

Working Paper

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The ENP

Visibility and Perceptions in the Partner
Countries

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Working Paper FG2, 2008/ 01,
January 2008, SWP Berlin

updated on April 23, 2008

Table of Contents

Summary	3
1. Introduction	4
2. Visibility and perception in the partner countries	5
2.1. Group I: Belarus, Tunisia, and West Bank and Gaza Strip	5
2.2. Group II: Algeria, Azerbaijan, Egypt, Jordan, Libya and Syria	6
2.3. Group III: Armenia, Georgia, Lebanon, Moldova, Morocco and Ukraine	8
2.4. Group IV: Israel	11
3. General Findings and Recommendations	11
General Findings	11
Recommendations	11
Annex I: Visibility and Perception – Overview on the ENP Partner Countries	13
Annex II: State of the ENP	17
Annex III: Membership in International and Regional Organisations and Party to Important Treaties	18

Summary

Visibility and perceptions of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) are important variables for the effectiveness of the EU approach towards its neighbours. In the absence of a clear EU membership perspective, the ENP builds on the principle of “joint ownership”: it entails mutual efforts of both the EU and the respective partner country in determining the adequate action lines – the objectives which the two partners both agree to fulfil.

In this context, visibility reflects the degree of awareness of the EU on the part of partner countries, while perception refers to interpretations and misinterpretations of the EU’s motives for launching and conducting its policies in the partner countries. It entails an interpretation of the ENP’s values and norms on the part of partner countries.

The perception of the EU varies considerably among the ENP partners, depending on the credibility of the EU to produce and/or encourage reforms, the existence of other external actors having their own reform strategies with the ENP partners, and most importantly the domestic demand for reforms. The more the EU will be perceived as a distinct and valuable external actor, the more likely the ENP will achieve its mission: facilitating reforms and democracy, stability and prosperity.

As it stands, the situation is far from homogeneous among the ENP partners, and one can schematically distinguish¹ between the Southern and the Eastern dimension: while Southern partners (with the exception of Israel) see EU involvement in domestic affairs as a constraint on their room for manoeuvre, Eastern neighbours (including South Caucasus) consider that the ENP does not engage as thoroughly as they wish on the path to EU integration.

The way the EU is seen and perceived among the ENP countries calls for a tailor-made approach, according to each partner’s specificities, in line with the principle of “joint ownership”. Specific proposals to strengthen the ENP’s visibility and improve its perception in the partner countries include:

- A reinforcement of differentiation among ENP partners in order to address each country’s needs individually,
- An improvement of the domestic capacity development, through the allocation of more resources to the EU’s communication, the intensification of the dialogue with civil society in partner countries, and an increased investment in capacity-building through EU aid programmes,
- The development of regional networking in order to facilitate the process of socialisation and encourage accession to the international organisations.

1 With the exceptions of Belarus, Libya, West Bank and Gaza Strip.

1. Introduction

The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) establishes a single policy framework between the European Union (EU) and its sixteen partner countries.² In the absence of a clear EU membership perspective, the ENP builds on the principle of “joint ownership”: it entails mutual efforts of both the EU and the respective partner country in determining the adequate action lines – the objectives which the two partners both agree to fulfil. The EU’s power of attraction in the target countries is at stake, and therefore, its credibility to induce change without necessarily offering the accession perspective.

Visibility and perceptions have become all the more important³ that the EU membership is not (yet) on the table. As the Council has made clear, ENP “remains distinct from the process and policy of enlargement”.⁴ The more membership will be perceived as a realistic option, the more the EU will be seen as an influential factor in third country’s policy formulation.

Therefore, visibility and perceptions of the ENP in the partner countries need to be examined, as the commitment of the EU’s neighbours to the principle of “joint ownership” and to domestic reforms will be dependent on the EU’s capacity to be perceived as a distinct and valuable external actor. For that purpose, the paper will look at the visibility, the expectations and the reservations related to ENP in the different neighbourhood countries.

Visibility

Visibility reflects the degree of awareness of the EU on the part of partner countries, the ease (or difficulty) with which the EU is identified among other external actors having their own reform strategies with the ENP partners. Visibility of the EU/ENP is often affected by the economic and strategic situation of partner countries. As has been shown by a recent study on the subject, a correlation between the dependency of ENP partner countries on the EU and their interest in the ENP is “a logical consequence of their cost-benefit analysis of cooperation”.⁵

We measure the degree of dependence on the EU with the help of three indicators:

- The ratio between total exports and exports to the EU
- The existence of neighbouring countries which are perceived as being unfriendly
- The possibility to find a substitute for the EU as a market for exports

Perception

Perception refers to interpretations and misinterpretations of the EU’s motives for launching and conducting its policies in the partner countries. It entails an interpretation of the ENP’s values and norms on the part of partner countries. We describe a country’s policy as reflecting a supportive perception of the ENP’s norms and values if its domestic policies are congruent with the ENP’s normative objectives or if they are supported and viewed as a welcome compensation for non-existing but prized policies. When analysing perceptions, we do not only focus on governments. We also take a closer look at non-governmental actors and their responses to the EU’s policies.⁶ Representatives of civil society, including non-governmental organisations (NGOs), can play a vital role in holding governments and donors accountable for their decisions and investments.

2 Pertinent documents and data on the ENP are collected at http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/index_en.htm. The author is grateful for support and critical remarks by several colleagues at the SWP for research assistance.

3 The Commission has recently stated that “(v)isibility will ... be important in strengthening the ENP, making it meaningful to the citizens of the EU and of the partner countries” (COM(2006)726 final, p. 7). The EP Committee on Regional Development has likewise called on the Commission and the Member States “to take the measures needed to ensure the visibility of the ENP” (2007/2088 INI).

4 Council of the European Union, Strengthening the European Neighbourhood Policy – Presidency Progress Report, 10874/07, Brussels, 15 June 2007, p. 3.

5 Sabiha Senyücel, Sanem Güner, Sigrid Faath, Hanspeter Mattes 2006: Factors and Perceptions Influencing the Implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy in Selected Southern Mediterranean Partner Countries, EuroMesco 49, p. 23.

6 As the Council has underlined, “a strengthened ENP could not work properly without better involving the citizens of the EU and of partner countries. Ownership by governments is essential but not in itself sufficient to successfully support better governance” (General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC), 18/19 June 2007, Strengthening the European Neighbourhood Policy, Presidency Report, p. 8).

We measure the degree of supportive perception with the help of three indicators:

- The extent to which a government can credibly claim to pursue a political agenda of fostering democracy and human rights
- The level of implementation in the last five years of significant corresponding domestic measures
- The support (or demand) of non-governmental actors such as opposition parties, the media, economic actors and the general public for the implementation of democratic reforms

2. Visibility and perception in the partner countries

With the aid of these indicators, we can distinguish four groups of countries, each describing a specific combination of perception and visibility:

- Group I: Belarus, Tunisia, and West Bank and Gaza Strip
- Group II: Algeria, Azerbaijan, Egypt, Jordan, Libya and Syria
- Group III: Armenia, Georgia, Lebanon, Moldova, Morocco and Ukraine
- Group IV: Israel

(This grouping is illustrated in the table annexed to this briefing.⁷ Due to the difficulty in some cases to classify the countries in a specific group, it should be seen as a frame for analysis rather than as a definite categorisation.)

2.1. Group I: Belarus, Tunisia, and West Bank and Gaza Strip

The first group is characterised by a high degree of visibility of the ENP though these countries do not show a supportive attitude towards the norms and values of the ENP.

Although they stand to benefit a lot from better cooperation with the EU, we cannot yet identify more than an unconvincing rhetorical commitment to the ENP's norms and values. The EU and the ENP can be assumed to be highly visible to Tunisia, Belarus, and the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Tunisia exports nearly 80% of its products to the EU. These exports are mainly textiles, clothes and agricultural goods. Tunisia would have significant problems to find substitute markets for these products. The same applies to Belarus. Belarus exports 45.6% of its products to the EU and would have significant difficulties of finding a substitute market for its major export product (transit of energy). The massive dependence of Belarus on Russia combined with the increasingly tense relations between the two countries might make Belarus highly receptive to support by the EU and provide for a high visibility of the ENP. The West Bank and Gaza Strip exports most of its products to Israel. It is nevertheless highly dependent on benevolent European policies due to the EU's crucial contribution to its budget and the support provided to health care and public services.

All three countries nevertheless show hardly any progress towards reform in the last couple of years:

- **The West Bank and Gaza** is the most problematic case. After the victory of Hamas in 2006, the EU suspended political contact and cooperation pending the Palestinian Authority's acceptance of the Quartet's principles.
- **Tunisia** is still a by and large authoritarian country with a substantial concentration of power in the hands of the ruling party and President. Knowledge about what distinguishes the ENP from the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) is low among the general public. The ENP is generally viewed positive by economic actors as well as by civil society groups and the few legal opposition actors. However, there is a feeling among opposition forces that the Action Plan is not specific and demanding enough regarding the enhancement of political freedoms and freedom of expression. At the same time, regime close circles in the bureaucracy view the ENP less favourable than the EMP due to it being - even if only slightly - more specific on political freedoms and human rights. And they generally tend to view the ENP as a more patronizing instrument than the EMP.

7

See Annex 1: Visibility and Perception – Overview on the ENP Partner Countries, p. 13.

