

EU bolsters its support to reformers in its Southern and Eastern neighbourhoods

In May 2011, in the midst of dramatic changes sweeping the Southern Neighbourhood, the EU completed a major review of its European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). According to a policy of “more for more”, committed reformers in the EU’s Southern and Eastern neighbourhood would be awarded greater and broader EU support.

The ENP package presented today, by Catherine Ashton, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Commission Vice-President and Štefan Füle, EU Commissioner for Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policy, assesses the first year of implementation of the new approach. It also proposes a roadmap for giving further impetus to the implementation of the Eastern Partnership.

Over the last twelve months, the **EU has responded with determination to a fast-changing situation in its neighbourhood**. The joint Communication assesses the results of the new policy:

- The EU re-oriented assistance programmes and made EUR 1 billion more available in 2011-2013 to be channelled through new innovative programmes - SPRING for the Southern Neighbourhood and EaPIC for the Eastern Neighbourhood. It increased the lending ceilings of the European Investment Bank by EUR 1.15 billion, and successfully proposed the extension of the mandate of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development to the EU’s southern neighbours.
- Applying the reform-rewarding logic of “more for more”, the EU has supported those partners embarking on political reforms. In Tunisia the EU has doubled its financial assistance from EUR 80 million to EUR 160 million in 2011. The EU has also been quick to curtail relations with countries grossly violating human rights, and impose wide ranging sanctions against those regimes, instead channelling its support towards civil society and affected populations.
- The resumption of official 5+2 talks on the settlement of the Transnistrian conflict in the Republic of Moldova was accompanied by intensified co-operation with the Government of Moldova, the launch of large-scale EU confidence building measures and a step-by-step review of EU sanctions against Transnistria.
- A Civil Society Facility covering all ENP countries was launched in September with an initial budget of EUR 26 million for 2011 and similar additional amounts planned for 2012 and 2013.

Upon finalisation of the assessment, High Representative **Catherine Ashton** declared: *“Last year, we re-launched our Neighbourhood Policy to reflect the historic changes going on around us. We now see the first results of this review, which sought to intensify assistance to those who went further in democratic and economic*

reforms. We have seen great progress in some countries. In others, we need to encourage the political leadership to take bold steps down the path to reform. I have always said that we will be judged on our work with our immediate neighbours, and I am convinced that we are moving in the right direction. We will continue to help our partners in their efforts to embed fundamental values and reinforce the economic reforms which are necessary to create what I call 'deep democracy'."

Štefan Füle added *"While we should not indulge in self-congratulation and we should always make a reality check about the effectiveness of our policy, we have set the new policy on solid grounds and have developed many initiatives that I am confident are already bearing fruit"*.

There was substantial progress on **political association with** partner countries. Negotiations on an Association Agreement (AA) have been launched with the Republic of Moldova, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan. Progress has been made on economic integration (so called **Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas** as an integral part of AAs); negotiations were launched with Moldova and Georgia, and will shortly be launched with Armenia. Similar negotiations with Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia are likely to be opened before the end of the year.

While AA (including DCFTA) negotiations were finalised with Ukraine, followed by the Agreement's initialling in March, remaining concerns about the domestic political situation in Ukraine have cast doubts about the early signature and ratification of this agreement, unless these concerns are addressed.

Significant progress has also been made in **the area of mobility**. Steps were taken towards visa liberalisation with Eastern partners, namely the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia. A mobility partnership has been recently established with Armenia and negotiations on mobility partnership with Azerbaijan could be launched soon. A special offer in this area has been made to Belarus. In the South, dialogues on migration, mobility and security were launched with Morocco and Tunisia, opening the way to mobility partnerships. The Communication proposes to initiate a dialogue with Jordan.

Following the request made by the March 2012 European Council, the staff working document on the "Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity" proposes a Roadmap including objectives, instruments and actions for the implementation of EU policies towards Southern Mediterranean partners.

As agreed at the Eastern Partnership Summit in Warsaw in 2011, a separate joint Communication proposes **A Roadmap to the autumn 2013 Eastern Partnership Summit**. The Communication describes for the first time the full range of bilateral and multilateral activities under the Eastern Partnership. The Roadmap reconfirms the shared commitment of the EU and the Eastern European partner countries to democratic reforms and economic transformation, and sets out an ambitious work programme in view of next year's summit in Vilnius. It will give impetus to objectives of the Eastern Partnership: to accelerate political association and deepen economic integration of the partner countries with the EU; to increase the mobility of citizens in a secure and well managed environment; and to foster cooperation across a wide range of sectors.

*“The Eastern Partnership addresses the issue of unfinished transformation” commented **High Representative Ashton**. “I am confident that the Roadmap will help partner countries accelerate their transition towards democracy and market-oriented economy by providing a monitoring tool in support of their reform process. The more partner countries achieve tangible progress in their reform efforts, the more the EU will be prepared to support them. It is also vital that partners make renewed efforts to resolve the conflicts which have blighted the region for far too long. The EU stands ready to strengthen its support to those who are ready to take courageous decisions and turn the page.”*

Commissioner **Füle** added: *“I am pleased to see that this policy tool has been developed further to consultations held with EU Member States, our Eastern European partners, and civil society. The Roadmap lays out in a transparent way for all partners the range of objectives of the Eastern Partnership, the expected policy actions on the part of our partners, the EU support to achieve these objectives, and an indication of what can be achieved by the next Eastern Partnership Summit to be held in autumn 2013.”*

The documents available include:

- The joint Communication: “Delivering on a new European Neighbourhood Policy”.
- The joint Communication: “A Roadmap to the autumn 2013 Eastern Partnership Summit”.
- Two joint Staff working documents providing details on the Eastern Partnership Roadmap bilateral and multilateral dimensions.
- Twelve joint Staff working documents assessing progress made by individual ENP country partners (country reports).
- A report on “Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity”, concerning Southern Mediterranean including the roadmap.
- A report on the "Eastern Partnership".
- A statistical annex.
- A set of 16 Memos, summarising the state of the play in the neighbouring countries.