

# Eu neighbourhood policy in the context of common foreign policy the possibilities...

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## **EU Neighbourhood Policy in the context of common foreign policy: the possibilities and limits of joint actions**

Since its inception, the European Union has maintained its influential capacity in the European region, and it enabled a peaceful co-existence between member states and mutual development to flourish. When the Maastricht Treaty was implemented, and applications for accession of the Central and Eastern European countries increased, questions have evolved as to how the CEE countries would be able to adapt to the current policies of the European Union. There is also a concern as to how the current member states would have to bear the new addition in the organization and its effects in their respective countries. However, each member state agrees that there is a need to create a coherent and common foreign policy to enable accession countries and neighbouring countries to adhere to the policy's goal in creating camaraderie and peace. As a result of negotiations and proposals, the European Neighbourhood Policy came into form, proposing for a 'Wider European Initiative'. However, there are still flaws into the policy's capacity to implement change and cooperation between the member states and the partners of the EU, especially in resolving the problem of weak governance and policy guidelines.

The proponents of the European Neighbourhood Policy began in March 2003 as the European Commission presented the communiqué "Wider Europe – Neighbourhood: A new Framework for relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours". Under the communiqué, it presented a framework that would enable the European Union to reach out to the CEE countries and

the neighbouring Middle Eastern countries to entice partnership and development. The communiqué was immediately accepted as the foundation of the ENP and shortly afterward, the strategy paper of the European Neighbourhood Policy was released in May 2004. Under the European Neighbourhood Policy, its primary goal integrates the three pillars of the European Union's present structure in creating stability and security within the EU and its neighbouring countries fostering positive interdependence. Under this goal, the European Union would work together with its neighbours to resolve regional conflicts and threats like terrorism and organized crimes. With the help of the European Security Strategy, the European Union can use the ESS to enable the ENP to create a secure foreign and security policy context. The ENP is seen as a policy that also encompasses the neighbouring countries in the East and South to share the stability the European Union currently has with its member states. However, many questioned the definition of the EU pertaining to neighbourhood. The European Union's neighbourhood encompasses a large area, especially those surrounded by the Mediterranean Sea. Under these included regions are mixes of nationalities and three major religions that may clash with European Union's religious background and economic stability.

The implementation of the ENP would begin with an economic proposal that would enable the EU to create a partnership with a non-member nation or neighbouring country. The treaties between the EU and the non-member nation or neighbour states are administered by a separate authority. The treaty between the EU and the neighbouring states covers open borders, common passport or visa such as the Schengen visa, and a single currency

the Euro. Normally, neighbouring states would find the terms of the treaty to be beneficial despite the reduced capacity of the government in promoting its sovereignty. However, neighbouring countries are more in favour in the ENP's capacity to help them in crises that would affect the whole community, and allow integration to develop. Under the neighbourhood policy, crisis opportunities that would require community intervention include terrorism, crime, and environmental issues. The EU offers to neighbour states its help in the intervening in these crises as this would help in promoting peace and stability. The EU also becomes the authority to establish a common judicial system that would define how the Union and the partner nations would act upon these crises. Eventually, this community judiciary system would proceed to replace the national law. Individual members are not permitted to create their own individual foreign policy as they are required to follow the community policy. To finalize the application of the ENP, the members would have to acknowledge that the EU is the final authority for intervening and declaring policies that would cover the entire "community" .

For the European Union, their reason in creating the European Neighbourhood Policy is to create a method of integration that would allow partner countries to participate in several EU policies and programmes. This goal realizes that the European Union aims to enable these neighbouring countries to merge with the European Union as a member. It is also seen as an attempt to manage the challenges of globalization and promote EU's internal security by creating stability. It also creates a medium to hinder all possible forms of division between these regions and Europe. The ENP also

seeks to find countries that would wish to remain a non-member of the EU and then foster economic, political and social cooperation between them and the member countries. This gives non-members freedom to influence EU policymaking, and unite with the remaining members under the ENP.

The possibilities under the ENP, aside from the promise of partnership with the EU and its promise to help neighbouring countries in time of crises, are limitless considering the ENP's developing guidelines. Since the ENP follows the three pillars policy that also enabled the creation of the European Union, each pillar in the ENP corresponds to an action or instrument that would ensure stability and integration for the member states and neighbouring nations. The First pillar contains the economic instruments like financial aids, development assistance, infrastructure funds, and trade agreements that would sustain the internal market. The ENP, under this pillar, comprises mostly incentive-based programs to utilize cost-benefit calculations and enable interaction in multiple instances. In 2006, the European Commission proposed to improve the offer the ENP would provide its neighbours by giving them deep free trading agreements with all ENP states, enabling these neighbours to gain access to services and resources. Political instruments are also used to continue supporting neighbouring nations with incentives that range from intervention assistance against crime to training for negotiations and expertise. Aside from the second pillar instruments for common strategies and joint actions in imposing sanctions or measures, the EU can also use diplomatic mediums to intervene in behalf of their neighbourhood partners.

The ENP also opens up possibilities of cooperation in improving a common foreign and security policy for the entire community and its partners.

