Review of the "European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument"

2008/2236(INI) - 19/02/2009 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted, by 500 votes to 46 with 12 abstentions, a resolution on the review of the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI). It refers to Regulation (EC) No 1638 /2006 establishing an ENPI and considers that, overall, the provisions of the Regulation 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 resolution 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 and to support its new regional initiatives. They ask that, when this occurs, the Mediterranean countries and the countries of eastern Europe should both benefit. Parliament goes on to recall that, during the negotiations on the ENPI's legal basis, Parliament had legitimate concerns over how the strategy papers and country papers, often containing indicative financial amounts, would be subject to parliamentary scrutiny. It calls for an evaluation of how these indicative financial commitments have been implemented during the past two years. Parliament 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: Parliament 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;
- 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;
- in relation to Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine in particular, the establishment of a free-trade zone should be accelerated as soon as partner countries are ready;
- increased regional cooperation in the Black Sea region should be one of the key priorities for the ENP. Parliament calls for enhanced cooperation with Turkey in the Black Sea, given its strategic

importance and the future role it could play in the common foreign and security policy, as well as with Russia, emphasising the need for the full involvement of those countries in the resolution of regional conflicts;

- 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.

Lastly, Parliament stresses that the financial envelope for Belarus needs to be reviewed to see whether cooperation can be broadened to cover areas beyond energy, the environment and migration, with a view to pursuing the policy of re-engagement initiated by the Council in September 2008.