



CONTRIBUTION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF CATALONIA ON:

The joint consultation: "Towards a new Neighbourhood Policy (ENP).



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GENERAL REMARKS

The European Union's consultation on *a new European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP)* is a *timely initiative that should contribute to revamp EU's neighbourhood policy* after ten years rich of geopolitical changes in and around the Union. It should also respond to a demand from numerous stakeholders who believe that time has come to take stock of the ENP, to adapt it to new challenges and to give it fresh momentum.

The consultation concerns EU Member States and the neighbouring countries, as well as national parliaments and the European Parliament, civil society, business and the academic community. In order to trigger a wide-ranging debate, the consultation process rightly also addresses to other organisations such as the Council of Europe, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and major international financial institutions.

Even though the involvement of regions and cities is not explicitly mentioned in the consultation, the Government of Catalonia feels entitled to contribute with its views from its experiences and contribution to this policy in the past, and in line with its leadership in the involvement of sub-national authorities in drawing up and implementing EU foreign policy.

This view is particularly justified with regard to the southern dimension of the ENP given Catalonia's Mediterranean vocation and its political, economic and human relationships with North Africa. The Catalan Government has been very active in multilateral cooperation - a dimension that is highlighted in the consultation paper -, notably in the framework of the Barcelona Process – which turns twenty in November – and the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), which was established in 2008 and has a Secretariat based in Barcelona.

Below we give an assessment on ten years of neighbourhood policy and put forward some suggestions for the future, in response to a number of questions posed by the EU paper that we found most relevant. In order to further substantiate our contribution, we gathered analysis and opinions of experts and institutions. These add to our experience in Euro-Mediterranean policy, particularly in Northern Africa.

Ten years of the ENP: Uneven results and new needs

The ENP has been criticised from a number of viewpoints which have gained force in recent years as a result of the challenges that have emerged both to the east and to the south of the EU. When taking stock, however, we need to distinguish between the exogenous causes and endogenous ones. Only then will it be possible to draw a distinction between adjustment difficulties and conceptual, structural weaknesses, which affect its architecture and financial instruments.

The ENP was put in place and developed in a context of increasing instability; to the east, as a result of Russian Federation's actions in the Ukraine and Georgia crises, and to the south, where a half-century-old status quo has been rocked by the awakening of civil societies and abrupt transition processes which have brought with them uncertainty, often fuelling civil conflict and radicalism.



The Catalan Government shares the EU's view that the review of the ENP calls for more realism, more diversity and more engagement of partners, but we also believe that this is not enough.

Some of the questions asked in the Communication seem particularly relevant if the intention is that the debate goes beyond the traditional circles and triggers the interest of a wider range of stakeholders:

- Answering to the question '*Should the ENP be maintained?*', we say 'yes'. But we immediately add that the ENP should be maintained as a central feature in EU's foreign policy.

- We have always believed that the southern and eastern aspects of the ENP concern different situations, and we therefore think it useful to ask whether the same institutional framework should be kept for both (*'Should a single framework continue to cover both East and South?'*)

- The question asked about the possibility of including the '*neighbours of the neighbours*' in the ENP is intriguing and of great interest with respect to the increasingly complex relations between the Maghreb and Sub-Saharan Africa (*'Should the current geographical scope be maintained? Should the ENP allow for more flexible ways of working with the neighbours of the neighbours?'*)

- Based on our experience, we believe it is useful to begin a debate on relationship formats that go beyond those currently offered by the ENP (*'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?'*).

We concur on the need for greater flexibility to tailor ENP instruments to new requirements. We also advocate more realism and acknowledge the need to engage neighbouring countries more effectively in the design of policies and their implementation.

As for the debate - that has always underlined this policy - about the pertinence and extent of conditionality, and focusing in Northern and Sub-Saharan Africa, we call for caution in the approach and the timelines. We need to avoid the language of imposition and lecturing, staying firm in the principles but not constraining excessively the necessary room for manoeuvre of political dialogue as main driver for democratic change and progress towards good governance, respect of fundamental rights and rule of Law. The quest for stability of the region and its countries requires long-term inclusive processes, as well as participation mechanisms.

Most Arab countries are calling for more resources and less conditionality. But beyond this shared message, their strategies are increasingly divergent and range from negotiating privileged association agreements to being wary of policies that they believe are being imposed. Their concerns include the persistence of trade deficit, to the point that some countries do not see bilateral agreements with the EU as a win-win game.



The EU's partners also need to decide whether they want to share the same destination, or if they envisage other options that they may legitimately think are more advantageous. The rationale for the ENP and the regional partnerships that accompany it is to provide a shared future outlook, which we have to map out together, and calls on all of us to make efforts. In the case of the southern dimension, this means both sides of the Mediterranean must make concessions.

Through this review, the ENP needs to move to the next level and come up to expectations. As both the EU and most partner countries advocate a reform that does not put into question its architecture, as they favour a cautious approach in view of current security challenges to the East and to the South, the test is thus to find a balance between that caution and the urgency of getting the most appropriate tools to tackle new challenges.

The adoption of the ENP was a strategic decision aimed at creating an area of shared prosperity between the EU and its neighbours after the 2004 enlargement, the biggest ever in terms of territory, countries (ten) and population. In a context of European optimism, the EU offered a far-reaching perspective to neighbouring countries which former EC's President Romano Prodi described as "everything but institutions".

It was an ambitious commitment involving free market access and free movement of people, goods and capital ('3M': Market, Money, Mobility). In exchange, neighbours would carry out reforms that would enable them to share the EU's values and political and market principles. Ten years later, the ENP has to take on board the fact that we are in a different and more uncertain context. The challenge is to make provision for this context without losing the vision that inspired the 2004 proposal.

The south is no longer a single neighbourhood

More than ever, our southern neighbours constitute a complex, heterogeneous neighbourhood. And this has enormous implications for the future of the ENP.

Indeed, and in spite of the association agreements signed with most Arab countries, it has not been possible to substantially advance economic and trade integration and ensure it helps to boost the 'neighbourhood' dynamics originally intended for the ENP.

The result is the existence of clearly divergent positions, ranging from Morocco, which has an association agreement at an advanced stage and is negotiating a complete and deepened free trade agreement, to Syria and Libya, which are now outside all neighbourhoods. In between, there is a great variety of viewpoints. Especially significant is the case of Egypt, a co-founder of the UfM, which is diversifying and rebalancing its trade and strategic relations.

From the multilateral standpoint, and notwithstanding the importance of the UfM as a single platform for political dialogue for the 42 countries in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP), there has been little progress in the strategic objectives set by the Barcelona Process in 1995.

So, after 10 years of the ENP and 20 years of the EMP, the Mediterranean remains the world's most polarised border in terms of per capita income and human development index.



This results in having security issues and illegal migration at the top of the EU's political agenda concerning this region.

This situation has been aggravated in the south by the failure of two neighbour countries (Syria and Libya) and the jihadist challenge in the geographical area of the ENP and beyond (Iraq, Yemen and the Sahel). European societies have reacted with fear to the terrorist threat and some countries have seen worrying signs of political populism fuelling Islamophobia and anti-Semitism.

Crisis and fragmentation should not make us lose sight of the strategic objectives of the Barcelona Process and the ENP in the Mediterranean. In addition to responding to the challenges of security, both the ENP and the EMP seek to associate with the EU a number of countries totalling nearly 400 million people and which present outstanding demographic and trade complementarities. The intention is to form together a stable and prosperous region that can compete with other major economic areas.

Ideas and suggestions for reviewing the ENP

Ambition and realism. To review the ENP, the EU must find a balance between ambition and realism that takes into account the limits of what is possible in the current context, but also its legitimate aspiration to turn its neighbouring countries into a 'circle of friends', for the benefit of stability, good governance and shared prosperity.

The realism comes from the EU's loss of influence. The EU Communication acknowledges this reality, puts forward approaches that are less totalising than those which prevailed from 1995 to 2008 and replaces them by more pragmatic proposals. We endorse this approach, since it reflects both the present and foreseeable future, as long as the original ambition is maintained.

Ambition also means resources. The EU has allocated €15,4 billion for the period 2014-2020, representing a 35% increase over the budget for the previous seven-year period. Given the economic situation, we think this is a reasonable effort. However, we advocate for a redistribution of the expenditure that takes better into account the historical significance of the challenges presented by the Mediterranean. It is not appropriate for the ENP that the per capita expenditure in some Eastern European countries goes up to ten times higher than in the most populated countries in the South.