- **Belarus** is the least democratic country in Europe and does not even rhetorically adopt the language of democracy and human rights. It is now outside the bound of the ENP and it will remain so as long as its authoritarian president blocks all democratic reforms. The perception of the EU is rather negative both among Belarusian authorities and even among the general public. In Belarus, only 1.1% of the citizens associate a better future with the European Union and 77% with President Lukashenko.⁸ Furthermore, the coverage of European issues in Belarus is very poor and largely negative. In the current situation civil society actors in Belarus have hardly any possibility to develop or to benefit from the ENP. The opposition is struggling to coordinate its activities against a background of intensifying attacks on civil society and the independent press. Domestic NGOs are often threatened with jail. Some dissidents therefore expect an increase in funding for the construction of an independent information network, and the support for the families of political prisoners.

2.2. Group II: Algeria, Azerbaijan, Egypt, Jordan, Libya and Syria

The second group brings together ENP countries which have access to strategic resources, are economically rather well-off or depend only to a limited degree on the EU's political support or access to its market. For instance, Jordan sends only 5.5% of its total exports to the EU. It is a group of countries which has alternatives to selling its major exports to the EU and which expects little from the EU in terms of increased security. In this context, it is difficult for the EU and the ENP to be highly visible. Not surprisingly, it is also a group of countries which does not show a supportive attitude towards the ENP's norms and values, and which shows little progress in proceeding towards democracy and respect for human rights.

Most of these countries export primarily energy and would probably have little difficulty finding alternative markets for their products. In addition, none of these countries is heavily dependent on the EU in terms of security. Notwithstanding the low degree of visibility of the EU, the ENP and closer relations with the EU are important policy steps for Jordan in order to balance the strong dependence on the USA.⁹ In addition, its security situation is more directly affected by US and Israeli policies than by actions taken by the EU. Libya does not have unfriendly neighbours which pose a significant threat. Egypt of course has difficulties with Israel and, in addition, a serious conflict with Sudan over water resources. In neither of these conflicts, however, is the EU an important player. The limited capacity of the EU to solve international conflicts is also obvious in the cases of Syria and Azerbaijan. Syria and Azerbaijan still lack peace agreements with their neighbouring countries (Israel and Armenia). In both cases, however, Russia (in the case of Azerbaijan) or the United States (in the case of Syria) are more important actors.

Therefore in all six ENP countries of this group, the visibility of the EU, defined as a combination of economic dependence and an unstable security situation, is limited, and the governmental perception of the ENP is rather non-supportive:

- In **Algeria** the choice of voters during the recent elections of May 2007 were limited to candidates blessed by the military-backed system of government that has prevailed in Algeria since it gained independence from France in 1962. Only a handful of minor opposition parties were permitted to run against the governing coalition. Just like in most Arab countries, the awareness of the ENP is low among the general public. With Algeria not yet having engaged in negotiations over an ENP Action Plan there is virtually no reporting about the ENP in the state media. So the ENP is often being confused with the EMP. The ENP, however, is welcomed among civil society actors and the private press, that have received MEDA funds or training within the MEDA framework and that are worried now what Algeria's refusal to participate in the ENP will mean for their funding in the future. Left wing opposition parties are at least as sceptical toward the ENP as they were toward the EMP. They see it as imposed by the north and fear that market liberalization and reduction of tariffs will destroy domestic enterprises and increase unemployment. At the same time, expectations that the ENP could change the authoritarian political structures are low, based on the perception that Europe had never seriously pushed for the implementation of Article 2 in the

⁸ Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on Belarus Civil Society (2006/C 318/23), fn. 5.

⁹ On the following see Sabiha Senyücel, Sanem Güner, Sigrid Faath, Hanspeter Mattes 2006: Factors and Perceptions Influencing the Implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy in Selected Southern Mediterranean Partner Countries, EuroMesco 49, p. 19-21.

association agreements. The attitude of economic actors toward the ENP varies strongly, depending on how much they have to lose or win from profound economic and administrative reform. Those with vested interests in the economic *status quo* oppose the ENP.

- In **Azerbaijan**, neither civil society organisations nor opposition parties are able to effectively represent constituent interests or contribute to the policy-making process. During the elections in 2005, Azerbaijani authorities were responsible for the violent harassment of journalists covering opposition rallies, frequent attacks and forced closure of independent media outlets, and widespread abuse of state and local resources in favour of pro-government candidates. Of particular importance in connection with the October 2008 presidential elections, is the further reform of the electoral code. Taking advantage of the cooperation with the EU, OSCE and the Council of Europe (in particular with the Venice Commission), it would be important for Azerbaijan to address without further delays issues such as the remodelling of the Central Election Commission and lower level commissions, to secure the confidence of voters and candidates. Ensuring that electoral campaigns, access to media and the elections themselves are free and fair would strengthen Azerbaijan's credibility and its aspirations to come closer to Europe. The EU-Azerbaijan bilateral trade grew in 2000-2006 with enhanced dynamism and the EU progressively became Azerbaijan's main trade partner (45.3% share in its overall external trade in 2006). Azerbaijan's economic growth rate fell from 34.5% in 2006 to 24.7% in 2007, which nevertheless represents one of the highest, if not the highest, growth rate in the world for the past year. The EU is very likely to support the return of displaced Azeris to Nagorno-Karabakh in the event of a resolution of the conflict. The EU may even help to guarantee the security of returnees through peace-keeping and is also for this reason non-negligible in the Nagorno-Karabakh context. The outcome of these activities will be of major importance for the perception of the ENP in both Azerbaijan and Armenia.
- In **Egypt**, the domestic actors are sharply divided. A number of civilian organisations, especially human rights groups, have criticised the ENP for not having extended the bilateral negotiations to civil society representatives. They have asked the EU to include respect for human rights and political reforms as a priority in the Action Plan. On the other hand, however, conservative religious, and especially Islamist organisations exert a strong influence on the population at large and are highly critical with regard to the political and cultural impact of any external financing of NGOs. Their opposition to the government will continue to ensure that the country's leaders will put aspects of internal stability and the control of political and social processes at least on the same level as economic and developmental cooperation.
- After years of suffering from the conflict with Israel, the majority of the **Jordanian** people today are convinced of the need for international cooperation. The EU is seen as a relatively positive partner because it is perceived as less interventionist than the USA's government, which is thought to be merely pursuing its own ends. At the same time, however, a majority of the political actors and organisations reject any external interference in internal affairs. The influential Jordanian "Movement Against the Normalisation of Relations with Israel" even tries to discredit all foreign funding of civil society associations, especially human and women's rights organisations, for fear that they import Western manners and cultural influence. Jordan still has to implement a number of reforms in order to comply with standards of democracy. King Abdullah remains the ultimate authority and little progress can be expected without his support. The parliamentary elections in November 2007 were held under the temporary elections law. Therefore no progress can be reported on the reform of the elections law. Under Temporary Elections Law, the number and boundaries of the electoral districts as well as the allocation of seats per constituency are unilaterally decided by the Government. Jordan did not accept international electoral observation and monitoring by local NGOs was restricted. No changes have been introduced with regard to current restrictions on freedom of assembly.
- **Libya** is still ruled by Muammar Gaddafi and does not show any significant progress towards democracy and the respect for human rights. Libya however has taken substantial steps to leave its dubious past behind in order to normalise its relations with the outside, but has not to date engaged in a contractual relation with the EU. Although the other five countries in this group have contractual ties with the EU (Algeria, Azerbaijan, Egypt, Jordan, and Syria) and at least rhetorically claim to support democratic values and respect for human rights, it is hard to find convincing empirical evidence which supports these claims. Quite the opposite, all these

countries are cases of *de facto* one-party-systems (Syria) or systems in which the ruling party decides on the selection of legal opposition parties (Egypt and Algeria), limited freedom of the press, and widespread intimidation of opposition supporters (Azerbaijan).

- In **Syria**, the latest elections of May 2007 have been condemned as a farce by opposition groups which urged a boycott. All candidates for the parliament, known as the Assembly of People, are vested by the authorities. Former political prisoners are stripped of their civil rights and cannot stand in the elections or vote; and the rules make it impossible for any real independents to win. Independent civil society groups and an organised political opposition do hardly exist. The main non-governmental political force is not the political parties and not an Islamic opposition but the chambers of commerce and business people. Some dissidents argue that thorough domestic reform and closer relations with the EU/ ENP will only have a chance if supported by the business chambers. They are the only non-military force capable of putting pressure on the government.

2.3. Group III: Armenia, Georgia, Lebanon, Moldova, Morocco and Ukraine

The third group brings together ENP countries that are rather vulnerable to a withdrawal of the EU's political support or a limitation of access to its market. The ENP is likely to enjoy a high degree of visibility in these countries. They also have a positive perception of the EU/ENP values and norms.

The need for political support and the condition for military insecurity can be found to some extent in all six countries (although in the case of Ukraine, the need for political support is not as evident as in the other five countries due to the absence of open military threats or unsettled border conflicts). Armenia, Georgia, Lebanon, Moldova, and Morocco are involved in military disputes with their neighbours:

- Armenia has occupied the province of Nagorno-Karabakh, which legally belongs to Azerbaijan, and has rather difficult relations with Turkey.
- Georgia faces an extensive and unwelcome presence of Russian military.
- Lebanon's political and economic situation has been highly instable since Israel's military intervention in 2006, and as a consequence Israel and Syria are perceived as threatening neighbours. The political elites are split in two camps and the government is *de facto* paralysed. Lebanon is highly dependent on the EU's political and financial support.
- Moldova's situation is likewise rather difficult. Transnistria, which is legally a part of its territory, is a break-away territory occupied by Russian military.
- Morocco has strained relations with Algeria due to the latter's support of the separatist Polisario Front in the Western Sahara conflict. The fact that relations between the two countries are still problematic is underlined by a recent exchange of accusations over the sneaking of illegal immigrants coming from the African states, south of the Sahara desert, through their lands towards Spain.

In addition to the difficult security situation, five of the six countries (with the exception of Lebanon) are strongly dependent on the European market:

- Morocco exports more than 60% of its products to the EU. These products are largely agriculture and textiles, and are hard to sell on non-European markets.
- Armenia, Moldova, and Georgia's major trading partner is also the EU, with nearly 50% of all Armenian and Georgian exports going to the EU and 38.5% of Moldovan exports.
- Ukraine sends only about 25% of its products to the EU and is economically less dependent than Morocco, Georgia, and Armenia. However, its second most important trading partner is Russia. Against the background of significant evidence in the last years that Russia is increasingly using its trade policy as a tool for its foreign and security policy interests, Ukraine must be highly interested in maintaining and even expanding its trade relations with the EU.

Not surprisingly, the perception of the EU and the ENP in these countries is rather supportive. Significant parts of the Ukrainian elite are oriented towards the West rather than towards Russia. Some envisage a future EU membership as a realistic option. In some cases, such as the supportive attitude of the former

Kutchma regime, the positive perception of the ENP is only rhetorically and was used for exploiting its positive image and for mobilising domestic support. Even though none of the six countries is yet a full-blown democracy, all of them have shown positive developments in the last couple of years:

- In **Armenia**, the conduct of the February 2008 presidential elections raised concerns, in particular the state of emergency that was introduced in their aftermath. The events have shown the necessity for further improvement in the field of human rights despite the progress achieved in. According to international observers parliamentary elections in May 2007 were conducted largely in accordance with Armenia's OSCE commitments and other international standards for democratic elections. Access to the media by political contestants was deemed fair and equal during the official campaigning period for parliamentary elections. Steps were taken to strengthen the role of the Human Rights Defender (Ombudsperson) in line with international standards. Improvements were observed in terms of institutional immunity of the office, its capacity to investigate claims of human rights violations and involvement in the legislative process. A presidential decree was adopted in July 2007 making it mandatory to send all drafts relating to democracy and human rights for the Defender's review before presenting it to the government. Among the measures proposed by the Council of Europe is the lifting of barriers to the impeachment or prosecution of the president, and the weakening of his powers to dismiss the national assembly, to oversee the judiciary and media, and to make ministerial appointments. In addition, the independence of the judiciary is strengthened, the powers and financial resources of local government are in some respects increased, and dual citizenship is allowed, which is an important issue for a country with some 7 million ethnic Armenians living outside the country while only 3.5 million reside within the borders. The ENP's and EU's perception on the part of non-state actors is not easy to describe. The opposition is divided among parties that are personality based, associated with families or clans that had influence before or immediately after independence (i.e. Karabakh-Clan). There is a widespread perception that the opposition is only interested in regime change. The perception of the EU in Armenia is also affected by its approach to the "frozen conflicts" in the South Caucasus. The United States and Russia still determine the pace and direction of their settlement. The EU is perceived as relying on its aid, moral authority and "honest broker" image, which appear less effective when the strongest component of its "soft power" – the prospect of EU accession – is lacking. Armenia is also interested in resolving the conflict in Abkhazia, and has some influence there through the large Armenian community. But the ENP alone is not perceived as having sufficient leverage to influence the process significantly.
- **Georgia** faces a number of continuing problems, too. Presidential elections took place in January 2008, just after the reporting period. The international election observation mission - including ODIHR, European Parliament and the Parliamentary Assemblies of the Council of Europe and the OSCE - stated that these were the first genuinely competitive presidential elections but noted a number of serious shortcomings, including the misuse of State's administrative resources for campaigning purposes, unbalanced media exposure of candidates, reported acts of voters' intimidation, lack of clarity and detail in the election-day procedures, and irregularities in the counting and tabulation. These serious shortcomings need to be addressed in view of the legislative elections in May 2008. The parliamentary majority and the opposition have started a dialogue on redefining electoral rules and reviewing basic institutional arrangements. Georgia's democratic institutions are characterised by a strong presidential system, a weak separation of institutional powers and an ineffective system of democratic checks and balances. Recommendations made by the Venice Commission in 2004 to deal with these inconsistencies have not yet been sufficiently addressed. The role of the Ombudsperson has not been strengthened. Criticism has been made that the reports and activities of the latter were widely disregarded by the authorities. Two sets of human rights concerns have been voiced by Georgian NGOs: persecution of religious minorities by state authorities and the Georgian orthodox church; and torture and maltreatment in the penitentiary system. There is little awareness among the Georgian population and NGOs about the ENP due to the very limited media coverage. The general public, however, is positive about the idea of European integration. More than 70% of Georgians are in favour of joining the EU in the nearest future. There is also a growing expectation that the EU will adopt a major role in mediating the "frozen conflicts" in Abkhazia and South Ossetia.
- In **Lebanon**, the parliament was a major place for discussion and debate between the different political groups before the invasion of Israel. Elections are generally free and there is universal