Cooperation between the ENP states would enable positive involvement of all states in issues related to the CFSP and the European Security and Defence Policy, crisis management and prevention, information sharing, joint action as well as EU-led operations. Cooperation would also entice further development of responsibilities between all states part of the neighbourhood policy to facilitate security and stability. The European Union can also utilize this opportunity in reinforcing security in the region and rebuilding cooperation to address issues that affect its borders and the entire region. With regards to the CFSP, the European Commission can directly address representatives for the CFSP and representatives from the various neighbouring countries. The ENP would also be able to increase coordination between international and regional organizations to spring into action in case of crisis .

However, despite the nobility of the ENP to create a common foreign policy for its members and neighbours, it still has various flaws that prevent others from benefiting from the ENP's goal in creating co-existence and mutual development. The first limitation of the ENP is its proximity policy that only covers the Eastern countries like Moldova, Russia, Ukraine and Belarus originally. The Mediterranean countries were only added in a later period, and only Russia expressed that it would only favour bilateral partnerships. When the ENP was fully launched, the scope of the proximity policy has widened to include South Caucasian territories as requested by Ukraine,

Moldova, Morocco, Tunisia, Israel and the Palestinian Authority. The inclusion of these additional territories in the proximity policy that only covers the Eastern European regions now presents to the original partners that they would benefit more from the partnership if they acceded instead of undergoing the ENP. The original chosen neighbours would also find the ENP less attractive due to its new neighbour additions, finding it mediocre and no longer fitted to their country's needs. These first-chosen neighbours may also find the ENP no longer a deal of great political importance since the additional neighbours would force the ENP to change its objectives and integration measures.

The differentiation of policy goals of the ENP would also cause questions as to the ultimate goal of the policy to bring a positive relationship between the member countries and the partner states with an unclear objective for joint action. The concern of EU's southern and eastern borders, for example, would create a rift in undermining the policy goals of the ENP considering that these regions are poorer than the Western European members and the accession countries of the EU, which may cause the member states to shoulder the neighbouring state. Some of these neighbouring countries and partner states, such as Israel and the Palestinian Authority, are politically unstable due to rivalling factions. Each of these countries, including the present member countries wants something out of the neighbourhood policy which may affect joint action come the time a crisis arises in the region's borders.

Although there are conditionality packages and incentives offered in the ENP that entices neighbour countries to join the policy and implement all EU reforms, there is still a question if this is enough to facilitate change and harbour joint action tendencies. At present, the greatest foreign policy success the Union has achieved is the transformation of former Soviet countries into democratic countries with working market economies. Some believe that it was due to the promise by the Union to allow these former Soviet countries to apply for EU memberships come the time they reform their government and their economies in EU standards. Experts believe that the membership incentive is the key that would determine if a non-member state would adhere to the policies noted in the ENP or other EU-related policies. Without the membership incentive, there is a high chance that the non-member state would not accept the ENP reforms and policies, and decline all form of joint action despite its capacity to affect the state. There is also differentiation in each country in terms of its maturity over the values the EU wishes to promote in the nations. With most of these values, to countries like in North Africa and Middle East, unfitting to be applied in their own region, it may affect the EU's credibility even further in these regions.

Using pre-accession routines and instruments in applying the ENP in the majority of these neighbouring countries is also a flaw in the ENP as it may undermine the effectiveness of the ENP to enhance the security of the European Union, as well as the viability of the policy to cater to joint action and acceptance in the neighbouring countries. As of today, the current framework which the ENP uses the pre-accession medium could only enable



the Union to avoid questioning, it cannot, however, develop new agreements considering the nature of the neighbourhood policy. Negotiation would also become less intergovernmental, and it may cause demarcation between the three pillars of the ENP. Some third countries who will join the ENP would also find the instruments and policies of the ENP as a method to accede to the EU rather than seeing it as an alternative for membership. The lack of clear aims, credibility, and how the EU can deliver its promise to the countries that apply the ENP undermines its capacity to promote joint action and common foreign policy .

The European Neighbourhood Policy may have lofty goals in creating partnerships with non-member states and neighbouring partners, but, it has potential to develop into a common foreign policy that the member states and the neighbouring countries can accept. On the one hand, the neighbourhood policy still has to address the proximity scope of its neighbourhood coverage, and how these additional countries could adapt its policies to match with the ENP member countries and the other European Union member states. It also has to address its goals and how exactly could it enforce joint action and understanding between the neighbouring countries who have vetted interest in certain fields with the application in the ENP. There is also a need to address how the present Union sustain the individual economies of each member state once these neighbours enter the picture. However, on the other hand, the incentives the policy provides would enable these interested neighbours to find a solution to their current political and economic problems. For the EU, it would open up new

opportunities and markets for the member countries to examine and explore. The ENP must find an opening that would be flexible enough to accommodate all the loopholes seen in the earlier drafts and retain the core goal of the whole neighbourhood policy – to promote peace and stability between the European region and its neighbourhood nations, and respond to any threats in a joint effort.

## References

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