

**A Joint contribution of the Conference of European Churches and the
Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe
to the consultation paper
Towards a new European Neighbourhood Policy**

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Executive summary

For the member churches of the Conference of European Churches (CEC) and the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME) the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) is a significant part of the value setting exercise for the whole continent. Since the EU's early inception, CEC and CCME have supported the vision of cooperation, trustful partnership and fair relations which go beyond the internal structure of the Union.

CEC, which includes in its membership churches from the EU and non-EU parts of the continent, has contributed for more than 5 decades to the building of trust between peoples and churches from different parts of the continent. CCME is the ecumenical agency on migration and integration, asylum and refugees, and against racism and discrimination in Europe. Members of CEC and CCME include Anglican, Orthodox and Protestant Churches from all over the continent.

For Churches 'good neighbourhood' is not only a term designing a policy frame. The vision of a good neighbour goes back to our understanding of the biblical notion of the neighbour, the good Samaritan. It introduces a prototype of behaviour which respects 'the other' in his/her integrity and needs, responds to the situation while offering to share and support.

From our perspective, the ENP incorporates to a large extent a vision for the whole continent. The key words in this vision need to be counted in terms of mutual interdependence between all countries of the continent. The churches' vision of a fair relationship between the EU and countries in the EU neighbourhood include interdependence and awareness that both parties, the EU and non-EU neighbours, need each other.

Key recommendations:

- the ENP should be maintained. At the same time a revised ENP needs to allow for a more targeted approach that recognises that the challenges facing the EU today are different from the time when the ENP was first devised, and that these challenges require a more focused approach;
- the ENP needs to be an instrument able to overcome internal differences and reconcile the competing priorities of different member states;
- the ENP needs to be flexible, able to react to unexpected developments and tailor made;
- the ENP has to recognise that our ability to affect desired change in our immediate neighbourhood is more limited than before;
- strengthening the ownership of the ENP in the EU Member States, in particular those having common borders with non-EU countries, as well as ownership by the citizens are the key factors to the success of the ENP.

Specific proposals:

- Prosperity should not be treated as the key priority for the ENP. The EU should through the ENP build partnerships which respect different realities in its neighbouring countries, very often different cultures, history, religion and social traditions;
- the ENP should use the potential of partnerships and cooperation between non-state actors from the EU Member States and neighbouring countries, support more people-to people contacts;
- the ENP should acknowledge the role of civil society partners in an official way, support social and human rights dialogues, common projects and partnerships between civil society partners from the EU and neighbouring countries;
- the cultural dimension of the ENP can be one of decisive factors contributing to the success or failure of this policy. In order to foster religious dialogue and respect for cultural diversity the ENP should acknowledge existing partnerships and cooperation between religious groups and partners from the EU and neighbouring countries and acknowledge their contribution to trust-building;
- the ENP should empower young people to participate in exchange programmes and subsequently return to their countries of origin and be a multiplier of knowledge and cultural tolerance there;
- the EU needs to address the humanitarian crisis at its borders, as well as the need for more open and transparent migration rules.

2. Lessons Learned and Questions on the Future Direction of ENP

□ The importance of building **deeper relationships** with the EU's partners is not in question.

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

The ENP is an important factor of political, economic and social reality in Europe through which the EU takes responsibility for developments beyond its borders. The ENP is a significant part of the EU's overall policy frame and is the key factor in contributing to the stability within its immediate neighbourhood. At the same time the ENP serves as an instrument for developing and cultivating partnership relations and is an instrument for the promotion of the EU key values. Through the ENP the EU develops its own image as an open and reliable partner. The EU without the well framed ENP would not be in a position to fulfil its basic objectives formulated in the Treaty. All this speaks for maintaining the ENP and further strengthening its role as a key EU policy. Recent developments in the close neighbourhood of the EU demonstrate failures of this policy in the past, which need to be avoided.

