## Basic information

| | |
|---|---|
| **2003/2018(INI)**<br>INI - Own-initiative procedure | Procedure completed |
| Wider Europe, neighbourhood: a new framework for relations with Eastern and Southern neighbours<br>**Subject**<br>6.40.15 European neighbourhood policy | |

## Key players

### European Parliament

| Committee responsible | Rapporteur | Appointed |
|---|---|---|
| AFET Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security, Defense | NAPOLETANO Pasqualina (PSE) | 25/03/2003 |

| Committee for opinion | Rapporteur for opinion | Appointed |
|---|---|---|
| BUDG Budgets | BÖGE Reimer (PPE-DE) | 10/07/2003 |

### Council of the European Union

| Council configuration | Meetings | Date |
|---|---|---|
| General Affairs | 2501 | 2003-04-14 |
| General Affairs | 2518 | 2003-06-16 |
| General Affairs | 2495 | 2003-03-18 |

### European Commission

| Commission DG | Commissioner |
|---|---|
| External Relations | |

## Key events

| Date | Event | Reference | Summary |
|---|---|---|---|
| 11/03/2003 | Non-legislative basic document published | COM(2003)0104 | Summary |
| 18/03/2003 | Debate in Council | | Summary |
| 27/03/2003 | Committee referral announced in Parliament | | |
| 14/04/2003 | Debate in Council | | Summary |
| 16/06/2003 | Resolution/conclusions adopted by Council | | |
| 04/11/2003 | Vote in committee | | Summary |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 04/11/2003 | Committee report tabled for plenary | A5-0378/2003 | |
| 19/11/2003 | Debate in Parliament | | |
| 20/11/2003 | Decision by Parliament | T5-0520/2003 | Summary |
| 20/11/2003 | End of procedure in Parliament | | |

| Technical information | |
|---|---|
| **Procedure reference** | 2003/2018(INI) |
| **Procedure type** | INI - Own-initiative procedure |
| **Procedure subtype** | Strategic initiative |
| **Legal basis** | Rules of Procedure EP 55 |
| **Stage reached in procedure** | Procedure completed |
| **Committee dossier** | AFET/5/19304 |

# Wider Europe, neighbourhood: a new framework for relations with Eastern and Southern neighbours

2003/2018(INI) - 11/03/2003 - Non-legislative basic document

As of 1 May 2004, the European Union will encompass 25 countries, with a combined population of more than 450 million and a GDP of almost EUR 1000 billion. Such a dramatic enlargement will have weighty political and economic consequences on the EU's new neighbours, namely Russia, the Western NIS and the Southern Mediterranean. In response to this development the Council has requested that the Commission prepare a report on future EU policy vis-à-vis its new neighbours. For the purposes of this document the Commission does not include the candidate countries of Turkey, Bulgaria and Romania. In its Communication, the Commission is keen to emphasise that the EU must avoid drawing new dividing lines in Europe. Rather, future EU policy will rest on the promotion of stability and prosperity with its neighbours through the long-term promotion of reform, sustainable development and trade. The so-called "ring-of-friends" with whom the EU can enjoy close, peaceful and co-operative relations. First and foremost the Communication suggests that Russia and the countries of the Western NIS and the Southern Mediterranean should be offered the prospect of a stake in the EU's Internal Market and further integration and liberalisation to promote the free movement of persons, goods, services and capital - the four freedoms. The challenge to do so is great. There is, for instance, a great disparity between the levels of GDP. Most of the EU's southern and eastern neighbours have a nominal GDP per capita of less than EUR 2000. Poverty and social exclusion has increased sharply in Russia and the WNIS over the past decade. Similarly in the Mediterranean region relative poverty remains an issue. Nearly 30% of the population live on less than $2 a day and illiteracy rates remain high. Only 0.6% use the internet and only 1.2% have access to a computer. Other problems faced by these neighbouring countries are weak levels of foreign direct investment, weak functioning legal systems plus the negative effect of conflict (Western Sahara, Palestine and Transdniestria). In order to counter the negative impacts outlined above and in order to implement the "ring-of-friends" policy the Commission has put forward a number of proposals for further European Parliament and Council consideration. They are: - The extension of the internal market and regulatory structures. The implementation of such a policy would allow for the establishment of common rules and standards, vital if the EU's neighbours are to successfully access the enlarged EU internal market. This would also have the advantage of creating a level playing field in the area of goods, services, capital and persons. - Preferential trading relations and market opening. More open trade is a key component for market integration and as such the Commission urges the expansion of existing trade agreement with the neighbouring countries - both with the EU and amongst themselves. - Perspectives for lawful migration and movement of persons. The EU is keen to emphasise that the new external border should not be seen as a barrier to trade, social and cultural interchange or regional cooperation. Proposals include facilitating the crossing of external borders for bona fide third-country nationals living in the border areas that have legitimate and valid grounds for regularly crossing the border and who do notpose any security threat. - Intensified co-operation to prevent and combat common security. The Commission is seeking an intensification of co-operation, joint work and greater assistance to combat security threats such as terrorism and trans-national organised crime, customs and taxation fraud, nuclear and environmental hazards and communicable diseases. - Greater EU political involvement in conflict prevention and crisis management. Under this heading the Commission proposes that the EU should take a more active role in facilitating a settlement of the disputes over Palestine, the Western Sahara and Transdniestria. - Greater efforts to promote human rights, further cultural co-operation and enhance mutual understanding. Such efforts would include EU programmes and activities in research, education, culture and bilateral visitor programmes. - Integration of transport, energy and the communications networks and the European research area - in particular EU policies such as the Trans European Networks (TENs), Galileo and other research activities. - New instruments and investment promotion and protection. Future agreements concluded with the EU's neighbours could include reciprocal provisions granting companies national treatment for their operations as well as a strengthening in the overall protection of investment. As such the EU should continue to assist in the fight against corruption. - Supporting WTO membership. The EU should support WTO negotiations with applicant countries - Russia, Ukraine, Algeria, Lebanon and Syria. - Financial assistance, better tailored to needs. This would include, for example, the strengthening of all forms of economic, legal and social cooperation across borders, especially between regional and local authorities and within civil society. - New sources of finance. The Commission proposed a possible Euro-Med bank as a means of providing additional support for private sector

