

Please find below a UN Women input to the consultation on the new European Neighborhood Policy. These comments/suggestions are based on input received from our UN Women colleagues in the neighbourhood countries:

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

We recommend a differentiated approach towards the Arab States. In the past, the ENP drew many of its tools directly from the experience of the enlargement process in an attempt, among other things, to strengthen conditionality towards the countries on the southern shore of the Mediterranean. In other words, the ENP imported much of the logic of enlargement as far as conditionality is concerned without making a critical assessment of the crucial differences between eastern Europe and the “neighborhood” countries: the absence of the ultimate incentive of accession, of the strong consensus in Central Europe about “returning to Europe”, and of the fundamentally different understanding of sovereignty and external interference in the internal affairs of the state.

One of the strong points of the ENP has always been the attempt to extend the EU’s regulatory approach beyond its borders. In other words, by offering integration into parts of the EU Single Market the EU tried to conceptualize a geographical space broader than its borders governed by common rules.

However, relations with North Africa and the Middle East have always been overwhelmingly dominated by issues which had little to do with the single market paradigm, e.g. strategic and security priorities ranging from conflicts in the Middle East, migration control, the fight against terrorism, and access to energy which has put the ENP towards the Arab States on total different tracks.

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? What could be done better to ensure greater coherence between the ENP and the EU’s relations with Russia, with partners in Central Asia, or in Africa, especially in the Sahel and in the Horn of Africa, and with the Gulf countries?

The Gulf countries play a key and vital role in the political stability and overall economic growth in the Arab States region. We recommend an inclusive policy in the ENP towards the GCC countries. In particular, we recognize a number of key issues that should be addressed in the ENP as follows:

By encouraging certain elements of bilateralism to promote common short term interests and maximize influence more effectively while at the same time allowing ongoing multilateral contacts and efforts to focus on more long term issues. For instance, the EU Parliament Report on relations with the Gulf region (2010) has called to examine the prospects that bilateral cooperation could facilitate multilateral initiatives;

By coordinating aid programmes to support economic development;

By maintaining and even expanding recent momentum in areas such as renewable energy (for example, through the EU/GCC Clean Energy Network), education and research (through decentralized cooperative measures on public diplomacy, or joint higher education initiatives), or investment strategies (such as cooperation between GCC and EU chambers of commerce).

In all of these areas, the degree of contact should be expanded to include more people-to-people exchanges, extended training opportunities, and a higher number of meetings and discussion forums.

This also should include the area of civil society development. While there is a degree of skepticism in the GCC states about the kind of role civil society can play in their political development, the EU understands that sustainable development can only be guaranteed through the engagement of civil society and respect for human rights and political reforms.

*How should the ENP address **conflicts and crises in the neighbourhood**? Should CFSP and CSDP activities be better integrated in the ENP framework? Should it have a greater role in developing confidence-building measures and post-conflict actions as well as related state- and institution-building activities?*

We recommend that any potential ENP action to address conflicts in the Arab States region takes into due consideration the Security Council resolution 1325, and subsequent resolutions linked to women, peace and security. Including the role of women in mediation and peacebuilding processes.

Should the ENP be given a strengthened focus on working with partners on the prevention of radicalisation, the fight against terrorism and organised crime?

Violent extremism in the Arab States region is identified as one of the major causes preventing the advancement of the gender agenda in the region. We strongly recommend to address this issue as one of the key priority areas of the ENP, including the role women play both as deterrents to violent extremism and as actors within extremist groups. The Global Review on UNSCR 1325 will be published in October 2015 with specific recommendations which would possibly also be helpful for neighbourhood countries. In the consultation paper, the focus on women is not necessarily integrated holistically but rather as creating opportunities for women. What would be important is to also take into consideration the key role of women from Arab States in promoting stability as peace builders, reconciliators and in encountering radicalization; thus investment on that important role should be part of the stability pillar.

Can more be done to network different parts of the partner populations?

There are many existing networks of civil society in the Arab region, and many new and emerging organizations, strengthening outreach to these and ensuring linkages and synergies needs to take place. Linking to existing national networks, where available, would be beneficial, some UN

agencies also coordinate regional networks on a variety of thematic areas – which can be tapped into.

Focus

We recommend a gender-focused approach with targeted interventions rather than a mere gender-mainstreaming in the ENP. This could be strengthened by the development of a higher number of gender-related initiatives and by allocating specific budgetary resources on gender. A strong and specific Plan of Action on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development and International Cooperation, currently under formulation, will be key in this regard.

