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ENP in the context of the EU's external policy framework: a critical examination of the ENP's outcomes and prospects

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ENP in the context of the EU's external policy framework: a critical examination of the ENP's outcomes and prospects*

Abstract: The EU has an ability to induce change in its neighbourhood by a wide range of means. The question is how deep and how extensive that influence can be. The objective of this paper is to address this issue. To this end, following an overview of the ENP's evolution, the challenges that the ENP faces are discussed. It is argued that although the ENP has not always proved an efficient EU's external policy instrument, it retains an important position in the EU's external policy with a wide range of economic and political instruments extended to the ENP partner-countries.

Keywords: European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), European Union (EU), Eastern Partnership (EaP), Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), Black Sea Synergy (BSS), EU's external activities

Introduction

The EU external relations budget for 2014-2020 seeks to

make Europe count in a world of shifting alliances and emerging new powers. The overall objective for external action is to ensure that the EU is also able to live up to its ambitions with regards to promoting democracy, peace, solidarity, stability and poverty reduction and to help safeguard global public goods.¹

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¹ European Commission, 'The Multiannual Financial Framework: The External Action Financing Instruments', *Memo/Press Release Database*, 11 December 2013, Brussels: European Commission, 2013, http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-13-1134_en.htm [2016-11-04].

External policies of the EU target the following four areas: neighbourhood, enlargement, development cooperation and cooperation with strategic partners. An overall amount of €51.42 billion (current prices)² has been committed for the implementation of the EU external policies for the period 2014-2020³, out of which €15.43 billion for the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI). Table 1 presents the details. As the key tool designed to implement the ENP, the ENI constitutes the second largest expenditure item in this category. It is important to note, however, that even if commitments for the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI)⁴ outweigh those for the ENI, the DCI's number of beneficiaries is incomparably larger. This suggests that the ENI represents in fact a very generous pool of financial support and hence the ENP itself constitutes the EU's priority. Specifically, the DCI includes all developing countries in the Middle East, Asia, South Africa and Latin America. Simultaneously, the EU neighbouring countries are eligible to benefit not only from the ENI, but also from other financing instruments. These include the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP)⁵ and interventions under the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP).

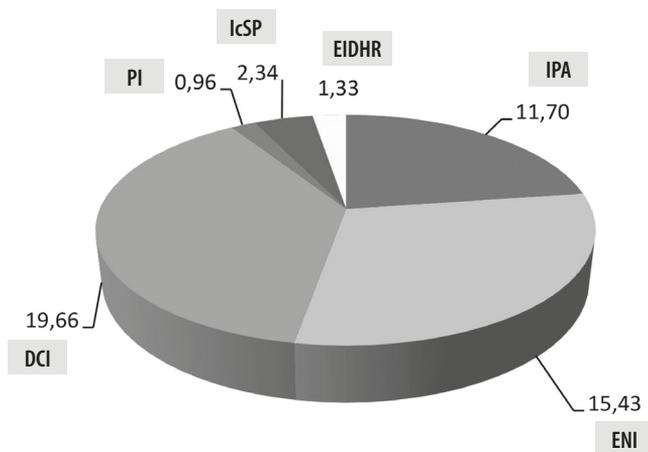
2 Ibid., p. 2.

3 In addition to the basic package for external action, the EU-budget covers other expenses, i.a. the Instrument for Nuclear Safety Cooperation (€0.225 billion) and the Instrument for Greenland (€0.184 billion). A further €30.506 billion will be made available for cooperation with African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries as well as Overseas Countries and Territories (OCT) through the 11th European Development Fund, which will remain outside of the EU budget and also is not subject to the ordinary legislative procedure. Overall funding for all above mentioned instruments adds up to €96.8 billion in current prices, source: European Commission, *The Multi-annual Financial Framework...*, op.cit.

4 Of the six recently adopted financing instruments for external action, the DCI has the largest financial envelope: €19.7 billion. In comparison, the 2007-13 DCI had an allocation of €16.9 billion. The DCI supports bilateral and regional cooperation with developing countries included in the OECD/DAC list of Official Development Assistance (ODA) recipients. The primary objective of cooperation under the DCI is the reduction of poverty. Furthermore, the DCI supports the aspiration to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and the post-2015 Development Agenda. The DCI will also contribute to the achievement of other goals of EU external action: fostering sustainable economic, social and environmental development, promoting democracy, the rule of law, good governance and respect for human rights.

5 On 11 March 2014, the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union adopted the Regulation establishing an Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP), which succeeds the Instrument for Stability (IFS).

Figure 1. EU's External financing instruments 2014-2020 (in billion €)



Source: European Commission, 'The Multiannual Financial Framework: The External Action Financing Instruments', *Memo/Press Release Database*, 11 December 2013, Brussels: European Commission, 2013.

1. The ENP's evolution and its complementary multilateral cooperation initiatives

The key assumption on which the ENP builds is that political stability and socio-economic growth in the EU neighbourhood are the best guarantee for maintaining peace and security in the long term. Initially, the ENP's goal was to prevent the establishment of new dividing lines in Europe by offering the EU neighbours the opportunity to participate in various economic, political, cultural and security activities. As the ENP foresaw the development of relations with the individual EU neighbour countries on a bilateral basis, considerable diversification in EU relations with its neighbouring countries has taken place. Indeed, the ENP builds on the realisation that each partner-country is at a different stage of economic and political development and therefore has different ambitions and needs. What follows is that the EU has to adapt and employ appropriate instruments to attain desired country specific policy-outcomes. In this sense, the differentiation principle is an integral feature of the ENP.

Another important characteristic of the ENP is the incentive-based approach, now referred to as a 'more-for-more' principle. It derives from the idea that stronger partnership and more incentives should

be provided to those partner-countries that display greater progress towards democratic reforms.⁶ Following a few years of the ENP's implementation a problem of an imbalance between its regional and bilateral approach was observed. On the one hand, bilateral instruments integral to the ENP enabled differentiation of this policy-framework, e.g. individualised action plans, which the EU negotiated with each partner-country according to progress reports' findings. On the other hand, though, the same instruments led to a diversification of the relationship between the EU and specific partner-countries weakening therefore incentives for intra-regional cooperation among the partner-countries themselves. In order to address this situation and create incentives for the EU partner-countries to engage in intra-regional cooperation, several regional and multilateral cooperation initiatives in the EU neighbourhood were launched.

Specifically, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) established as a multilateral forum for dialogue among countries in the region, was replaced by the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) in 2008. The UfM sought to boost efficiency of the EMP and strengthen the strategic relations between the EU and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) partner-countries. Building on the *acquis* of the Barcelona Process, the UfM offers a more balanced system of administration and greater transparency for citizens than the EMP. The most important changes introduced by the UfM include a rotating presidency of the EU representative and a representative of the MENA countries and the establishment of the UfM Secretariat in Barcelona. The Secretariat is responsible for identifying and promoting projects of regional, sub-regional and transnational scope across different sectors, including shipping and road transport, alternative energy sources, as well as small and medium-sized enterprises.⁷

If the establishment of a viable collaboration structure among the MENA countries was a difficult task, it was even more challenging to gather all Eastern Dimension (ED) partner-countries, i.e. including

6 European Commission and European Union External Action Service, 'A New Response to a Changing Neighbourhood: A review of European Neighbourhood Policy', *Joint Communication by the High Representative of the Union For Foreign Affairs And Security Policy and the European Commission*, Brussels, 25 May 2011.

7 Official European Commission website: ec.europa.eu

Russia, Ukraine and the South Caucasus countries at one negotiating table at the same time. The point is that Russia considers respective countries as belonging to its sphere of influence⁸. Consequently, it views the EU attempts at invigorating intra-regional collaboration in the region with suspicion. The first attempt to include the ED countries in a common regional platform was the establishment of the Black Sea Synergy (BSS)⁹ in 2007¹⁰. Following the entry in the EU of Romania and Bulgaria, the EU sought to change the distribution of power in South-Eastern Europe and by means of the BSS to enhance cooperation among the Black Sea countries.¹¹ The BSS serves as a tool to promote economic and democratic reforms, development as well as stability in the Black Sea region. The EU's involvement in the Black Sea region was driven as well by geostrategic considerations, including questions of transport routes and access to raw materials.¹² The BSS does conceal a considerable potential for the EU and its external policy goals¹³, nevertheless it underperforms.

- 8 F. Tassinari, 'A Synergy for Black Sea Regional Cooperation. Guidelines for an EU Initiative', *CEPS Policy Brief*, no. 105, 2006, p. 1; S.A. Andreev, 'The future of European Neighbourhood Policy and the role of regional cooperation in the Black Sea area', *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, vol. 8, no. 2, 2008, p. 101; A. Konarzewska, 'Strategia Unii Europejskiej wobec regionu Morza Czarnego' [EU Strategy towards Black Sea Region], *Bezpieczeństwo Narodowe* [National Security], no. 5-6, 2007; I. Ban, *The Black Sea Region and the European Neighbourhood Policy*, Budapest: CEU-ENS, 2006, p. 9; B. Piskorska, "'Synergia czarnomorska": zbliżenie państw regionu Morza Czarnego do UE' ['Black Sea synergy': rapprochement of the states of the Black Sea region to the UE], in: M. Pietraś, K. Stachurska-Szczesiak, J. Misiągiewicz (eds), *Europejska Polityka Sąsiedztwa Unii Europejskiej. Unia i jej bliscy sąsiedzi* [European Neighbourhood Policy of the EU. The Union and its close neighbours], Lublin: Wydawnictwo UMCS, 2012, pp. 175-192.
- 9 The BSS covers the states of a wider Black Sea region: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Turkey, Greece, Bulgaria, Romania, Moldova, Ukraine and Russia. The idea for the BSS recalls, in terms of practical cooperation and common interests (e.g. transport, environment, energy, combating organised crime), cooperation in the framework of the EU's Northern Dimension. European Commission, *Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on Black Sea Synergy – A New Regional Cooperation Initiative*, COM (2007) 160 final, Brussels: European Commission, 11 April 2007.
- 10 However, officially, the BSS was launched in Kiev in February 2008.
- 11 European Commission, *Communication on Strengthening the European Neighbourhood Policy*, COM (2006) 726 final, Brussels: European Commission, 2006.
- 12 T. Kapuśniak, 'Wymiar wschodni Europejskiej Polityki Sąsiedztwa Unii Europejskiej. Inkluzja bez członkostwa?' [Eastern dimension of the European Neighbourhood Policy of the European Union. Inclusion without membership?], *Natolin Zeszyty* [Natolin Papers], no. 42, 2010, pp. 83-89.
- 13 A. Visvizi, 'Social Innovation in the EU and the Black Sea Region: trends, challenges and opportunities', in: A. Korovesi, (ed.) *Empowering Civil Society in the Black Sea region: a tool for Innovative Social Change*, Xenophon Paper, no. 13, 2013, Athens: International Centre for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS), pp. 77-87, http://icbss.org/media/1115_original.pdf.

The Russian-Georgian conflict in 2008 served as an impulse for strengthening the ED. Indeed, the Eastern Partnership (EaP)¹⁴ was launched soon after. The idea of EaP was promoted by Poland and Sweden.¹⁵ It targeted the six ED partner-countries, i.e. Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. The EaP led to a real rapprochement between the EU and those partner-countries. Cooperation was fostered in such areas as human rights, market economy, sustainable development, good governance, energy security and others. Increased EU involvement in cooperation with each partner-country was conditional on respective countries' individual progress in achieving the EaP objectives. As the number of cooperation initiatives in the EU neighbourhood increased and yet the budget remained the same, a concern was born that tensions among the partner-countries would emerge. From a different angle, France and Spain, as the key supporters of the UfM on the one hand, and Poland and Sweden, as the key supporters of the EaP on the other hand, sought to draw the EU's institutional attention to the UfM and EaP respectively. Nevertheless, today, it seems that no permanent competition between these two policy-frameworks has emerged.

2. Challenges to the ENP implementation

The ENP is subject to multifaceted internal and external challenges. The internal challenges include shortcomings in the original design of the ENP, its scope and allocation of incentives, the diverse expectations and potential of the ENP partner-countries.¹⁶ The external challenges include changing dynamics of the geopolitical situation and financial crisis 2008+.

The shortcomings in the original design of the ENP seem to have come back as a boomerang today and weigh heavily on the ENP's ef-

14 European Commission, 'Eastern Partnership', *Communication from the Commission*, COM (2008) 823 final, confirmed by Joint Declaration of the Prague Eastern Partnership Summit, Prague, 7 May 2009; H. De Waele, *Layered Global Player. Legal Dynamics of EU External Relations*, London–New York: Springer, 2011, p. 133.