suffrage. The perception of the ENP on the part of non-governmental actors in Lebanon is strongly affected by the fragility of the political compromise underlying the Lebanese political system. Any political measure which threatens the social harmony and the balance among the different groups therefore must be assumed to be viewed with scepticism. Each stage of the political reform therefore will be taken very cautiously and slowly, irrespective of the goals that are formulated in the Action Plan.

- **Moldova** faces some continuing obstacles in its transition to democracy. The executive still retains most political power. Yet Moldova has had some success on the road to a more democratic future. Local elections took place in June 2007. OSCE/ODIHR deployed an election observation mission which noted that the elections were generally well administered and that voters were offered a genuine choice. Shortcomings were observed regarding the right of citizens to seek public office and equitable media access for all candidates. In addition, Moldova has privatised many aspects of its economy, has reduced governmental regulation of business, and has kept inflation within manageable limits. The political system is becoming increasingly diverse and has even developed a vocal and occasionally effective opposition. All political parties represented in the Parliament of Moldova favour integration into the EU and the Moldovan authorities expect the EU to offer membership in the long run. Moreover, a great emphasis is put on joining the South East European Cooperation Process and entry to the CEFTA. In addition, the EU has become central to conflict resolution in Transnistria. The general idea of European integration is supported by a majority of the public opinion in Moldova. A recent opinion poll shows that 72.2% of the population is in favour of Moldova's accession to the EU in 2007 (as compared to 61% in 2003, 67.87% in 2004, 64.3% in 2005, and 68.4 in 2006). Civil society in Moldova is still embryonic. NGOs, as far as they exist, share a general lack of knowledge concerning the ENP and its opportunities. The opposition is fragmented and lacks meaningful resources for political activities. Those voices which are heard in the West argue for increased investment in training and scholarship programmes or administrative support for twinning activities with Western NGOs.
- **Morocco** has launched numerous initiatives aimed at the modernisation of the state, democratisation and national reconciliation – in particular via the Fairness and Reconciliation Commission, the law on political parties, the law on the liberalisation of the audiovisual sector, the law against torture - and the promotion of economic and social development, in particular the national human development initiative, the status of women, and the fight against poverty. The positive attitude of the government to the EU is shared by Moroccan non-governmental actors and the media which all show a generally supportive perception of the EU and the ENP.¹⁰ Even left-wing parties, trade unions and the moderate Islamists of the Party of Justice and Development lend their support to cooperation with the EU in economic, developmental, or security policies, whether this occurs in the EMP or the in ENP (the latter being seen as complementary to the EMP). The ENP is further supported by the major Moroccan communities that live in EU Member States and increasingly act as investors. It must be noted, however, that Morocco remains quite reluctant to external pressure for democratisation. Despite the efforts described above, demands for a more democratic regime, made by the EU or the US have not entirely materialised.
- In **Ukraine**, the government's human rights performance improved significantly after the Orange Revolution in late 2004. The Administration largely ended government harassment of the mass media and interference with the freedom of assembly. It has lifted limitations on freedom of association and increased police accountability. Domestic and international human rights groups generally operate without government harassment. Among governmental actors, the perception of the ENP is rather critical. The Ukrainian authorities insist on going beyond the ENP, and bringing Ukraine closer to EU membership. The former Foreign Minister of Ukraine Borys Tarasiuk called the ENP "wrong by definition" and called upon the EU to promise membership to Ukraine and decide on the time when it could join. The present Foreign Minister is more realistic in this respect and is talking about eventual association status and deepening of, first of all, economic relations between Ukraine and the EU. Yet, the membership idea is still in the background of all of Ukraine's endeavors towards the EU. In any case Ukrainians demand special status for Ukraine. The awareness of the ENP and the EU is low among the general public due to poor coverage by Ukrainian media. 77% of the general public consider the information on the EU

10

On the following paragraph see Sabiha Senyücel, Sanem Güner, Sigrid Faath, Hanspeter Mattes 2006: Factors and Perceptions Influencing the Implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy in Selected Southern Mediterranean Partner Countries, EuroMesco 49, p. 15-16.

from the media as insufficient and 63% of those questioned would like to know more about it. All in all, 44% of Ukrainians would like Ukraine to join the EU and consider it to benefit largely of accession. It is interesting to note that this number has decreased over the past years (55% in 2001 and 47% in 2005). Despite the often sharp polarisation of opinions on many issues in the foreign policy among the main political forces in Ukraine, the intensification of political and economic relations with the EU enjoys general support. The only opponent of Ukraine's relations with the EU is the Communist party which, however, has little or no influence on the political process in Ukraine.

