

Resolution on the review of the European neighbourhood policy - eastern dimension

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The European Parliament adopted a resolution tabled by the Committee on Foreign Affairs on the review of the European Neighbourhood Policy - Eastern Dimension.

ENP review – General: Parliament welcomes the ongoing review of the ENP and stresses that this process should lead to a further enhancement of the EU's ties with neighbouring countries and that, while the aspirations and goals of those countries may differ, all of them have the potential to be the closest of political allies for the EU. It notes that the two dimensions (southern and eastern) of the ENP should be perceived as integral parts of the same priority policy. Members emphasise that the strategic review of the ENP should reflect an increased political commitment from all partners and should strengthen performance-based differentiation based on clearly defined benchmarks. They stress the need to acknowledge the changes brought by the Lisbon Treaty with respect to institutional changes and the increased powers of Parliament and they call on the EEAS and the EU delegations around the world to contribute greatly to ensuring that human rights and political principles are more strongly integrated into the analysis of the political situation in third countries and fed into possible 'transformation' policies via aid projects.

ENP-East: Parliament welcomes the launch of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) as a political framework for the advancement of the eastern dimension of the ENP, which seeks to deepen the relations between the EU and its eastern neighbours while supporting political and socio-economic reforms in the partner countries. It for clear benchmarks for monitoring such reforms, noting that the benchmarks should take into consideration the specificities of each partner, including its specific goals and potential, and that Parliament must be involved in devising these benchmarks. Members stress that a European perspective including Article 49 of the Treaty on EU could constitute a driving force for reforms in these countries and further strengthen their commitment to shared values and principles such as democracy, the rule of law, respect for human rights and good governance.

They note that since the ENP's launch in 2004, mixed results have been recorded, with positive developments concerning human rights and democratisation in some partner countries and some negative developments in others, particularly in Belarus, where recent developments were an affront to the EU's vision of respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

Parliament underlines the importance of complementing the EU's bilateral relations with EaP countries with a multilateral dimension by increasing the number of activities included in the thematic platforms, paying particular attention to strengthening cross-border projects. It notes, however, that the bilateral dimension remains prominent, and calls for a **clearer and more rigorous differentiation and conditionality**, where ambition and commitments are followed by implementation and **real progress is followed by concrete steps towards a European perspective**. Members firmly believe that the intensification of ties with the best-performing partners will have a positive effect on the others and could enhance multilateral cooperation.

They recall their view that the **Association Agreements** are an important tool for stimulating reform and should include concrete conditions, timetables and performance benchmarks and be accompanied by a regular monitoring process in order to efficiently deepen the bilateral relationship with the EU in a holistic way and to enhance coherence between all of the components of such agreements, i.e. the political, economic, social and cultural components and the human rights obligations. The Comprehensive

Institution-Building Programmes should be launched as swiftly as possible. Bearing in mind the ambitious nature of the Association Agreements and their crucial importance for the future of the EaP, Parliament considers that the EU should support these countries through the provision of technical and financial assistance, so as to empower them to fulfil the implementation commitments.

It goes on to stress the importance of supporting the **mobility of citizens**, maintaining people-to-people contacts and managing migration flows, particularly through visa facilitation and readmission agreements, with a view to gradually moving towards full visa liberalisation, provided that all relevant conditions are fully met. Visa liberalisation can be used as a strong incentive to promote democratisation and human rights reforms in the partner countries, as well as a means of acknowledging concrete steps taken towards political association and economic integration with the EU within the ENP framework.

Members underline the need to provide an **adequate level of EU funding** for cooperation with the neighbourhood and reiterates the value of the ENPI as the ENP financing instrument, which needs to evolve in such a way as to respond more flexibly to the different needs of the neighbouring countries and regions, ensure that there is a direct linkage between the ENP policy objectives and ENPI programming and reflect the performance-based character of the future ENP. Parliament emphasises, however, the need to ensure greater flexibility as well as better-targeted assistance, aimed in particular at civil society and local levels, making sure that the financial assistance is not subject to unjustified state interference. A fundamental criterion for the funding of projects must be their added value for local economic development, taking into account the actual cost of, and the real contribution made by, each project. Parliament calls on the Commission and the EEAS to conduct early consultations with Parliament and the civil society stakeholders during the forthcoming drafting of the successor instrument.

It also calls for:

more funding to be provided under, and better use to be made of, the Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights in order to strengthen civil society's capacity to promote human rights and democratic reform;

a sizeable increase in the heading 4 ceiling within the overall budget;

increased financial support, albeit not at the expense of funding for the Union for the Mediterranean, for the eastern component of the ENP, in order to fulfil the objectives and secure effective implementation of the EaP.

Members note that strengthening the Youth dimension of the Eastern Partnership represents a major investment in the future of EU-Eastern Neighbourhood relations, with great potential for the years to come. They reiterate that the additional EUR 1 000 000 allocated to the ENPI for 2011 within the EU budget for 2011 should be spent by the Commission on strengthening the Youth dimension of the Eastern partnership by providing:

small grants to be awarded through calls for proposals issued by the Commission or an EU delegation and addressed to EU and EaP countries' youth organisations, for common projects;

scholarships for students from ENP-East countries

Role of the European Parliament: Members stress the key importance of the European Parliament in fostering political debate and in enhancing democracy in the neighbouring partner countries, including through parliamentary election observation missions. They reaffirm strong support for the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly, and consider that the Assembly will make a useful contribution to the implementation of the strengthened ENP. The resolution stresses the role of the European Parliament in all phases and areas of the development of the ENP, both in the making of strategic choices and in

scrutinising ENP implementation. It regrets, however, the limited consultation and access to documents during the drafting of relevant programming documents, and calls for Parliament to be granted access to the negotiating mandates for all international agreements under negotiation with the ENP partner countries, in accordance the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU.