European neighbourhood policy

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The committee adopted the own-initiative report by Charles Tannock (EPP-ED , UK) on the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). The report emphasised that the EU enlargement process must be accompanied by "an ambitious and substantial flexible neighbourhood policy" for those European countries which are aligning themselves with the values of the EU and "are minded to take part in the European project". The ENP could MEPs said that the Commission should give vigorous support to democratic forces in neighbouring countries, in particular by providing access to independent media and information.

The committee also called for clear priorities and evaluation criteria and an effective monitoring mechanism. It added that, if countries violate international and European standards of respect for human rights and democracy, the EU should be ready to restrict or suspend aid and even to cancel agreements.

MEPs welcomed the idea of providing European neighbourhood agreements at the end of the ENP process, adding that such agreements can encourage step-by-step progress towards full access to the internal market, participation in the European security and defence policy and close cooperation in the field of justice and home affairs. However, they said that the ENP should not only strengthen ties between the EU and the neighbouring countries but also promote regional integration between these countries.

The committee recognised the "European aspirations" of Ukraine and Moldova , and called for a "long-term European perspective" to be established. It also proposed a European stability pact for the Southern Caucasus, modelled on the EU stability pact for South-eastern Europe .

Other points mentioned in the report include: improving energy network links in order to benefit both the EU and its partner countries; stepping up trade and tourism, which will mean improving transport networks and will probably improve links between the partner countries; cooperation in environmental matters, such as water management, waste management, air pollution, flood management and combating desertification; and cooperation on legal and illegal immigration.