements as the final stage of political association and economic integration? Is there scope within the ENP for some kind of variable geometry, with different kinds of relationships for those partners that choose different levels of engagement?***

Yes, the EU has to take into account the new geopolitical context and the diverse aspirations of countries in the Southern Mediterranean. Against this background formats of variable

geometry are inevitable to advance Euro-Mediterranean relations. At the same, however, the multiplication of overlapping formats and institutions, which leads among others to less transparency and accountability, is badly received by partner countries. A “clearing” of the overall institutional framework, which then allows for variable geometry, is in order.

***10. Which priorities do partners see in terms of their relations with the EU? Which sector or policy areas would they like to develop further?***

The joint fight against security threats such as jihadist terrorism, support for socio-economic development and facilitation of mobility are priorities for partner countries. Civil society expects at the same time a consistent approach and an honest discourse by the EU concerning human rights and democratic reform.

***11. How can the EU adapt the ‘more for more’ principle to a context in which certain partners do not choose closer integration, in order to create incentives for the respect of fundamental values and further key reforms?***

The “more for more” principle has to be thoroughly revised anyway. Even partner countries such as Tunisia and Morocco, that seek closer integration with the EU, perceive that the incentives put on the table by the EU are not enough concerning all three “M’s” (money, market, mobility) that have been promised in 2011. They feel that their efforts both when it comes to efforts against illegal immigration (Morocco) and democratic reform (Tunisia) have not been sufficiently rewarded. In this context, an honest debate about creating effective incentives for approaching towards European Standards is inevitable including a better understanding of the local context how to support civil society and other political partners such as political opposition parties in case governments in the partner countries are less willing or capable in implementing structural reforms. The principle of conditionality drawn from the enlargement experiences needs to be thoroughly rethought to avoid double standards in the relations with the countries that could trigger negative effects for both sides.

***12. What do partners seek in the ENP? How can it best accommodate their interests and aspirations?***

Partners are quite confused about what the EU itself wants to achieve with the ENP. The EU and its member state should elaborate a clear vision about how they imagine the future of the Euro-Mediterranean region and make their interests as transparent as possible. The vision should include the development of a true partnership based on a realistic analysis of the local and regional context including representatives of civil society and other political

actors in the dialogue about the cooperation's objectives in order to receive a broader picture of the partner countries aspirations. More focus should be put on the modernization of the education system, underpinning structural reforms in the economy as well as early democratic political education of young people and scholarships for students in order to avoid Anti-European and Anti-Western radicalization. On the EU side, the ENP needs to receive a stronger support by the EU Member states and jointly pursue a more streamlined national policies for the region within the framework of the ENP as well articulate more openly its own interests. In this context, institutions such as the Union of the Mediterranean needs to be substantially re-structured in terms of political relevance and strategic approach.