

## **Response to the consultation on the European Neighbourhood Policy**

**By the Finnish NGDO Platform to the EU, Kehys**

This document addresses a few key principles for the review of the European Neighbourhood Policy. The principles are based upon discussions of a working group on peace and security, consisting of Finnish NGDOs, coordinated by The Finnish NGDO Platform to the EU, Kehys. In addition to the principles below, Kehys aligns herself with the position of the Enlargement, Pre-Accession and Neighbourhood Working Group (EPAN) of CONCORD.

The key elements of a revised European Neighbourhood Policy should be based upon the core values of the European Union, in particular democracy and respect for human rights. Promoting human rights, an enabling environment for civil society, democracy and good governance should be brought to the core of the ENP.

### **1. Human rights**

Conditionality with regards to human rights, democratic progress and rule of law should be supported by coherent political messages and in all aspects of political cooperation. The revised ENP should have enhanced coherence with the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy. The EU should support policies which help bring to justice the perpetrators of human rights violations.

The ENP should tackle the root causes of conflicts, such as weak institutions, lack of democracy and fundamental freedoms, coupled with human rights violations, inequalities, lack of social justice, unemployment, and shrinking space for CSOs. With regards to preventing radicalization and fighting terrorism, a long-term approach, including, for example, the promotion of human rights, should be preferred over short-term solutions.

### **2. Democracy and good governance**

The commitment to supporting democracy should be voiced clearly. Particular attention should be paid to developing democratic principles at the local level, giving the possibility to have vivid local civil society and local governance. The ENP should support participatory democracy processes and cooperation between authorities, on all levels, with civil society. A particular emphasis should be put on supporting informed media as a key element of democracy.

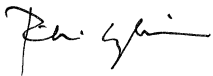
### **3. Civil society**

All stakeholders, including networks of civil society, independent trade unions, human rights defenders and social movements through participatory mechanism should be invited to engage in the design, implementation and monitoring of EU policies and programs. Clear principles for consulting with CSOs in ENP countries are needed. The revised ENP should promote freedom of association and peaceful assembly, and an enabling environment for civil society. Mobility and people-to-people contacts should also be promoted. Capacity building of CSOs both in ENP countries and EU Member States should be supported through providing more opportunities for trans-border civil society contacts and mutual learning. Special assistance and empowering of youth could be achieved through enabling youth-based organizations and building their capacities, supporting youth initiatives and increasing existing youth empowerment programs/projects. EU should address the growing problem of GONGOs.

#### 4. Coherence

The coherence of ENP and CFSP and CSDP should be improved. Reviewing the ENP before the CFSP is not ideal with regards to coherence. While reviewing the ENP, it is important to assess possible overlapping features. Expanding the ENP is only motivated if it brings added value to promoting the core principles of the EU that is not possible to achieve with other instruments.

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