

European Movement International

ENP Review

Towards a new European Neighbourhood Policy: Public Consultation Process

The European Movement International (EMI) comprises of 33 international organisations, 39 national councils and 3 supporting members. The EMI Network is active not only in the EU, but also in the countries of the Eastern Neighbourhood. We share and promote the values the European Union stands for: democracy, respect for human rights, stability and peace. Based on our experience and expertise, given the main themes set out for the consultations, we wish to contribute to the ENP process with the following suggestions.

Focus

The central aim of the European Neighbourhood Policy is to establish a ring of friends, a wider area in which the rule of law applies in national and international relations, where economic stability is ensured and where peace and a good life for citizens is made possible.

In order to achieve this, the EU should rely on its soft-power, the strength and attractiveness of its values and of its political, economic and social model. It should also further develop a self-confident and determined approach and not get lost in short term reactive policies and power games.

The ENP should have a tangible, positive structure. It should offer national governments and citizens incentives which support the development of democratic states and societies with close ties to the European Union and to their neighbours. Citizens should also have a chance to observe the benefits of the ENP in their daily life. The facilitation of free movement and visa liberalisation should be given key importance, as this would enable many to experience the EU, its values, principles and way of life, and to be personally involved in building close relations among countries and peoples.

The Challenges of Differentiation

The current one-framework-for-all approach has not achieved its purpose - thus the European Neighbourhood Policy should include more individualized instruments. In order to achieve maximum impact and to make optimal use of its resources, it is necessary to first differentiate between the East and South, whose problems and needs are fundamentally different. Furthermore, each individual country has to be addressed individually, in accordance with its respective needs and interests. The European Movement therefore suggests the following criteria for defining specific approaches:

- 1. List incentives and other measures to determine the current state of democratic development**
- 2. Determine the specific challenges which need to be taken into consideration, such as social and economic challenges, as well as challenges related to international conflicts.**
- 3. Outline the future status and/or partnership model envisioned for these countries with regard to the European Union.**

Countries of the Eastern Neighbourhood should get a clear membership perspective, as stated in [the EMI Resolution](#) and respective [Press Release](#). Regarding the Southern Neighbourhood, the dramatic situation in the Mediterranean calls for closer integration of migration policy and other foreign policy instruments into the ENP. The Union for the Mediterranean needs to be revived, bearing in mind that a clearer vision and focus on creation of a new framework facilitating the ENP might be necessary. Additional efforts are also necessary

with regard to Israel, Palestine and the Middle East Peace Process.

The final aim should be a common economic area encompassing the Union and all neighbouring countries, with different degrees of involvement in other EU-policies.

Evidence shows that reforms have always worked best when perspectives are clear and all possible incentives are on the table. Here the European Union needs to be more outspoken, precise and credible.

Involvement of Other Neighbours

We call for the involvement of Turkey, presently conducting accession negotiations for full membership with the EU. If the aim of the ENP is to achieve progress in the Southern Caucasus and also in the Mediterranean, the involvement of Turkey in developing action plans and policy tools and implementing them is essential. It should be given a special liaison status on the EU side.

Switzerland and the EFTA countries, in particular Norway with its experience in supporting the development of NGOs in Central Europe, should also be part of this process.

Finally the EU should add weight to vital democratization and stabilization efforts and help tackle the said countries' economies and institutions just as it has been done in the Western Balkans. The experiences drawn and lessons learnt from the democratization efforts in the Balkan countries could serve as an example for ENP, and be utilized in the countries which are now facing similar challenges.

The EU should also work on changing the perception Russia has about ENP as a hostile instrument, emphasizing that the ENP stands for peace, stability and democratic values. This should be achieved not only via diplomatic channels and a permanent dialogue on the goals and tools of ENP, but also via encouragement of Russian civil society to view the ENP as conducive to promoting and building new paths for a peaceful future.

Flexibility

The support tools that the EU offers often prove to be inadequate for dealing with the challenges that governments face reforming their countries, due to the lack of available resources. When formulating demands towards neighbourhood countries, transitory hardships caused by economic reforms, such as unemployment, lower income, higher cost for the state or social welfare budgets, need to be taken into account. They should be compensated at least partly (by granting financial aid or market access) in order to avoid that the reform process becomes unpopular and feeds populist and eurosceptic forces.

The streamlining of Action Plans in line with the respective countries' needs and priorities can be achieved through clearer benchmarking. The goals defined in Action Plans are often vague and open to interpretation, so their formulation calls for more attention.

Ownership & visibility

The European Neighbourhood Policy must be designed and implemented as a common approach of both EU institutions and member states. Member states must act in support of and in line with commonly defined policies.

The European Movement believes that true change is possible only if it is based on a broad consensus in society. Thus, the involvement of citizens and their associations in the definition and implementation of policies is crucial for success. Cooperation with civil society as well as financial and other support for civil society projects must be an integral part of the new European Neighbourhood Policy.

For the European Movement, it is impossible to imagine cross-border relations as contacts at the government level only. In order to be successful, the European Neighbourhood Policy needs to rely on European Public Diplomacy: the active involvement of civil society organisations in building contacts, exchanging experience and promoting peaceful change. The European Movement International with all its members is ready to contribute and to cooperate with the EU institutions on the realization of this endeavour.