15 Appropriate decisions were taken at the European Council on 19-20 March 2009.

16 J. Kwiecień, 'Interests and preferences and their constitutive role in the EaP: regional, national and local actors vis-à-vis the ENP's goals and objectives', *Yearbook of the Institute of East-Central Europe*, vol. 13, no. 4, 2015, pp. 103-107.

fectiveness. To a considerable extent, the ENP as a policy-framework builds on experiences and mechanisms that have shaped the EU policy of enlargement. In other words, successive rounds of enlargement allowed the EU to accumulate expertise and hence eventually turn the enlargement policy not only into an external policy instrument but also into a model of international cooperation. Clearly, given the specificity of countries included in the ENP, it was not feasible for all experiences and modes of cooperation garnered during the enlargement process to be transferred to the ENP. This is perhaps one of the most salient reasons of why so many challenges to the ENP implementation exist.¹⁷ These include, for instance, vast diversity among the ENP partner-countries. They differ markedly in potential and expectations regarding outcomes and goals of cooperation. Specifically, for some of the partner-countries, the EU membership has always been the ultimate goal of cooperation. Other countries were interested solely in deepening their trade relations with the EU in view of establishing a free trade area.

Accordingly, the ENP partner-countries can be divided into three groups.¹⁸ Belarus and Azerbaijan were not interested in the EU membership. Ukraine and Armenia considered the possibility of EU accession. For Moldova and Georgia, the prospect of membership in the EU was an essential rationale behind their involvement with the ENP. However, the ambiguity as to the final objective of the ENP, as the EU membership was neither promised nor excluded, caused a feeling in the latter that the EU neglected their interests and objectives. These countries were particularly dissatisfied due to the fact that Iceland, Lichtenstein and Norway¹⁹, i.e. members of the European Economic Area (EEA), were not included in the ENP. Also, there was a suspicion among them that the ENP might serve as a substitute for EU membership. This fear was augmented by the realisation that following the 2004 enlargement, the EU experienced an 'enlargement fatigue'. In-

17 Visvizi, *op.cit.*, pp. 77-87.

18 See: J. Rupnik (ed.), *Les Banlieues de l'Europe* [The suburbs of Europe], Paris: Presses de Sciences Po, 2007.

19 K. Dośpiał-Borysiak, T. Kapuśniak, 'Wschodni wymiar w polityce Unii Europejskiej' [Eastern dimension in the policy of the European Union], *Studia Europejskie* [European Studies], no. 4, 2008, pp. 219-225.

deed, popular discourse of that time oscillated around the notions of the EU's limited inclusion capacity and the need for 'deepening' rather than 'widening' of the European project. The different expectations amongst the Eastern neighbours are reflected in the EU funds absorption: the highest absorption level of the EU funds devoted to the government reforms in 2007-2010 was demonstrated by Moldova (77%) and Georgia (74%), followed by Ukraine (67%), Armenia (47%), and reform-unfriendly Azerbaijan (27%) at the bottom of the list.²⁰

Further challenges of internal nature include the scope of this policy-framework and allocation of its incentives. Specifically, the benefits offered by the EU to the partner-countries did not include political integration. They were limited to establishing closer trade relations and access to the single market. The ENP's offer was therefore incomparably less than what the EU promised to the countries negotiating EU membership. The model of the ENP's benefits for the partner-countries was termed as 'conditionality-lite'²¹, i.e. characterised by vague and non-committal relationships. Paradoxically, however, the lack of hard conditionality in the ENP may boost the effectiveness of other mechanisms, e.g. socialisation of local elites²² that ultimately contribute to the attainment of domestic reforms. Discussing the ENP's challenges, the notion of mobility incentives should be mentioned. For instance, several ENP partner-countries expressed their disappointment with the EU's reluctant stance towards visa liberalisation. Another problem frequently raised in the debate on the ENP refers to the consistency and rigour in funds allocation.²³

Reviewing the ENP in May 2011²⁴, the EU addressed that problem by introducing the 'more for more' approach. In line with its objectives, the best performers with regard to democratic reforms were to

- 20 E. Kaca, 'Neighbourhood Policy: "More for More" Requires Stronger Union Diplomacy', *PISM Bulletin*, no. 107 (440), Warsaw: Polish Institute of International Affairs, 16 November 2012.
- 21 G. Sasse, 'The ENP Process and the EU's Eastern Neighbours: "Conditionality-lite", Socialisation and "Procedural Entrapment"', *Global Europe Papers*, 2008/9, p. 10.
- 22 G. Sasse, 'The European Neighbourhood Policy: Conditionality Revised for the EU's Eastern Neighbours', *Europe-Asia Studies*, no. 60/2, 2008, pp. 295-316.
- 23 C. Grant, 'A New Neighbourhood Policy for the EU', Centre for European Reform, March 2011.
- 24 European Commission and External Action Service, 'A New Response to a Changing Neighbourhood: A review of European Neighbourhood Policy', *Joint Communication by the High Representative of The Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the European Commission*, Brussels, 25 May 2011.