The ENP needs to be tailored to different realities and needs of the EU neighbourhood. Expected objectives of the ENP can be achieved through differentiating the situation in the South, Mediterranean region and Eastern neighbour countries, all of which have their specific needs and expectations of the

EU. For Southern EU Member States, the neighbouring countries South of the Mediterranean Sea are much closer geographically and historically than many Eastern countries. For Central and Eastern EU Member States relations with Eastern neighbouring countries are for the same reasons important relationships to neighbour countries in the East of the continent. Therefore, Eastern and Mediterranean neighbourhood policy needs to be clearly distinguished and the ENP needs to factor in the differences. A central difference between Southern and Eastern neighbours should be observed: Eastern neighbours are members of pan-European organisations and as such are bound by a pan-European rights framework such as the European Convention on Human Rights and other European Conventions. This will necessitate a differentiated treatment of these two neighbourhoods.

At the same time the ENP needs to be an instrument able to overcome internal differences and reconcile competing priorities of different member states; an instrument supporting the unity of the EU and not expressing disunity and fragmentation. The ENP must be coherent with other EU policies.

□ The current framework of the ENP covers **16 neighbouring countries**. However, many of the challenges that need to be tackled by the EU and its neighbours together, cannot be adequately addressed without taking into account, or in some cases co-operating with, the **neighbours of the neighbours**.

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 ENP is too technocratic and inflexible; too insistent on applying the same template to the 16 vastly different countries with its compass. The ENP needs to be flexible, able to react to unexpected developments and tailor made. There have been recent dramatic developments in North Africa/Middle East and in the Ukraine. Both are of utmost relevance and different in their implications for the relations of these countries to the EU. The ENP may provide a common frame for neighbourhood policies, this frame needs however to be on the one hand clear and transparent, on the other hand flexible enough to enable specific reaction in distinct neighbourhood regions. ENP needs to be able to respond to the requirements and complex realities of EU neighbours. This includes taking into consideration the relationship of subject countries of the ENP into a wider context than in the bilateral links between these countries to the EU. At the same time the ENP has to take into account mutual interdependence between the EU and its neighbours.

□ While the ENP is conducted through the EU institutions, greater Member State involvement could lead to greater results.

How could a more comprehensive approach with more active involvement by Member States give the policy greater weight? Would stronger co-ownership of the policy be preferred by partners?

Strengthen ownership of the ENP in the EU Member States having common borders with countries which are the subjects of the ENP is a key step for improving efficiency of the ENP.

The Conference of European Churches would in the next stage of the ENP favour an approach, which should place the accent on people- to- people contacts. In order to achieve this, the ENP may profit from the mapping of existing partnership relations at different levels. This would include those between non-state actors and of the institutions/organisations in the EU Member States and their relevant partners in respective neighbouring countries and acknowledge them as contributing to reaching the objectives of the ENP. Partnerships and cooperation between non-state actors have the potential to contribute to building positive relations between EU Member States and neighbouring countries.

More needs to be done in the sphere of communication, and not only where the ENP is concerned. What is required is more urgent awareness raising of the pressing need for policies to be put in place whereby

the *raison d'être* of the ENP is brought to the attention of the citizens of the European Union, and that increased resources are devoted to engaging with them.

□ The ENP has **developed and applied tools for closer political association and economic integration of partners aspiring towards this goal**, including far-reaching agreements such as the Association Agreements and the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas (AAs/DCFTAs).

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?

Association Agreements are helpful instruments of the ENP, nevertheless their scope is limited. The ENP ought to cover more intensively sectors beyond trade and economy, for example cultural exchanges and the whole palette of 'soft' policies helping to win the hearts and minds of the population in the EU, as well as to highlight the objectives of the ENP in societies of the EU neighbouring states.