There is no ambition without a narrative, without a vision. So we believe that the essential pragmatism that inspires the review of the ENP should not give up on what has been the soul of this policy, especially in the Mediterranean, where - as we noted above - it is part of a shared project.

Diversification versus fragmentation.

We believe that the main challenge for the EU is to accentuate the diversification of the ENP without calling into question its regional dimension. To ensure that diversification does not lead to fragmentation, neighbourhood policy has to take into account the existence of the different interests of partners and integrate them into a global road map with a shared



calendar. This is key to convince many countries that the long-term benefits justify the short-term costs the ENP may entail.

Neighbourhood policy and foreign policy.

In order to promote a common area of stability, security and prosperity at its borders, the EU needs to ensure smoother coordination of the ENP with its foreign policy as a whole, and with the foreign policy of its Member States.

The High Representative and Commission paper recognises that 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". Greater synergy between the different expressions of the EU's foreign policy is therefore required to gain efficiency and to effectively prevent and combat the new forms of radicalisation, terrorism and organised crime to be found inside and outside the EU.

This coordination should also move forward with the three partnerships that have been established: the UfM, the Eastern Partnership and the Black Sea Synergy. It has to do this in a differentiated way that respects the uniqueness of each neighbourhood.

Notwithstanding the multilateral initiatives to the east and south-east of Europe, we believe that the UfM has an institutional track record and reality that call for more political attention and appropriate resources.

The neighbours also have neighbours.

More effective integration of the ENP in EU foreign policy should make it possible, in certain circumstances, to associate the neighbours of the neighbours with some of its aspects. The questions posed by the Communication in this area suggest greater integration of policies for the Maghreb with those devised for sub-Saharan Africa with respect to the market and human movements and security.

The Ukraine crisis has highlighted the need for greater consistency between the ENP and the EU's relations with Russia. Furthermore, the crisis in the Middle East means we need to look for new neighbourhood policy approaches to the east of the Mediterranean that take into consideration the Gulf states and Turkey, which are not part of the neighbourhood but are key players for the region's future.

Proximity and ownership.

Effective mobilisation of resources and endorsement by public opinion requires participation. In other words, participation by civil society in mapping out and implementing programmes. This principle becomes even more necessary in foreign policy as large segments of the public opinion often see it as very abstract and distant from their daily concerns and interests.

We believe that the Communication overly focuses lack of ownership on shortcomings in communication. Better explanation of the ENP's aims and achievements is certainly necessary, but the best way to change existing perceptions is to ensure more and better engagement of all stakeholders. We think the process that has been opened up is an opportunity, as long as it is more than just a top-down debate and mobilises all stakeholders.



The Government of Catalonia believes that the current review should give more prominence to the parliaments and sub-state and local authorities that are playing an increasing role in establishing regional ties and are at the forefront of issues related to the neighbourhood.

Given these considerations, we share the idea of a variable geometry for the ENP which makes it possible to undertake programmes targeted at areas with more shared interests (trade, connectivity, security, governance, migration and mobility). This is a sensible proposal but raises the challenge of consistency. If the ENP seeks to give hope to a region in need, it cannot be reduced to an untidy toolbox which features everything but does not provide a comprehensive policy response.

More coordination between the ENP and the UfM

Although the UfM has its own field and institutional architecture, the EU Communication also briefly refers to it when discussing the regional dimension of the ENP. It asks whether the multilateral dimension is able to deliver further added value and whether its current formats are fit for purpose with respect to the UfM, the EaP and the Black Sea Synergy.

The paper also introduces the issue of possible diversification of multilateral policy – *Can we more effectively use other, more flexible frameworks?* – without specifying whether these would be complementary to or substitutes for the current ones.

More imagination and flexibility is also needed multilaterally. In particular, we think that the EU should cooperate more actively with other stakeholders involved in the region, such as the Arab League (which only has observer status in the UfM and has low profile bilateral relations with the EU), the OSCE, the OIC, the G8, the Gulf Cooperation Council, the Arab Maghreb Union and the African Union.

