

**RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE COMMITTEE
ON EU DOCUMENT NO. 59
(DOC. XVIII, no. 94)**

The Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Emigration, following consideration of EU Document no 59,

Whereas

- The Joint Consultation Paper of the European Commission and the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, JOIN(2015) 6, "Towards a new European Neighbourhood Policy" of 4 March 2015, has elicited wide-ranging consultation within the European Union and in neighbouring countries, with a view to the revision of that policy;
- Although the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) has performed an important function in dialogue and cooperation with neighbouring countries, it has not always been able to offer adequate and comprehensive response to a changing environment, as the Paper has emphasised, in terms of both the way it is managed and the instruments with which it is equipped;
- Over the years, the ENP has considerably increased its "bureaucratic" dimension, focusing on pursuing stabilisation and creating free-trade areas, but it has not always been able to satisfy the specific expectations, sensitivities and aspirations of our Partners, or to adapt to the different demands and levels of socio-economic and political development of the countries concerned;

Considering that

- The extraordinary changes that have taken place in this geopolitical area, on the southern and eastern sides, marked by endemic instability and widespread conflict, as well as by great opportunities and examples of effective democratic transition, require a more politically-oriented management of relations with partner countries, including the "neighbours of the neighbours";
- Originally designed in 2003 and most recently amended at a time when the outcome of the so-called "Arab revolutions" was not clear, the ENP has considerably "aged" since then, and now appears to be an inadequate tool needing to be updated in order to respond effectively to this situation which is marked by instability and conflict both to the East and – above all – to the South of the Union;
- In particular, there is very little focus on the geopolitical situation in the Mediterranean, its development, its challenges and opportunities, partly because of different sensitivities within the EU, shown, amongst other things, by the lack of a new generation of bilateral agreements, and the continuing deadlock in the Union for the Mediterranean;
- This being so, the ENP must be more closely integrated with the Union's foreign and security policy, and consequently the role of the High Representative and the EEAS must be enhanced, pursuant to the provisions of article 18(4) TEU;
- To preserve the unitary framework of the ENP, a more nuanced approach is needed to differentiate between the southern and the eastern dimensions, and within each of them, on

the basis of dialogue with the Partners on the actual priorities and potential of the relationship, avoiding pre-constituted classifications, taking account, in other words, of the different political, economic and social levels of preparation and development of the countries concerned, and their respective levels of ambition within the framework of the objectives of the ENP and regional specificities;

- It is necessary to study new, more immediate and targeted cooperation and partnership instruments that can provide opportunities for political dialogue in crisis situations, while at all times maintaining an integrated and coherent approach by the Union's policies;
- With particular reference to the countries in the southern neighbourhood, it is necessary to strengthen the linkage between ENP, regional dialogue, cultural cooperation, interfaith and multicultural dialogue, education and vocational training;
- Particular importance and attention should be given to the linkage between the ENP and migration policies. The neighbourhood policy could represent a useful tool in order to strengthen dialogue with the partner countries and a means of co-managing migration, gradually superseding the rationale of dealing with it purely as an emergency, to be achieved by urgently revising the Dublin III Regulation, and by establishing solidarity-oriented criteria among Member States, including burden sharing on asylum and temporary protection seekers especially from the Mediterranean.

Also considering, in relation to the issues raised in the Joint Consultation Paper:

- **On whether the ENP should be kept within a single institutional framework:**

The ENP must be kept within a unitary framework, but as an integral part of the external action of the EU, synergistically complementing the Union's common foreign, security and defence policy. As part of the process of tightening coordination between policies with a strong external dimension, it might be appropriate to have one single framework, under the responsibility of one single Commissioner, provided that the established internal allocation of ENP resources is confirmed (two-thirds to the southern partnership and one-third to the eastern partnership). The overall flow of Union resources to each partner, including resources coming through other instruments and funds, should also be made more credible and transparent;

- **On a variable geometry ENP:**

Sharp differences have to be introduced between each country, the 'more for more' model used hitherto must be mitigated, and greater account must be taken of the widely differing starting points and initial conditions when evaluating the results. The effective demands of partner countries should be carefully evaluated on a case-by-case basis. For example, Tunisia and Libya need two widely differing frameworks for engaging in dialogue today: immediate economic support in one case, and prolonged political support in the other. The Union must fully take on board these differences and act accordingly, with enhanced awareness and coherence;