receive more financial support. In other words, the EU did not deprive the remaining partner-countries of funding, but created a system of incentives for those partner-countries that demonstrated a true commitment to the reform process. In the 2015 review of the ENP, this incentive-based approach was assessed as 'successful'²⁵ and the EC will seek further possibilities to leverage additional non-EU-Budget funding and will modernise its technical assistance instruments (TAIEX and Twinning) to provide tailor-made support.²⁶

The most important external challenge to the ENP's implementation is Russia and its attempts to restore its former influence in the post-Soviet space. To this end, Russia employs a variety of instruments, including attempts to 'warm up' the frozen conflicts in Transnistria²⁷, Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The Russian-Georgian conflict in 2008 serves as a clear evidence that fundamental differences exist between the EU and Russia as regards their view of the post-Soviet space and the means employed to influence it. For instance, whereas the EU continued using soft instruments of the ENP²⁸, Russia initiated a competing project, i.e. the Eurasian Customs Union. Moreover, Russia is militarily present in almost every EaP country but Azerbaijan. It tormented the EU by using the energy as a weapon, e.g. in 2009, gas supply was cut off in Slovakia and Bulgaria due to the Russian-Ukrainian price dispute. Russia threatened to do the same with other EU countries.

Last but not least, the implications of the crisis should be taken into account. Although the EU Eastern neighbours and Russia experienced the impact of the financial crisis 2008+ more directly and more suddenly than the EU's Southern neighbours did²⁹, overall, the crisis

25 European Commission, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, 'Review of the European Neighbourhood Policy', *Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions*, JOIN (2015) 50 final, Brussels, 18 November 2015, p. 5.

26 *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20.

27 K. Lungu, 'Transnistria – who to blame?', *ECFR Commentary*, 15 January 2016, http://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary_transnistria_who_to_blame [2016-11-04].

28 D. Bechev, K. Nicolaidis, 'From Policy to Policy: Can the EU Special Relations with Its "Neighbourhood" Be Decentered?', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, vol. 48, no. 3, 2010, pp. 6-7.

29 This was reflected in the economic growth, which for the Mediterranean region nearly halved in 2009 in comparison with 2008, from 5.2% to 2.7%, and for the Eastern neighbours – indicated an almost 10%-points decrease from 2008.

has had a dramatic impact on growth prospects in both regions³⁰. In addition, the migration crisis creates additional pressure on the ENP and expectations invested in it. In 2015, the EC admitted, “the EU cannot alone solve the many challenges of the region.”³¹ However, the new ENP is to help in creating the conditions for positive development.³²

3. The ENP’s toolkit

The ENP foresees financial and technical assistance, development support, preferential trade agreements as well as the perspective of participating in the EU internal market. In 2006 the ENP’s toolkit was extended to include (bilateral) Association Agreements (AAs). The key component of the AAs is the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (AA/DCFTA). Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine have concluded AA/DCFTA negotiations. Tunisia benefits from a privileged partnership and Morocco has an advanced status in its relations with the EU³³. Armenia decided to stop the process and announced joining Belarus in the Eurasian Customs Union. The revamped in 2011 ENP foresees ‘lighter’ options for those countries that decide not to transform all sectors of their economies at the outset. For instance, in the AA/DCFTAs framework the ENP partner-countries may opt for Agreements on Conformity Assessment and Acceptance (ACAAs). These agreements enable free movement of industrial products in specific sectors³⁴, rather than full trade liberalisation as in the case of DCFTAs.

The ENP’s existing toolbox provides also for a wide range of political tools. Besides typically formal instruments of the former second pillar (common strategies, joint actions or positions in the ENP framework), the EU can impose sanctions and restrictions: an arms embargo, visa restrictions, the freezing of funds, flight bans. Furthermore, the diplomatic instruments are commonly used i.a. demarché, public statements, visits at the highest level, the appeal of ambassadors, political

30 European Commission, ‘The Impact of the Global Crisis on Neighbouring Countries of the EU’, *Occasional Papers*, no. 48, June 2009.

31 European Commission, ‘Review of the European Neighbourhood Policy...’, *op.cit.*, p. 2.

32 *Loc.cit.*

33 *Ibid.*, p. 4.

34 *Ibid.*, p. 8.

consultations, support for other international organisations' activities, elections observations. There were only several cases, where the partner countries were 'punished' this way, i.e. asset freezes and travel bans for Belarusian leaders, as well as travel ban for Transnistrian leaders.³⁵ The flashiest example could be the economic sanctions imposed on Russia on 31 July 2014 in response to its assertive policy that violated the Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity.³⁶

Last but not least, the EU has at its disposal the instruments in the field of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) for civilian and military management of conflicts³⁷, in particular the strengthening of political dialogue, participation of partner countries in the CFSP and CSDP, crisis management, as well as further development of the shared responsibility for stability and security in neighbouring regions. Moreover, the EU is interested in strengthening the safety and security of energy and transport connections, the environment and the development of regional cooperation as a tool for solving important issues at the external borders (illegal migration, smuggling, cross-border organised crime)³⁸. The idea, especially the fight with terrorism, was also stressed in the latest ENP review of 2015. Indirectly, the new ENP might contribute to terrorism prevention.

In the CSDP framework, apart from the missions in the Western Balkans, since 2004 the EU has been conducting an EUJUST THEMIS mission to support the rule of law in Georgia, two support missions on the Ukrainian-Moldovan border, RAFAH mission on the Egyptian-Palestinian border, as well as a police mission EUPOL COPPS in the Palestinian territories. These examples show that even the CSDP can

35 E. Gnedina, N. Popescu, 'The European Neighbourhood Policy's first decade in the Eastern Neighbourhood', *Neighbourhood Policy Paper*, no. 3, July 2012, Center for International and European Studies, p. 3.

36 On Monday 21 December 2015, the EU formally extended its sanctions against Russia for six months. The sanctions target trade with Russia in the energy, defence and finance sectors, as well as in the area of dual-use goods.

37 S. Gstohl, 'The EU as a Norm Exporter?', in: D. Mahncke, S. Gstohl, (eds), *Europe's Near Abroad. Promises and Prospects of the EU's Neighbourhood Policy*, Brussels: P.I.E. Peter Lang S.A., 2008, pp. 282-283.

38 European Commission, 'European Neighbourhood Policy – Strategy Paper', *Communication from the Commission to the Council and European Parliament*, COM (2004) 373 final, Brussels, 12 May 2004.

serve the objectives of the ENP³⁹. For the time being, the EU strongly prefers the conflict prevention and post-conflict reconstruction missions rather than any direct involvement.⁴⁰

4. Partner-countries' economic and political changes

● In the MFF 2000-2006 countries included in ED and Southern Dimension (SD) were granted €8.4 billion. In the MFF 2007-2013 the EU funding increased by 32% and reached the value of €11.2 billion⁴¹. Overall however, the ENP partner-countries received more funding than initially planned, i.e. ca. €13 billion. In the MFF 2014-2020 the EU assigned €15.4 billion⁴² for relevant instruments, including the ENI. Despite the huge financial support on the part of the EU, ten years following the ENP's launch the results are modest.

There are countries like Moldova, Georgia, Tunisia and Morocco, where governments are committed to reform. The example of Egyptian transition clearly shows the risks and pitfalls of a badly managed process.⁴³ Georgia and Moldova managed to make a progress in reforms of the political and judicial system. As far as the respect for fundamental rights and freedoms is concerned, Azerbaijan left it untouched, despite the calls of the EU. No progress occurred in Belarus in the area of political reforms and the political repressions in Belarus after the elections of December 2010 were a critical test for the ENP. In Tunisia, a new government was appointed and a new constitution was adopted. In Egypt, President Mohammed Morsi was ousted, but the concerns about political polarity, freedom of press and assembly

39 In addition, two of the ENP countries, i.e. Ukraine and Morocco, have been involved in the activities of CSDP in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

40 K. Smith, 'The Outsiders: The European Neighbourhood Policy', *International Affairs*, vol. 81, no. 4, 2005, pp. 757-773; K. Weber, M.E. Smith, M. Baum, *Governing Europe's neighbourhood. Partners or periphery?*, Manchester-New York: Manchester University Press, 2007, p. 39.

41 Gnedina, Popescu, op.cit., p. 3.

42 European Commission, 'Neighbourhood at the crossroads – taking stock of a year of challenges', *Press Release*, 27 March 2014, Brussels: European Commission, 2014.

43 European Commission, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, 'Neighbourhood at the Crossroads: Implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy in 2013', *Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions*, JOIN (2014) 12 final, 27 March 2014, Brussels, p. 7.

remained valid. A limited implementation of commitments took place in Morocco due to the difficult political context (although positive reforms of migration policy took place).

An important progress could be noticed in the mobility and migration, where almost all of the Eastern partner-countries and two of the Southern partner-countries (Morocco and Tunisia) signed mobility partnerships. In the latest ENP review of 2015, the EU committed to reinforce the cooperation on migration and mobility not only with direct neighbourhood, but also beyond, meaning Turkey, Western Balkans, countries of the wider Middle East, the Sahel region and the Horn of Africa.⁴⁴ In light of the problem with massive migration flows, more action and involvement is needed than a closer cooperation on visa and mobility issues.⁴⁵ In a way, the migration crisis offers the EC the possibility of proving the ENP's effectiveness and usefulness by helping in the migration management process.

The events observed in the EU's neighbourhood, including massive refugee flows, rise in terrorism as well as violation of Ukrainian territorial integrity can reshape the ENP. For instance, in response to the Russian-Ukrainian conflict escalation, the EU promptly signed the political chapter of the EU-Ukraine AA/DCFTA postponing the signing of the economic one. Appreciating the power of societies of partner-countries (revolutions in Georgia in 2003 and Ukraine in 2004 and 2014), the EC states that the

willingness to reform cannot be imposed from outside and the expectation for reform must come from societies. By engaging directly with people, opening travel and study opportunities for citizens (even unilaterally), and promoting networking between communities (business, research, universities, arts, culture, etc.), and supporting civil society, EU policy can act as a catalyst in this process.⁴⁶

In order to strengthen the political dimension of the ENP, the EC suggested the possibility of involvement of all partner-countries in the

44 European Commission, 'Review of the European Neighbourhood Policy...', op.cit., p. 15.

45 There are already ongoing regional dialogues such as the Rabat and Khartoum processes in the South and the Budapest and Prague processes in the East as well as on the Eastern Partnership panel on Migration and Asylum for intra-regional cooperation and programming.

46 European Commission, 'Neighbourhood at the Crossroads...', op.cit., p. 8.

CFSP declarations, inviting them to the meetings of international fora and intensification of the parliamentary cooperation.

Conclusions

The ENP as an instrument of the EU external policy has a potential which has not been fully exploited, partially due to the internal and external challenges to the ENP. The analysis of the ENP's meaning in the EU's external activities framework suggests that the ENI is, in fact, a very generous pool of financial resources and the ENP itself the EU's priority. However, the results of the ENP economic and political support to the partner-countries as a whole, were acknowledged even by the EC as of 'very limited progress'⁴⁷ with some exceptions. From the latest ENP review 2015 arises a longing for a somehow common policy framework for the Eastern and Southern neighbours.⁴⁸

It is difficult to imagine that without changes the ENP will replicate the transformative power that the EU enlargement policy demonstrated. The adjustments need to address the problem of vast diversity among the ENP partner-countries and Russia's assertive policy to restore its former influence zone. Some limitations to the exploitation of the potential of the ENP as a foreign policy instrument are due to the allocation of political and economic incentives and lack of political will of the ruling elites to introduce reforms in the partner-countries.

The EU wanted to impact on the external surroundings in a rather evolutionary way by political, legal and economic means and by using its own attractiveness. However, it did not predict that the societies in Southern countries (Arab Spring 2011) and in Ukraine (Ukrainian crisis) would start revolutions. The ENP occurred unprepared for such a scenario, which could have raised doubts on the concept. The EU's economic, political and humanitarian support to the countries in need a few months later, turned out to be insufficient. In its concept, the ENP was to stabilise the periphery, but in the end the sudden upheavals in the partner-countries are a serious destabilising threat to the EU.

47 European Commission, 'European Neighbourhood Policy: Working towards a Stronger Partnership', *Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions*, JOIN (2013) 4 final, 20 March 2013, Brussels.

48 European Commission, 'Review of the European Neighbourhood Policy...', *op.cit.*, p. 4.

Now the EU has to tackle massive migration flows and rising terrorism consequences. Paradoxically, the migration and terrorism crisis offers the possibility of proving the ENP's effectiveness and usefulness by helping in the migration management and terrorism prevention.

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