

Review of the "European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument"

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The Committee on Foreign Affairs adopted an own-initiative report drafted by Konrad **SZYMANSKI** (UEN, PL) on the review of the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI). It referred to Regulation (EC) No 1638/2006 establishing an ENPI and considers that, overall, the provisions of Regulation (EC) No 1638/2006 are adequate and valid for the purposes of cooperation with neighbouring countries and other multilateral organisations. Members call on the Commission, together with the partner governments, to develop further mechanisms for consultation with civil society and local authorities, in order better to involve them in the design and monitoring of the implementation of the ENPI and of the national reform programmes.

The report states that sectoral and general budget support under the ENPI should be made available only to governments which are able to implement it in a transparent and accountable manner and where it constitutes a real incentive. The Commission is asked to review the appropriateness of budget support in countries which have problems with budgetary management and control procedures and high levels of corruption.

Furthermore, there should be a country-specific approach with regard to political conditionality, designed inter alia to promote democracy, the rule of law and good governance, respect for human rights and minority rights and the independence of the judiciary.

Members underline the need to increase the ENPI financial envelope in order to enable the ENP to attain its increasingly ambitious objectives. They go on to recall that, during the negotiations on the ENPI's legal basis, Parliament had legitimate concerns over how the medium and short-term strategy papers and country papers, often containing indicative financial amounts, would be subject to parliamentary scrutiny. They call for an evaluation of how these indicative financial commitments have been implemented during the past two years. The committee is concerned about the high level of requested budgetary transfers, which already amount to a cumulative increase of EUR 410 million in commitments and EUR 635 million in payments for the years 2007 and 2008.

Country and region-specific remarks: the committee notes the progress made under the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM initiative), but stresses that:

- the ENPI financing of the ENP initiative for the South or East should not be used to the detriment of each other;
- Parliament should be adequately informed of the UfM projects funded from the ENPI;
- when ENPI funds are used, the transparency of other sources, including private funding, is particularly important.

Members also made the following points:

- the Mediterranean component of the ENP should complement the Barcelona Process, and the ENP's objectives need to be more clearly defined in order to strengthen the Barcelona Process by favouring a multilateral regional approach;

- there should be enhanced EU involvement in the Black Sea region and an ambitious Eastern Partnership. The committee stressed the need to accelerate the establishment of a free-trade zone in relation to Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Ukraine and Moldova in particular, as soon as partner countries are ready;
- an Eastern Neighbourhood assembly ("Euroeast"), with the participation of the European Parliament, should be created on the same lines as the Euromed and EuroLat assemblies with a view to implementing the ENPI in the countries of eastern Europe, namely Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus.