

UNESCO's review on the European Neighbourhood Policy: a focus on the Neighbourhood South

Name: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

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| Contact details: | Floris van Zuilekom | Jan Debisschop |
| | f.van-zuilekom@unesco.org | j.debisschop@unesco.org |
| | +322908962 | +322908963 |

UNESCO considers the EU to be a privileged partner and a key player in the Neighbourhood South. Both bilateral and regional cooperation instruments are of great importance in order to establish a stable Southern Neighbourhood with sustainable, inclusive and integrated growth. However the ENP suffers from a patent ambiguity by not distinguishing itself from the enlargement policy. Furthermore Israel's presence among the group of recipient countries is generally resented among other governments.

Focus: fields of cooperation

What priority areas should the ENP focus on?

- All the priority sectors of the EU are relevant, and UNESCO suggests including culture as a transverse axe over all the priority areas instead of limiting it to migration and mobility. **Culture** can be a source of resilience and socio-economic engine, particularly in countries affected by crisis (majority of Arab countries).
- Institutional support to **education** through senior policy advice, not via direct budgetary funding.
- Support to job opportunities for women.

What tools could be helpful to deepen cooperation?

- The experience of UNESCO field offices showed that EU cooperation tools are not flexible enough to respond to multi sectoral needs in these countries. Instead, there should be a support to **sector wide coordination**, particularly with relevant UN agencies to avoid fragmentation and increase optimisation of resources.
- Review the effectiveness of twinning arrangements as some do not seem to achieve expected results.

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

- To involve national governments the resources should be directed to national governments under condition that they will then distribute it to their institutions, their professionals and actors of civil society. This way **national capacity** will be supported and distrust between national authorities and actors of society will be mitigated. Currently the development

programs tend to bypass public bodies and go straight to the actors of civil society, thereby ignoring the remarkable progress in cooperation between government and civil society (particularly in Maghreb) that deserves to be supported and sustained.

- Engage a wider range of stakeholders in the planning processes, including the UN specialised agencies that usually work very closely with ministries.

How can the EU better support a focus on a limited number of key sectors for your particular country?

- Response of UNESCO field office to the Maghreb: bilateral cooperation would benefit from UNESCO's expertise that ensures a sectoral policy dialogue in close cooperation with the Maghreb countries. For Morocco and Tunisia action plans are already available which are globally relevant.
- Response of UNESCO field office to Jordan: increase the focus on culture, education and job opportunities for poor women. Base the priority setting on national planning documents as well as on the new Sustainable Development Goals.

Flexibility – Towards a More Flexible Toolbox

How can the EU engage more effectively and respond more flexibly to developments in partner countries affected by conflict situations?

- In terms of flexibility, the EU would benefit from UNESCO's expertise in bilateral cooperation with countries in the Neighbourhood South. The expertise ensures a sectoral policy dialogue approach that is applicable to these countries. Example: UNESCO could do monitoring missions to examine EU programmes by using the budget support instrument. This would give an independent assessment, scientific support and credibility to the programme. This also applies to the ROM monitor (Results Oriented Monitoring) whose efficiency and quality are very often questioned.
- Adaptation and usage of regional tools and the multi-sectoral expertise of the UNESCO offices will enable the ENP to improve its assistance to the Neighbourhood South Countries. Also, the connections of the UNESCO Field Offices may help to improve the flexibility and visibility of the EU.
- The EU should think on how to accelerate internal procedures and be leaner and more efficient. At this moment the EU procedures seem to be very time consuming, in terms of approvals, feedback on progress reports etc., whilst the situation in conflict/post conflict countries evolves very rapidly.
- The ENP should distribute its efforts evenly over countries in conflict and stable countries.

Is the choice of sectors and mechanisms for delivery of EU financial support appropriate? How could its impact and visibility be enhanced?

- An effective manner to enhance visibility is to ensure that sufficient funds (possibly even for an international communication officer) are allocated in the project proposal/budget of the executing agency. We found this solution very efficient. However the focus on visibility

becomes sometimes an effort by itself, without being really linked to the impact of the project or its results.

Ownership and Visibility

How can the ENP accommodate the interests and aspirations of a partner-country?

- A delicate balance should be struck between the country specific demands, the international agenda and the values to which all countries subscribed.
- The EU occasionally seems to be responding more to a “political imperative” than a technical analysis of the priority needs.

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?

- Invest more funds in supporting civil society programmes, which would not require the government approval. This is rarely done.

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

- The interventions can be shorter in terms of duration, it will depend on the capacity of the implementing agency to deliver faster, the impact might also be different. However, certain programmes cannot be shortened when an impactful achievement is expected. It is the type of engagement that may need to be changed, not necessarily the duration of the program.

General remarks on ownership and visibility by our field office for the Maghreb:

The UNESCO Office for the Maghreb identifies a few challenges that prevent the EU from distributing ownership to the partner country:

- 1) EU’s need for communication,
- 2) A lack of resources to explain the results and the various instruments of cooperation and
- 3) a need for close monitoring of the projects.

According to the UNESCO solution are as follows:

- UNESCO has expertise, networks and resources in institutional communication on which EU cooperation can build to put the EU as a real partner rather than only a donor.
- The sectoral policy dialogue can rely on UNESCO for greater effectiveness and efficiency.
- UNESCO could perform the tasks ROM (Results Oriented Monitoring) and monitoring missions programs using the budget support instrument; this would give an independent assessment, scientific and credible to those instruments.