□ **ENP Action Plans** have framed the development of relationships between the EU and most ENP partners. *Are the ENP Action Plans the right tool to deepen our partnerships? Are they too broad for some partners? Would the EU, would partners, benefit from a narrower focus and greater prioritisation?*

The aim of achieving a comprehensive scope of the ENP and setting the right priorities need to be distinguished. Both of them have a role in the overall setup of the ENP; nevertheless they must not replace each other. Although clearly focused Action Plans are important, these should not be the only instruments of the ENP. A broader scope of ENP and partnership relations needs to be considered.

□ **ENP Progress Reports** have helped the EU monitor closely progress with each of the ENP partners that have Action Plans, against the jointly agreed objectives set out in those Plans.

Is this approach appropriate for all partners? Has it added value to the EU's relations with each of its partners? Can EU and/or partner interests be served by a lighter reporting mechanism? Should the reporting be modulated according to the level of engagement of the ENP partner concerned? How can we better communicate key elements?

Although reporting has to follow a transparent and flexible structure, it must avoid becoming an unnecessary bureaucratic burden for partners.

□ The ENP has provided a **framework for sector cooperation** across a broad range of areas (including energy, transport, agriculture and rural development, justice and home affairs, customs, taxation, environment, disaster management, research and innovation, education, youth, culture, health, etc.).

Can partnerships be focussed more explicitly on joint interests, in order to increase ownership on both sides? How should the ENP accommodate the differentiation that this would entail? Are new elements needed to support deeper cooperation in these or other fields?

The Eastern Neighbourhood has in addition to EU programmes the shared basis of the Council of Europe Convention on Human Rights as well as other European Conventions, such as the Convention against Trafficking in Human Beings, the European Social Charter, Minority Rights Conventions and others.

ENP would benefit from a closer cooperation with the relevant programmes of the Council of Europe in countries concerned being members of the Council of Europe.

□ **Visa liberalisation** and visa facilitation processes have eased travel and cemented reforms; mobility partnerships have furthered contacts, with programmes supporting these processes.

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?

Visa facilitation is one of the important aspects as it concerns travel and people to people contact. However, in practice more has been achieved in the Eastern neighbourhood than in the Southern

neighbourhood. Currently the Schengen Visa Code is under negotiations in the EU Council and Parliament.

Easier and cheaper access to visa, or visa waiving agreements, could facilitate more and easier travel, reduce smuggling and unnecessary turns to the asylum system. Travel is the first step to getting to know realities in other countries. It creates understanding for different cultures and social systems, it broadens horizons. Free travel is of extremely high value which should be further strengthened, as this is the cornerstone for understanding and respecting others. If people become part of the neighbourhood process, they may cherish achievements much more than is currently the case.

The EU plans for SMART borders are mentioned in the document only as potentially contributing to easier entry. However, it entails a tight exit control system, which could put a penalty on exit without proper documents. Every entry and exit, whether a visa is needed or not, would be recorded. Some critical questions have been raised, and a proposal will only be forthcoming in 2016. Thus, it is too early to say whether this can positively or negatively influence the movement of people across EU borders.

A critical question in this respect is how visas impact the possibility for persons seeking international protection to access the EU in safe and legal ways. For those countries which are in conflict it would be important to facilitate humanitarian visas or even lift visa requirements, so that persons no longer need to resort to illicit and dangerous means of accessing the EU territory.

□ The EU seeks to promote **prosperity** on its borders. Prosperity in the partner countries is negatively affected by structural weaknesses such as inequalities, poverty, the informal economy and deficiencies in democracy, pluralism and respect for the rule of law. In addition, much of the ENP partners' economic and social development has been disrupted by turbulence due to conflict or rapid internal change.

How can the EU do more to support sustainable economic and social development in the ENP partner countries? How can we empower economically, politically and socially the younger generation? How to better promote sustainable employment? And how can these objectives be better linked to indispensable reforms in the fields of anti-corruption, judicial reform, governance and security, which are prerequisites for foreign direct investment?