- **On the geographical scope and dialogue with the "neighbours of the neighbours":**

It is absolutely necessary to extend the tools for dialogue to include the "neighbours of the neighbours" provided that this can be developed concretely, and translated into realistic objectives. In the case of the southern neighbourhood, dialogue must therefore also be strengthened to include the countries of origin of migrants (particularly in the Sahel and the Horn of Africa), as proposed in the European Agenda on Migration. For the Eastern neighbourhood it would appear crucially important to engage in a closer and systematic

dialogue with Russia, which has not always been fully deployed, as was the case with the Partnership Agreement with Ukraine, concluded without giving any consideration to the rightful concerns of the Russian Federation;

- **On interfaith dialogue:**

Interfaith and multicultural dialogue is an absolute priority. The instruments needed to nurture dialogue among different religions and faiths must be strengthened, moving from mutual recognition with the aim of creating solidarity-based coexistence, particularly by fostering dialogue with Islam and its followers;

- **On the involvement of Member States and shared ownership:**

Greater Member State involvement would appear to be absolutely essential to make ENP management more “political”. However, the pressure of national interests must not be allowed to lead to its fragmentation or to a loss of its global dimension as an instrument of a fully European foreign policy;

- **On Association Agreements, Free Trade Areas (FTAs) and sectoral cooperation:**

Association Agreements and FTAs are the most advanced political and commercial tools and the ideal goal for the ENP. But they cannot be the only way to develop neighbourhood relations, unless we want to leave out at least half of the countries, particularly those suffering from greater instability, or those which are not interested in these Agreements or are unable to conclude them. It is therefore necessary to devise other forms of association and dialogue which, while less binding and advanced, are at all events able to buttress relations between the EU and its neighbours through more targeted forms of support. The true interests of individual countries have to be identified and encouraged through targeted actions, by leading and supporting the internal development processes, also through customs relief measures;

- **On action plans, country strategies and annual progress reports:**

These instruments have become excessively cumbersome. Following a more political and differentiated approach, they must be converted into more flexible documents that are consistent with internal conditions and possible forms of dialogue, which can also be achieved with greater and more effective contribution by the EEAS;

- **On visa liberalisation and youth mobility:**

Mobility has a crucial political value for reinforcing relations with neighbouring countries, but it is also one of the fields which reveals most clearly the difference between the two dimensions of neighbourhood policy. With particular reference to the southern neighbourhood, everything must be done to encourage mobility partnerships, foster opportunities for students and young entrepreneurs and create know-how for them to take back to their home countries. In more general terms, it is becoming increasingly more necessary to aim at quality circular migration that will generate mutually positive spin-offs for the benefit of the host countries and the home countries, fostering the latter's economic development. We must make the most of student exchange programmes, thinking in terms of a full-fledged “Mediterranean Erasmus” programme, to be given a substantial share of current mobility programmes. In view of the specific nature of societies in the southern neighbourhood, the exchange measures must also be accompanied by training programmes *in situ*, designed in particular to benefit young women;

- **On the role of the ENP in neighbourhood crisis management:**

The ENP must have a stronger and more active role as a primary instrument for political dialogue in crisis areas. For this to be brought about it must be integrated into the CSFP/CSDP of which it must increasingly account for a privileged cluster;

- **On regional cooperation:**

It is necessary to debate the effectiveness of the Union for the Mediterranean and of the Eastern partnership. Also in this case, more concrete patterns of co-ownership and gradual integration going beyond sheer economic cooperation must be explored. These should take account of the different levels of dialogue between countries in the area, and should channel interests towards concrete and immediate-impact issues. Regional cooperation between partner countries must be encouraged, also at bilateral level, especially in the southern neighbourhood;

- **On the role of civil society:**

It is crucial to have appropriate instruments to robustly enhance the role of civil society, taking account of the fact that, in partner countries, civil society is often very different than in the EU. We must support the creation of a socio-economic fabric which will also ensure channels of dialogue and support when state institutions fail;

Commits the Government

To support these positions in the European Union and to make efforts towards their adoption.