2.4. Group IV: Israel

The last group includes Israel.

- **Israel** is a well-established democracy and therefore not subject to any EU measures towards the promotion of democracy and human rights. Israel holds long and well-established relations with the EU and its Member States. An intensified formal partnership or even membership to the European Economic Area is blocked by its security and geopolitical situation. Israel is, so to say, in a category of its own and not subject to the following discussion.

3. General Findings and Recommendations

General Findings

Visibility and perception are important variables for the effectiveness of the ENP. The way the EU is seen and perceived among the ENP countries varies considerably, and calls for a tailor-made approach, according to each partner's specificities, in line with the principle of "joint ownership". It is important therefore to show that external measures are merely a form of assistance and not a dictate by foreign powers. At the same time, the EU shall pursue its own interests in an open and transparent manner. The ENP "joint ownership" approach suits this need and must be strengthened as it emphasises that the EU takes into account the specific problems and conditions in the region. This underlines also the importance of adopting a realistic approach to the effectiveness of the ENP. It has to take into consideration that the societal perception of the EU/ENP depends largely on the cultural context:

- Citizens in the Mediterranean countries (with the exception of Israel) do not consider EU accession as a realistic perspective and are often worried about too much EU involvement in domestic affairs. In Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria, Jordan and Syria, "foreign" involvement in domestic affairs is viewed highly critical not only by the governments but also by a number of civil society actors. In order to avoid being branded "foreign agents" many Arab organisations decline to accept outside support.¹¹
- Citizens in East European and South Caucasian partner countries rather criticize the ENP for excluding the prospect of accession and for not engaging as thoroughly as they would like to. This applies to Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan.
- The only exceptions to this ordering are Belarus, West Bank and Gaza Strip, which are difficult to qualify.

Recommendations

In order to strengthen the EU's and the ENP's visibility and improve its perception in the partner countries these recommendations can be formulated:

11 Cf. Richard Youngs 2007: Europe's Flawed Approach to Arab Democracy, Centre For European Reform, London, p. 5.

1. *Reinforce Differentiation*

The ENP should continue to build on the principle of differentiation, in order to “remain sufficiently flexible to allow individual partners to self-differentiate according to their capacity, needs and performance”.¹²

-It is mainly in the partner countries which show a supportive perception of the ENP’s values and norms that the use of financial incentives is an effective instrument for fostering reform. In these countries the ENP is most successful, and the recent ENP strategy is an appropriate strategy for dealing with them.

-In countries where the perception of the ENP’s norms and values is non-supportive, financial incentives will be of limited use as long as domestic conditions do not allow reforms to take place. However, financial instruments can be used meaningfully, if they are limited to realizing goals of mutual interest, such as creating an environment that is conducive for energy cooperation and other functional policies.

2. *Encouraging civil society*

The EU’s approach to domestic reforms in partner countries has been very cautious in the last years. The EU has been criticised for not being really committed to democracy; an unwillingness to offer major incentives to governments in return for reform; a “scatter-gun” approach supporting *ad hoc* initiatives rather than a coherent strategy for political reform; and a failure to support independent and socially-rooted reformers on the ground.¹³

The EU can improve its reform policy by:

- *Providing better information and transparency* in programming, implementation and monitoring to NGOs. Few if any provisions have been made in the ENPI regulation to ensure proper information and outreach to civil society.
- *Intensifying dialogue with civil society* in partner countries, including on inter-cultural and inter-faith issues, better information on ENP matters by EU and Member States’ institutions, also on the ground, and in particular through enhanced EU support to the civil society.
- *Investing in increased capacity-building through EU aid programmes*, which include: reinforcing education, training activities with ENP partners, the facilitation of legitimate travel for our partners’ citizens, and the easing of access to visa.

3. *Facilitate Regional Networking*

The EU is not alone in its efforts to improve the perception of democratic norms and the rule of law in the countries of the Mediterranean region, Eastern Europe and Southern Caucasus. A great number of international and especially regional organisations (OSCE, NATO, Council of Europe) are dedicated to very similar policies.

The EU should therefore aim at:

- *Encouraging the accession to the international organisations* of the less reform-minded partner countries and developing their cooperation with other countries.
- *Facilitating the process of socialisation*: socialising effects of the international community will foster learning processes in these countries.