As for the UfM, in spite of its political and budgetary constraints, it is the most advanced expression of a multilateral policy in the Mediterranean. The fact that it encompasses all EU countries, ten Arab countries, Israel, Turkey and three European countries outside the EU makes it into a unique and shared political forum.

Moreover, we strongly believe that the approach taken by the UfM Secretariat over the past three years coincides with the strategy of customised programmes which the ENP is geared towards. The UfM's challenge is, in any case, to prove that its activities, its political dimension and inclusive work culture can bring value to the regional dimension of the new ENP.

Given the overlap between many of the UfM's work areas and the ENP's action areas, what needs to be done is to avoid duplication, join forces and seek out synergies that give more credibility and visibility to Euro-Mediterranean cooperation. Likewise, the establishment of a kick-start seed fund managed by the Secretariat of the UfM to initially finance their labelled projects or conduct feasibility studies would help attract greater funds from the private sector. In addition, the UfM can help in ownership of Euro-Mediterranean policy by public opinion in Arab countries, which is one of the main shortcomings of the ENP.

The consolidation of the UfM Secretariat should enhance its political centrality in the Euro-Mediterranean dialogue. We believe this should be a commitment of the EU and its member



states which corresponds to the situation in the region. A more central role for the Secretariat is not incompatible with the guidelines of the new ENP; in fact, quite the reverse. The more the ENP ramps up its bilateral aspect and diversifies its programmes, the more necessary it becomes to strengthen an institution like the UfM which articulates a multilateral Euro-Mediterranean perspective. Equally essential is supporting the Anna Lindh Foundation's work with civil society on intercultural dialogue and citizenship.

The celebration of an informal ministerial meeting of EU Foreign Ministers with their Southern counterparts earlier this year was a great achievement considering the absence of such meetings since November 2008. Nonetheless, in the future it is important that such meetings take place in the framework of the UfM, where many other sectorial Ministerial meetings are being held.

Giving the UfM Secretariat a more global dimension is the best way to carry out the abovementioned ENP reforms without losing the perspective that guided the Barcelona Declaration and the European Neighbourhood Policy. We think that the celebration of the 20th anniversary of the Euro-Mediterranean Conference on 20 November this year is a good opportunity to place the UfM at the centre of relations between Europe and southern and eastern Mediterranean countries.

To perform this role the UfM needs to be able to take more and better advantage of ENP resources. The aim should be to achieve greater operational capacity and not have to rely so heavily on projects funded by other institutions. In any case, developments over the last three years, including several ministerial meetings, dozens of "labelled" projects and a stabilised professional team headed by a unanimously elected general secretary, are an important guarantee of continuity in a context like the present.

Greater involvement of sub-state and local authorities

Most multilateral institutions that have been put in place in the Mediterranean have been intergovernmental and have not given cities and regions the role that corresponds to them. This shortcoming is due to the view prevailing in some European countries and others along the southern Mediterranean, which is reluctant to give sub-state authorities a part to play.

Even though the paper mentions the role of regional and local authorities in the Barcelona Declaration, the EMP had not given it institutional legitimacy until the founding of the Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly (ARLEM) in 2010 sponsored by the EU Committee of Regions and the UCLG, and after lengthy lobbying by cities and regions.

We believe that ARLEM should have a much more prominent place in the EMP's institutional presence which would enable it to play a role similar to the Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly.

From the beginning the ENP attributed some significance to sub-national authorities and raised funds to promote cooperation across borders. It is therefore somewhat surprising that the EU paper makes no reference to the contribution of regions and cities to the neighbourhood policy. In fact, it does not mention ARLEM and merely tersely asks: *'What can be done to promote links between scientific communities, universities, local authorities, women, youth, the media?'*



We believe that the new ENP cannot do without the regions and cities, especially those that are most exposed to the challenges of the neighbourhood. Regional and local authorities can help spell out priorities and objectives, specify projects and mobilise the best stakeholders. They can also be active players in the implementation of many programmes. In addition they can help to increase the visibility of the ENP and deliver its ownership by public opinion.

Since the restoration of democracy and the institutions of the Catalan Government, Catalonia has built up significant experience in the Mediterranean based on an important business presence, significant human exchanges and a long tradition of cooperation. The Catalan Government and many local councils in Catalonia have a presence in the main Euro-Mediterranean networks. Moreover, research centres such as the IEMed or CIDOB, which are among the best in Europe in the Mediterranean area, are another example of the interest of Catalan society and its institutions in relations with our neighbours to the south.

This is the outcome of a historical vocation and a broad consensus on this issue among Catalan political forces. It reflects a track record that led to Barcelona's nomination as the seat of the UfM Secretariat. We believe that all this justifies our aspiration to participate actively in the debate about a new neighbourhood policy which will affect the future of Catalonia and in its implementation.

Towards a Partnership with a Clearer Focus and More Tailored Cooperation

1. The Challenges of Differentiation

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? 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 EU should be able to explore new forms of relations with countries that do not consider partnerships, while respecting the principles of the ENP itself. In some cases, the partners believe that the Association Agreements are an imposition by the EU in this regard and reject them. A variable geometry implementation of the ENP should not be ruled out but should be contemplated, depending on the characteristics and desires of the partner countries, ensuring the defence of the rule of law, the establishment of security and stability in these countries.

Concerning the Eastern Partnership, the Riga Summit of 2015, has seen the expectations lowered since only three countries (Georgia, Ukraine and Moldova) are fully committed to the Association Agreements, while the rest a variable cooperation. This is what now exists. We cannot underestimate the pressure that Russia plays in his former partners and this fact should be taken into account.

Nevertheless, the ENP should be firmly based on promote the fundamental democratic principles and freedoms and common values. The Union is founded on the values of respect for human rights, liberty, democracy and the rule of law.



The European Neighbourhood Policy should assume a strengthened territorial approach. Differentiation may be made in terms of an agreed set of short- or mid-term objectives and priorities for each country. These must always have a territorial dimension in support of multi-lateral and macro-regional territorial development.

To apply to the Mediterranean basin the macro-regional approach. This approach could be introduced gradually, through three separate macro-regions for the Mediterranean, including the Adriatic-Ionian strategy, a Western Mediterranean strategy and an Eastern Mediterranean strategy. An alternative approach would be to encourage the gradual involvement of the countries and territories of the whole area within one growing macro-region. This approach would avoid fragmentation of the region into sub-regions.

We propose that this macro-regional approach be introduced gradually to the Mediterranean region and we believe that the European Neighbourhood Policy should incorporate methodologies, concepts and instruments from the European Cohesion Policy. It should also offer the opportunity for Mediterranean partner countries to participate in the European Structural Programmes on a progressive basis.

2. Focus.

In the first place, in order to promote a shared area of stability, security and prosperity on its borders, the EU needs to coordinate the ENP with its foreign policy and the foreign policy of its Member States. The High Representative and Commission paper recognises that 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". Greater synergy between the different expressions of the EU's foreign policy is therefore required to gain efficiency and to prevent and combat the new forms of radicalisation, terrorism and organised crime to be found inside and outside the EU.

The proposed areas of interest must be shared by the ENP partners in order to be effective and implemented consistently in order to deliver. The areas identified in the consultation include a range which is of mutual interest to both sides. The instruments of the ENP is endowed seem sufficient and appropriate. The sectorial dialogues help to fix the starting points and the needs and desires of the partners, so they can be useful.

3. Flexibility

The ENP covers a very large territory with a vast range of countries facing many different challenges [from Ukraine to Morocco]. Moreover, not all the countries participating in the ENP share the same eagerness to advance into political and economic integration. This baseline differences make it very important a high degree of flexibility within a general framework to avoid incurring in double standards.

How to streamline Action Plans to adapt them better to individual country needs and priorities?



Action Plans should not be conceived as a uniform document for all the countries, but rather an individualized one for each and every partner country within a common framework of values, objectives and priorities.

Action Plans should have their departing point in the analysis of the current situation of the country and its eagerness and capacity to engage in a political dialogue with the EU institutions. In this initial assessment, common interests should be analysed and common ground should be found between the EU institutions and the partner country. Finally, clear incentives should be defined according to the objectives defined with this specific country and the achievements expected.

Incentives could range from a wide variety of possibilities and should be conditioned to the degree of implication and reforms undergone by the partner countries. In this sense, it is especially important to clearly define the incentives that can be offered especially to southern Mediterranean countries, which do not have the most appealing incentive of accession.