Simultaneously, we also encourage an increasing focus on young people, both in decision making processes, and in addressing violent extremism, unemployment, etc.

Do you agree with the proposed areas of focus? If not, what alternative or additional priorities would you propose?

There needs to be a much stronger focus on gender equality, which continues to be a barrier to the realization of rights for women in the region. As such, any policy, programme or strategy development should not only address women, but also involve women from the relevant countries in the development and consultations.

Further comments from Egypt Office

Colleagues from Palestine highlighted that given the nature of the occupation, Palestine would need separate attention and cannot be easily incorporated under a general strategy.

We also suggest an increasing/more substantive partnership with relevant regional bodies, including the Arab league, OSCE, etc. The UN and The Arab League have a common framework for collaboration, and we work with the Arab League under the regional spring forward for women programme (including through the parliamentary meetings, which included the Arab Parliament), but this collaboration can be strengthened also at the "bilateral" level of the EU - LAS.

As always, an approach that does not only include women as a vulnerable group, but rather genuinely seeks to incorporate an engendered approach throughout is welcomed. This includes both an increase in gender equality programming, but also ensuring that women are at the table in decision making processes, policy development and dialogues.

Finally, we very much welcome the discussion on radicalization and violent extremism. In this region, we are increasingly dealing with non-state actors (again, Palestine would be a separate case here that needs specific attention). Here we need both a dialogue on how to respond to extremism from a gender perspective, i.e. address the gross violations against women the groups in this region are committing, and also look into how we can engage women in preventing violent extremism, as well as women who support extremist groups (and a dialogue of why this is happening). Addressing this needs to come not only from a military perspective (as is the case of the current regional response), but also through community dialogues, engaging civil society, religious leaders, and men and boys. We are happy to explore this more with the EU, of course.

Answers on Neighbourhood East:

Do you agree with the proposed areas of focus? If not, what alternative or additional priorities would you propose?

In principle yes, with the following comments:

- > Enhancing job opportunities especially in rural areas, focusing on youth and women's employment as essential pre-condition for poverty alleviations and prevention of increasing inequalities in Georgia.
- > Governance: acceleration of institutions building and strengthening accountability for the implementation of national legislation, policies and international commitments, including AA. Aiming at equal participation of men and women and inclusion of minorities in planning and decision-making processes.
- > The formulation of the priority to engage the young people and women is very weak and in principle serves lip service to gender equality as the EU priority and core value enshrined in key founding EU documents and treaties. "Increased opportunities" for women are a very unambitious goal, in the light of the need for achieving "de facto" gender equality (not equality of opportunities, but equality of results), that is the declared priority and core value of the EU enshrined in all EU key documents and Treaties.

Which priorities do partners see in terms of their relations with the EU? Which sector or policy areas would they like to develop further? Which areas are less interesting for partners?

Ensure full respect for Human Rights, including women's rights. UN mandate and presence in EN countries is underutilized in this respect.

Does the ENP currently have the right tools to address the priorities on which you consider it should focus? How could sectoral dialogues contribute?

Too many tools and not tailored to particular country needs, simplification of tools, better transparency and coordination within EU institutions and partners would be welcome.

How should the ENP address conflicts and crises in the neighbourhood? [Should CFSP and CSDP activities be better integrated in the ENP framework?] Should it have a greater role in developing confidence building measures and post-conflict actions as well as relates state- and institution-building activities? (Maria will take lead on those)

ENP should have strategy to address frozen conflicts' implications on the security in EN countries and in wider regions, focusing on protection of human rights (that are universal), humanitarian assistance, and confidence building -- as a minimum.

And some additional, more general comments:

We recommend having a strong reference to the future SDG framework in the new European Neighborhood Policy and aligning the future policy with that new SDG framework, including on Goal 5 on Gender Equality. We suggest that the policy would also refer to the Council Conclusion on Gender in Development from May 2015, including the EU support for a stand-alone goal on gender equality in the post-2015 framework and to refer to existing commitments to gender equality, such as those contained in CEDAW (including Concluding Observations of the CEDAW Committee) and the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA), and draw on the lessons learnt from the 20-year review of the implementation of the BPfA as the fulfilment of all gender equality commitments and the realization of women's and girls' human rights will be essential to the achievement of sustainable development by 2030. Equally there should be strong reference to the future EU Action Plan on Gender Equality in Development and International Cooperatio

Best,
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