development in the region. It also suggests the further development of EBRD and EIB funding to Russia and its extension to take in the Ukraine, Moldova and eventually Belarus. In order to achieve the objectives listed above Action Plans and benchmarks should be drawn up by the Commission and presented to both the European Parliament and Council for consideration, following discussion with the partner countries concerned. A three-step process could be envisaged for developing and implementing the Action Plans for each country. 1. Dialogue in the existing frameworks of the Association and Partnership Co-operation Agreements. 2. The setting out of common objectives and benchmarks plus a timetable of their achievement 3. An annual review of progress in the implementation of the action plans. Lastly, the financial implications of the new Neighbourhood Policy should be reflected in the Commission's future budgetary proposals.

# Wider Europe, neighbourhood: a new framework for relations with Eastern and Southern neighbours

2003/2018(INI) - 18/03/2003

The Council welcomed the Commission Communication "Wider Europe - Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours" as well as a contribution by Secretary-General/High Representative Solana. On this basis, it had an orientation debate on the general principles of this initiative, after which the Presidency noted as preliminary elements: - the emphasis placed by several speakers on the principle of differentiation of the relationship (different models to be applied to the different countries considered); - but also the fact that the approach to these countries was guided by common concerns, including the question of basic values (human rights, democracy, rule of law); - the fact that similar issues had to be addressed in these countries (including migration, organised crime, market issues, sustainable development); - the fact that the initiative should be seen as separate from the question of EU membership. The Council tasked its relevant bodies to continue preparatory work on this issue in view of the next General Affairs and External Relations Council meeting on 14-15 April and in the perspective of the enlarged meeting of the European Conference in Athens in 17 April.

# Wider Europe, neighbourhood: a new framework for relations with Eastern and Southern neighbours

2003/2018(INI) - 14/04/2003

The Council held a policy debate on the "Wider Europe" initiative and the Union's relations with its Eastern and Southern neighbours. The Permanent Representatives Committee will oversee further work so as to enable the Council to return to this subject at a forthcoming meeting. The "Wider Europe" initiative is based on the conviction that the EU's enlargement on 1 May 2004 - which represents a historic step for the European contintent - also presents a unique opportunity to strengthen co-operation and interdependence with those countries that will soon find themselves at the Union's frontiers. The Council's debate highlighted the need to take account of the specific situations within individual Eastern and Mediterranean neighbours and relations between them while strengthening co-operation and interdependence. There was broad agreement among delegations in the need for a differentiated approach and the issue of benchmarking to assess progress towards established objectives. The debate further confirmed that criminality including, human trafficking and illegal immigration, as well as the promotion of the human rights are important issues that will require careful examination in the framework of future work on "Wider Europe". Soem delegations considered that the structure of the European Conference - which was established in 1997 - will require review. In light of the views expressed by some delegations on the financial dimension to the Union's relations with neighbouring countries, the Presidency suggested that further discussion would be required on the use of existing instruments. The Presidency also emphasised that discussion on the Wider Europe should not prejudge the question of the future of EU membership.

# Wider Europe, neighbourhood: a new framework for relations with Eastern and Southern neighbours

2003/2018(INI) - 20/11/2003 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on the own-initiative report drafted by Pasqualina NAPOLETANO (PES, Italy) on the Wider Europe Neighbourhood Policy. (Please see the document dated 04/11/03.) Parliament felt that the new enhanced relationship with the Union's neighbours went beyond what has traditionally been seen as "external actions" for third countries and created a new dimension to the partnership. It remarked on the possibility of opening up heading 7 of the financial perspective (pre-accession strategy), or some other adjustment of the current headings, with appropriate financing after 2006. Furthermore, Parliament stated that the proposed functioning of action plans relating to Ukraine, Moldova and the southern Mediterranean partners must fully respect Parliament's legislative and budgetary prerogatives. It rejected any proposal that would give the Council predominance on policy issues. These must be dealt with in the framework of the established procedures and must guarantee the rights of both arms of the legislative and budgetary authorities. Finally, Parliament drew attention to the important role of the new Member States in stepping up, at their frontiers, efforts to promote political dialogue and the gradual establishment of a free trade area by means of national action plans and to consolidate cross-frontier cooperation.