- Better **financing** for southern Mediterranean countries: It is desirable to open the debate to a new redistribution of spending that takes into account the historical significance of the challenges presented by the Mediterranean as well as its demographic weight. In this sense, it makes no sense for ENP per capita expenditure in some Eastern European countries to be ten times higher than in the most populous countries in the South.
- Greater participation in EU programmes as Horizon 2020, Erasmus, and others...
- Possibility of introducing the methodology, concepts and instruments of **EU Cohesion Policy** and the progressive participation of partner Mediterranean countries in European structural policies and programmes.
- Visa liberalisation and visa facilitation processes.

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?

Political and institutional dialogue and engagement must prevail with countries that do not have Action Plans with the aim of searching for common ground that could derive into the detection of common interests that could derive into future Action Plans.

In the meanwhile, countries reluctant to engage more closely into integration should be encouraged to participate in the regional framework of the ENP via the Union for the Mediterranean and other regional and sectorial frameworks of its interest, such as the 5+5 dialogue.



In this sense, it is crucial to accentuate the flexibility of the ENP without calling into question its regional dimension. Here becomes fundamental the Union for the Mediterranean, which represents the regional dimension of the Mediterranean dimension of the ENP.

Given the overlap between many of the UfM's work areas and the ENP's action areas, what needs to be done is to avoid duplication, join forces and seek out synergies that give more credibility and visibility to Euro-Mediterranean cooperation. In addition, the UfM can help in ownership of Euro-Mediterranean policy by public opinion in Arab countries, which is one of the main shortcomings of the ENP.

The consolidation of the UfM Secretariat should enhance its political centrality in the Euro-Mediterranean dialogue. We believe this should be a commitment of the EU and its member states which corresponds to the situation in the region. A more central role for the Secretariat is not incompatible with the guidelines of the new ENP; in fact, quite the reverse. The more the ENP ramps up its bilateral aspect and diversifies its programmes, the more necessary it becomes to strengthen an institution like the UfM which articulates a multilateral Euro-Mediterranean perspective. Equally essential is supporting the Anna Lindh Foundation's work with civil society on intercultural dialogue and citizenship.

To perform this role the UfM needs to be able to take more and better advantage of ENP resources. The aim should be to achieve greater operational capacity and not have to rely so heavily on projects funded by other institutions. In any case, developments over the last three years, including several ministerial meetings, dozens of "*labelled*" projects and a stabilised professional team headed by a unanimously elected general secretary, are an important guarantee of continuity in a context like the present.

Better Integration and coordination with other cooperation frameworks such as the 5+5 that can enhance regional cooperation in specific sectors.

4. Ownership and visibility.

The vision of what ENP could offer to the partners is different if they are members of the Eastern Partnership, or the Euromed countries. Some of the countries in the EaP expect to be members of the EU one day, in a not too long time (i.e. Ukraine has expressed this will last year). The EU has to make clear the differentiation between the ENP and the aspirations of these partners.

The partners of the Euromediterranean partnership need a more prosperous society that could help to reduce inequalities in the region. In this sense the exercise that the EU has developed in the different countries of the ENP to set the action Plan, has taken into account the needs and wills of the countries, individually. A similar exercise must be done concerning the regional programmes, more easy to do in the EaP than in the Euromediterranean neighbourhood, where the differences are really big.

It's not only the Member States that must be more effectively involved in the ENP. It's necessary to include the Regional and local authorities of the ENP and the EU in order to get a more efficient and coordinated work in the neighbourhood. One example could



demonstrate that, the role of the local authorities in Libya, a country that does not work, submerged in the conflict, but the local authorities are guaranteeing the needs of the population and even helping the flood of migrants from the Syrian conflict.

The ownership and visibility of the European Neighbourhood Policy should be created and developed at the local and regional level, where regional and local governments, local actors and citizens should be able to contribute to the formulation of territorialised objectives, to have access to the policy's instruments and to be implied in the implementation and evaluation of the policy and its components. Local governments are public institutions closest to citizens and have opportunities to mobilise local communities and engage them in policy-making and implementation. Notably in countries without tradition of civic participation in public policies or countries with underdeveloped civil society, local governments have the necessary proximity to engage citizens and local actors. The European Neighbourhood Policy should thus seek to empower local governments and their representative associations and contribute to building their capacity to perform this role.