

Background notes – Inter-Parliamentary Conference for the CFSP and the CSDP – 5 & 6 September 2015

Session I: Towards a new European Neighbourhood Policy

1. Origins and results of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP)

Designed in 2003 and reviewed in 2011, the ENP aims at a close political and economic association with 16 EU neighbour countries: 10 **Southern neighbours**¹ and 6 **Eastern neighbours**.²

To this aim, the European Union and every partner country agree on an action plan which may lead to an **Association Agreement** (AA) including, in its most extensive form, a **Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement** (DCFTA) which reduces tariffs and harmonises local and EU norms on competition, public procurement, trade facilitation and intellectual property. **Georgia, Moldova** and **Ukraine** have signed in 2014 an agreement including a DCFTA, which are currently being ratified.³ **Morocco** is currently negotiating the terms of a DCFTA. Preparatory reunions aiming at launching negotiations have taken place with Jordan and Tunisia. Egypt, Israel and Lebanon have already concluded AAs without DCFTAs. Palestine has agreed with the EU on an action plan, while Algeria, Belarus, Libya and Syria have not.

The ENP also includes a **migration, mobility and asylum** dimension which generally leads to Mobility Partnerships, Visa Liberalisation Action Plans and/or Readmission Agreements between the EU and its partner countries. The first ENP country benefiting from visa-free access to the Schengen Area for its nationals is **Moldova**, since 2014. Negotiations to this respect are ongoing with **Georgia** and **Ukraine**.

In addition to the development of bilateral relations, the ENP also fosters multilateral relations through two structures: the **Union for the Mediterranean** (UfM) for Southern neighbours and the **Eastern Partnership** for Eastern neighbours. The UfM was launched in 2008 as a continuation of the Barcelona Process of 1995. Further to most of the Southern ENP countries, the UfM includes Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mauritania, Monaco, Montenegro and Turkey. The Eastern Partnership was established in 2009 in order to develop closer political ties between the EU and post-Soviet countries.

While tangible successes of the ENP are undeniable, the political situation in some partner countries is far from the initial ENP objectives in terms of democracy, rule of law, respect for human rights, economic integration and social cohesion.

To the **East**, the European choice of **Ukraine** led to the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol and to the backing of separatists in eastern Ukraine by Russia. In response, the EU adopted

¹ Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia

² Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine

³ As of 15 August 2015, 23 Parties had notified to the Council of the EU the ratification of the agreements with Moldova and Ukraine and 21 Parties the ratification of the agreement with Georgia.

diplomatic and economic sanctions against Russia, which were extended in June 2015 until 2016. Although the agreements referred to as Minsk II shall secure a ceasefire and a solution to the crisis, fighting continues and the Ukrainian government still does not enjoy sovereignty over its whole territory. Furthermore, **Georgia** had previously experienced Russian military activity on its territory. For its part, **Armenia** decided not to sign an AA/DCFTA with the EU, even though the negotiations were concluded, and is now a member of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU).

To the **South**, the Arab Spring did lead to a democratic transition only in **Tunisia**, a country which has however to deal with terrorist threats. **Egypt** is governed by the army since the ousting of the elected president in 2013. **Libya** suffers a conflict which the European intervention of 2011 was unable to stop, although the Skhirat Agreement of 10 July 2015 opens a window of opportunity to its resolution. On its part, **Syria** is embroiled in a war which takes a severe death toll and lacks a clear perspective of political solution. Nonetheless, the Iran nuclear deal may facilitate renewed diplomatic contacts of the main diplomatic players of the region on the issue. Syria counts more than 7 million internally displaced people and 4 million refugees abroad, while it is a fertile soil for Da'esh.

2. Launch of the review process

Considering the evolution of the neighbourhood and the results of the ENP, the High Representative/Vice-President and the European Commissioner for ENP and enlargement negotiations launched in March 2015 a **review of the ENP** including a public consultation concluded in June. After evaluation, the High Representative/Vice-President and the Commission will draft jointly a new communication in fall 2015, which will enclose concrete proposals on the future orientation of the ENP.

In their joint consultation paper, the High Representative/Vice-President and the Commission touch upon the forms that the reviewed ENP could take in order to better defend EU interests, address challenges in the region and draft policy which corresponds better to the expectations of partner countries. It calls stake-holders to share their views of the following aspects of the policy:

- The continuity of a **single framework** to cover both East and South
- The policy to formulate towards the **neighbours of the neighbours**
- How to better involve **EU Member States** in the ENP
- The relevance of the **AA/DCFTA** as the final objective for all partner countries
- The usefulness of **Action Plans** and **Progress Reports**
- A more focused framework for **sector cooperation**, particularly according to the “more for more” approach
- The management of **migration** and **mobility**
- The promotion of **prosperity** and **stability**
- The added value of **regional and multilateral cooperation**
- **Religious and cultural dialogue** and dialogue with **civil society**

3. Views of the Parliaments/Chambers of the Union

Some Parliaments/Chambers have expressed their views on the ENP review in the framework of the public consultation; others have preferred to use the political dialogue with the Commission; finally, some Parliaments/Chambers have adopted resolutions on the ENP review addressed at their governments.

Parliaments/Chambers having expressed views have generally dealt with the points put forward by the joint consultation paper, while specifying some of them or mentioning others, such as:

- The countries or regional integration projects concerned by the expression “**neighbours of neighbours**”: Russia, countries of the Middle East, the Sahel, the Horn of Africa, Central Asia, Cabo Verde or the EAEU.
- The **policy fields** to be prioritised: democracy, rule of law, respect for human rights, gender equality, good governance, economic development, employment, mobility, migration flows, the fight against trafficking of human beings, sharing the added value of the ENP, energy, climate, environment, security, armed conflicts, terrorism, cyber security, information security, coordination with development policies.
- The participation to the ENP to be considered as a process which is strictly separated from the **EU accession process** or as a first step towards it.
- The role of the **High Representative/Vice-President** in the ENP and the relevance of a distinct Commissioner for the ENP.
- The amount and distribution of **financial resources** of the ENP among Eastern and Southern neighbours.
- A **strategic communication** in order to communicate positively on the EU in ENP countries and on the importance of a safe and stable neighbourhood in the EU.
- Strengthening the **parliamentary dimension** of the ENP.
- Cooperation with **NATO** and **international financial institutions** in the ENP.
- The ENP as an **instrument of dialogue** in crisis regions.

Some points for discussion:

- Shall the reviewed ENP keep a single framework to cover both East and South? Shall this framework allow for differentiation, including narrower sector cooperation and the definition of other final objectives than the AA/DCFTA?
- Shall the reviewed ENP be more closely linked to other instruments of the CFSP, particularly in the security field, by introducing a security dimension to the ENP?
- Which approach shall the reviewed ENP develop towards neighbours of neighbours?
- Can participation to the Eastern Partnership be considered as a first step towards accession?
- Which measures can be adopted to concretely support Ukraine in the implementation of the agreements referred to as Minsk II?