The EU Treaty underlines the key role of the Union in promoting core values. This needs to be taken as a factor not only for EU internal policies, but as the key element of the ENP as well. Therefore, economy / prosperity should not be treated as the only priority followed at EU borders. The EU needs to respect different realities in its neighbouring countries, very often different cultures, history, religion and social traditions.

The EU needs to learn from the lessons of recent developments in some neighbouring countries: a difficult and unstable reality (North Africa) developed in some cases through support, even if indirect, of short-sighted EU policy in a previous period of time.

The revised ENP has to count as well with the changed environment that Europe now faces as a result of the Great Recession. At home we have realised that, with the Great Recession, the smooth upwards escalator has come to a halt. We have yet to achieve a similar recognition of rupture, of the end of an era, in thinking about our near abroad. The ENP has to recognise that our ability to affect desired change in our immediate neighbourhood is more limited than before.

□ The EU seeks to promote **stability** on its borders. To address existing challenges effectively, the EU has to draw on all its cooperation instruments. Activities under the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) have until now been conducted outside of the ENP framework. The level of instability in some partner countries not only disrupts progress towards democracy

but also threatens the rule of law, violates human rights and has serious impacts on the EU, such as irregular migratory flows and security threats.

*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?*

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?

Attention should be given to security and stability in the neighbourhood regions, as well as to various means through which this can be achieved. Consideration needs to be given to achieving security and stability through 'soft means' and through the support of trust-building mechanisms.

Experience from developments in the Ukraine leads to the conclusion that although ENP needs to be clearly focused, an efficient ENP should take into consideration broader developments in respective areas, and interests of all other countries in the region.

□ The ENP includes a clear objective to promote **regional cooperation**. Together with partners, the EU has pursued such cooperation through the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) in the South and the Eastern Partnership (EaP) in the East.

Is the multilateral dimension able to deliver further added value? Are these formats fit for purpose? How can their effectiveness be strengthened? Can we more effectively use other, more flexible frameworks? Can we better cooperate with other regional actors (Council of Europe, OSCE, League of Arab States, Organisation of the Islamic Conference, African Union)?

ENP suffers from the lack of recognition and ownership in the EU, as well as in the target countries. Cooperation with non-state actors, established in the respective regions needs to play a much more prominent role in the ENP. Trust-building is an important factor in developing partnership relations.

□ The ENP works extensively with governments, but also seeks to engage with **civil society**, including enhancing its monitoring function, particularly in countries where civil society is free, or largely free, to operate.

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?

What more can be done to promote links between business communities? With and between Social Partners (trade unions and employers' organisations) and to promote social dialogue? What can be done to promote links between scientific communities, universities, local authorities, women, youth, the media?

The focus of ENP should be broadened so that the aspiration of making progress in the areas of political governance is given equal priority with achieving economic transformation. An efficient ENP needs to identify effective ways for supporting civil society in neighbouring countries. The ENP should acknowledge the role of civil society partners in an official way, support social and human rights dialogues, common projects and partnerships between civil society partners from the EU and neighbour countries.

□ The ENP seeks real partnership with the EU's neighbours, and this must reflect and embrace diversity.

How can the ENP do more to foster religious dialogue and respect for cultural diversity, and counter prejudice? Should increasing understanding of each other's cultures be a more specific goal of the ENP and how should this be pursued? How can the ENP help tackle discrimination against vulnerable groups?

The cultural dimension of the ENP can be one of the decisive factors contributing to the success or failure of this policy. In order to foster religious dialogue and respect for cultural diversity the ENP should:

- Acknowledge existing partnerships and cooperation between religious groups and partners from the EU and neighbour countries and acknowledge their contribution to trust-building measures;
- Promote dialogue between political representatives and representatives of different religious groups;
- Promote meetings with representatives of persecuted or vulnerable groups;
- Support youth exchange programmes. Our experience from the past: many students from Russia went to study in Finland and the reciprocal opportunity existed to go to Russia. However, most of the student exchanges were one-sided, students (including university, as well as high schools/gymnasium-levels) were mostly coming from Russia to Finland. The problems for Russian students have increased over the last years;
- Support local reconciliation programmes, for example those focusing on the healing of memories, recognising historical wounds;
- The ENP needs to take up the challenge of intercultural and interreligious dialogue to underline that religious freedom is among the freedoms promoted by any ENP partnership. It may be useful to build on the accumulated experience of organisations such as the Conference of European Churches which have a track record of working on building bridges between cultures, churches and religions..

3. Towards a Partnership with a Clearer Focus and More Tailored Cooperation

3.1. The Challenges of Differentiation

Some partners in the East are embarking on DCFTAs, and aspire to the closest possible relationship with the EU. Although the large scope of the relationship is far from exhausted in any of these cases, there is an aspiration on their side to set a further horizon beyond their Association Agreements/DCFTAs.

In the South, there are increasing divergences in the aspirations of partner countries and instability arising from armed conflict. The events in the Arab world in 2011 and thereafter have fundamentally changed the region. For some Southern partners, this has led to positive political change; others are undergoing complex transitions, remain heavily exposed to the fallout of the Syrian crisis, or remain caught in protracted conflicts. *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?*

How should the EU take forward the tasking of the 2013 Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius of the long-term goal of a wider common area of economic prosperity based on WTO rules and sovereign choices throughout Europe and beyond?

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?

The larger EU Member States have a greater capacity for EU work on shared objectives. The EU should consider how to use this potential in an effective way. Some of the larger Member States have their own preferences, because of their geographical location, history and natural partnerships.

The concept of the lead countries having a particular responsibility for some segments of the ENP should be explored. The concept of lead countries may offer the ENP flexibility in the future, efficient use of resources, as well as an increase of ownership of these policies.

3.2. Focus

Our cooperation with ENP partners, as set out in the Action Plans, is currently very broad. Experience suggests that the ENP will be most effective when the agenda of the EU and its partner is truly shared. The

review needs to clarify what are the interests of the EU and each partner, and those areas of strongest common interest. This will help strengthen the partnership between the EU and our neighbouring countries going forwards.

On the basis of our informal consultations to date, the initial assessment is that the EU and our partners have strongest common interest in the following areas:

☐ Promoting **trade** and inclusive and sustainable **economic development** and enhancing job opportunities are priorities for our Neighbours and are also in the interests of the EU itself, in areas ranging from traditional rural livelihoods to research and digital markets.

☐ Both also have strong shared interests in improving **connectivity**, notably in the fields of sustainable transport and energy. There is also a shared interest in increasing energy security and efficiency, as well as energy safety.

☐ There are currently a number of conflicts affecting the neighbourhood region. Stability is a prerequisite for working together on enhanced prosperity. The EU and its Member States need to do more together with our partners to address the **security** threats that arise from conflict situations, from organised crime and from terrorism, and to develop our ability to jointly manage crises and disasters.

☐ Our partners face **governance** challenges. Ensuring rule of law, human rights and democracy is first and foremost key for their own citizens. By enhancing legal certainty, they also address issues that are important for domestic and foreign investors, such as fighting corruption and fraud and strengthening public finance management, including public internal control based on international standards.

Migration and mobility is a key area of co-operation for the EU and our partners. Enhancing mobility, especially for education, scientific, cultural, training and professional purposes, has positive effects on economies and societies alike. Tackling people smuggling and irregular migration is a common challenge.

☐ **Other common challenges** with impacts across borders are health security, threats to the environment and climate change.

☐ Increasing engagement with **young people**, including through educational exchanges and other networks, can play a major role in developing a common vision for the future. The EU will continue to support increased opportunities for **women**.

The review is an opportunity to establish a firm understanding between the EU and our partners of those areas of strongest common interest. This will be the basis for a stronger partnership going forwards. In that regard, we would propose to focus the consultations on the following questions:

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

☐ *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?*

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

☐ *If not, what new tools could be helpful to deepen cooperation in these sectors?*

☐ *How can the EU better support a focus on a limited number of key sectors, for partners that prefer this?*

The ENP needs to take into consideration new realities: rumours and incorrect information are spread more easily and faster than at any time before. These can be factors endangering good neighbourhood relations. Part of this comes out of wide-spread information through social media –pieces of information are being spread and easily misunderstood. So a wide concept of information is needed to redress mis-information.

The EU has multiple resources (mostly financial) being earmarked for economical projects, but not so much for projects of culture, youth, people-to-people exchange. Such projects need to be supported. An exchange of students at university and also High School-Level may play an important role in developing peace and stability in the EU neighbourhood area. It could contribute to reducing mutual misunderstandings and prejudices. The ENP should empower young people to participate in exchange programmes and subsequently return to their countries of origin and be a multipliers of knowledge and cultural tolerance.

Labour Migration:

Every day thousands of migrants come via legal ways to Europe. However, in the media and political discourse, we hear only about the thousands of “illegal immigrants” – we would insist on irregular migrants, coming to Europe. For legal migrants cooperation at an international level is very important, and this is also the case for irregular migration.

Labour migration is controversial in European societies at large, yet it is and has been an important fact. The demographic situation in the majority of Central and Eastern, but also Southern European states, not only in the EU, will have considerable effects in the coming 10-20 years: the working age population is shrinking in proportion to the overall population, while an older population will require more medical and social care than currently planned in most states. Current social systems will require adjustments, inside as well as outside the EU, and a better common approach towards a more inclusive social and labour market policies will be needed.

More open and transparent migration rules would be useful to address this situation. However, this will require discussions about migration in all sectors and not limited to highly-qualified migrants or seasonal workers. More circular migration could be achieved if more flexible and adequate rules could be agreed upon: upholding social security (pension, unemployment schemes, and training) and portability of the acquired social benefits (paid insurance or contributions into the system). These rules would be necessary for both Eastern and Southern neighbours. The ENP should therefore contribute to a holistic, coherent migration discourse taking serious the reasons for migration and upholding social systems.

Refugees:

The Southern neighbourhood in particular is facing conflict and war, with more than 6 million persons internationally displaced in the Middle East region. At the same time, conflicts in the neighbourhood of ENP countries, e.g. Eritrea or Somalia continue to influence transit flight and migration in ENP countries. New conflicts such as the one in the Ukraine might well generate even more internal displacement and international refugees. While EU countries have been affected by the refugee crises, the main responsibility is currently left to countries in the EU neighbourhood. Church partners in countries such as Lebanon are echoing in their reports what an unsustainable situation their country is in. We believe that the EU can and must do more to deal with this crisis. As a top priority the EU needs to address the humanitarian crisis at its borders. This would include further financial support to the countries hosting the vast majority of refugees. At the same time, the EU should offer meaningful quotas for resettlement and other forms of legal entry for refugees residing in the countries in the Middle East region. A safe passage to and through Europe has to be achieved and guaranteed for refugees, which will require more solidarity mechanisms inside the EU and reaching out to the neighbouring countries.

3.3. Flexibility – Towards a More Flexible Toolbox

Over the past ten years, the EU has developed and expanded the instruments of the ENP. It is currently based on the following central elements:

- Relations between the EU and the majority of ENP partner countries are structured in the legal framework provided by Association Agreements (AAs) or Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (PCAs).
- Action Plans or Association Agendas have been agreed to date with 12 ENP partner countries; for each of these countries, there is an annual report on implementation of Action Plan priorities.
- In addition to annual progress reports, the Annual Neighbourhood Package also comprises one strategic communication and two reports on implementation of regional cooperation priorities, one on the Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity with Southern partners and the other on the Eastern Partnership.
- The EU holds regular bilateral dialogues with most ENP partner countries in different formats. This includes formal exchanges foreseen in the AAs or PCAs (Association/Cooperation Councils, Association/Cooperation Committees, sectoral subcommittees). There are also numerous other interfaces, such as Human Rights Dialogues and other sector-specific dialogues.
- Substantial targeted financial support has already been provided to ENP partner countries. A further EUR 15 billion is foreseen for the period 2014-2020. A mid-term review is scheduled for 2017, which will be a major opportunity to adjust the allocation

and implementation of funding from the European Neighbourhood Instrument in the light of the results of this review and to ensure that the EU is better able to respond more flexibly through its financial cooperation to rapidly changing developments in the region.

- *How to streamline Action Plans to adapt them better to individual country needs and priorities?*
- *Is annual reporting needed for countries which do not choose to pursue closer political and economic integration?*
- *How should the EU structure relations with countries that do not currently have Action Plans?*
- *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?*
- *How to assess progress against jointly agreed reform targets when a partner country experiences significant external pressure, for instance armed conflict or refugee flows?*
- *How can the EU engage more effectively and respond more flexibly to developments in partner countries affected by conflict situations?*
- *What tools would the EU need to respond more effectively to fast-changing developments in its neighbourhood?*
- *Are the choice of sectors and mechanisms for delivery of EU financial support appropriate? How could its impact and visibility be enhanced?*

Financial schemes linked to the ENP need to follow clear criteria to avoid repetition of past experiences, when the EU financial support was used for sponsoring of initiatives with doubtful standards.

The ENP should, together with support of new initiatives, take advantage of support from existing partnerships. For example, it can take the number of initiatives of churches and faith based groups at grassroots levels, which lack recognition from public authorities also inside the EU.

The ENP should take into account positive examples of functioning schemes, which support meaningful projects of faith based / religious organisation at grassroots level e.g. focused on reconciliation, integration, community support etc., for example in the guidelines for sponsorship and support of faith based projects in the UK.

3.4. Ownership & Visibility

One of the most often repeated criticisms of the ENP is a lacking sense of ownership with partners, across their societies, and the general public's weak awareness of the policy's aims and impact. It is clear that substantial efforts are needed in the context of the ENP review to improve both the ownership of this policy by partner countries and to improve communication of its objectives and results both within the EU and in the partner countries.

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

Can ways of working be developed that are seen as more respectful by partners and demonstrate a partnership of equals? How should this impact on annual reporting?

Can the structures of the ENP be made more cooperative, to underline the partners' own choices and to enable all civil society actors across partner countries to take part?

Can the ENP deliver benefits within a shorter timeframe, in order that the value of the policy can be more easily grasped by the public? What would this require from the EU? And from the partner country?

How can the EU financial support be recast in an investment rather than donor dynamic, in which the partner country's active role is clearer?

How can EU Member States be involved more effectively in the design and implementation of the policy, including as concerns foreign policy and security related activities? How can the activities in EU Member States be better coordinated with the ENP?

Strengthening the ownership of the ENP in the EU Member States, in particular those having common borders with non-EU countries, as well as ownership among the citizens are key factors to the success of the ENP. With that in mind the future ENP should explore more cooperative structures of partnerships. People-to-people contacts in particular in border regions between neighbour countries and an effective communication are in this respect of crucial importance.

The Conference of European Churches (CEC) is a fellowship of some 114 Orthodox, Protestant, Anglican and Old Catholic Churches from all countries of Europe, plus 40 national council of churches and organisations in partnership. CEC was founded in 1959 and has offices in Brussels and Strasbourg.

The Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME) is the ecumenical agency on migration and integration, asylum and refugees, and against racism and discrimination in Europe. Members are Anglican, Orthodox and Protestant Churches and Councils of Churches as well as church-related agencies in presently 18 European countries. CCME cooperates with the Conference of European Churches and the World Council of Churches.