12 General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC), 18/19 June 2007, Strengthening the European Neighbourhood Policy, Presidency Report, p. 2.

13 Cf. Richard Youngs 2007: Europe’s Flawed Approach to Arab Democracy, Centre For European Reform, London.

Annex I: Visibility and Perception – Overview on the ENP Partner Countries

The Indicators:

(1) Visibility

- V1: Ratio between overall exports and exports to EU (<http://ec.europa.eu/trade/issues/bilateral/data.htm>) 2006
- V2: Neighbours which are perceived as unfriendly and threatening
- V3: Availability of substitute to the EU's markets for major export products (<http://ec.europa.eu/trade/issues/bilateral/data.htm>) 2006

(2) Perception

- P1: Credibility of reform rhetoric
- P2: Trend political transformation (2005 – 2007) (<http://www.bertelsmann-transformation-index.de/11.0.html?&L=1>)
- P3: Non-governmental attitudes

		Visibility	
		High	Low
Perception	Non-Supportive	(1) Tunisia, Belarus, West Bank and Gaza	(2) Azerbaijan, Egypt, Jordan, Lybia, Syria, Algeria
	Supportive	(3) Armenia, Moldova, Morocco, Georgia, Ukraine, Lebanon	(4) Israel

	Visibility				Perception			
	V1	V2	V3		P1	P2	P3	
Algeria	50.3%	No, apart from conflict with Morocco over Western Sahara.	Energy is major export product; substitutes for the EU markets are in principle available; EU strongly interested.	Low	Only rhetorical commitment to participatory democracy. Assassinations of critical journalists; dominance of the military and the ruling party.	0	Civil society, media worried about consequences of non-participation in ENP. Little expectations with regard to fostering of democracy.	Non-supportive
Armenia	47.6%	Occupies Nagorno-Karabakh which legally belongs to Azerbaijan.	Main export products to EU are agriculture and textiles. Substitutes not easy available.	High	Only rhetorical commitment to democratic processes. Progress in reform is slow; corrupted political elite is trying to retain power as long as possible; opposition is weak; widespread allegations of ballot-rigging and human rights abuses.	0	Weakly organised and largely self-minded opposition. Low awareness of EU/ ENP. Might change due to role of EU in conflict mediation with Azerbaijan.	Supportive
Azerbaijan	68.0%	Border conflict with Armenia over Nagorno-Karabakh.	93.8% of all exports from Azerbaijan are energy; substitutes for the EU markets are in principle available.	Low	Only rhetorical commitment to democratic processes. Corruption in governmental circles; concentration of power in the president's hands; weak and fragmented opposition; conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh dominates internal political agenda.	0	Low awareness of EU/ ENP. Might change due to role of EU in conflict mediation with Armenia.	Non-supportive
Belarus	45.6%	Increasing political and economic tensions with Russia.	60.1% of all imports from Belarus are energy; nearly all is transit from Russia, Belarus' main trading partner. Substitutes for EU market not easy available.	High	Not even rhetorical commitment to democracy. Authoritarian regime; heavy concentration of power in hands of the president Lukashenko.	0	Very sceptical. Only 1.1% associate a better future with the EU.	Non-supportive
Egypt	42.7%	Dispute with <i>Sudan</i> over territory. Normalisation of Egyptian- <i>Israeli</i> relations is handicapped by Israeli-Palestinian conflict.	56,1% of all imports from Egypt are energy; substitutes for the EU markets are in principle available.	Low	Only rhetorical commitment to democracy. High perceived level of corruption; current regime is trying to maintain its hold on power. Mubarak unwilling to foster serious domestic political reforms.	0	Some civilian groups demand stronger pressure on government in order to foster political reforms. Religious groups worried about external financial involvement.	Non-supportive
Georgia	47.4%	Russian military is reducing its unwelcomed presence in Georgia.	60,2% of all exports to the EU is energy and 18,5% is agriculture. Substitutes for EU	Rather High	Highly pronounced reform rhetoric. High level of corruption and organised crime; conflicts in South Ossetia and Abkhazia dominate domestic political	↗	Limited awareness due to low media coverage. More than 70% in favour of accession to EU.	Supportive

			market not easy available.		agenda.		Expectation of growing role in conflict mediation (Abkhazia and South Ossetia).	
Israel	27.7%	Unsettled Israeli-Palestinian conflict; no peace agreements with <i>Syria</i> and <i>Lebanon</i> .	22,8% of all exports to the EU are machinery; substitute markets for major products could in principle be found.	Low	All significant political parties abide to democratic rules. Internal political agenda is heavily influenced by the conflict with West Bank and Gaza, Lebanon and Syria.	n.a.	Major expectation is better access to European markets.	Supportive
Jordan	5,5%	<i>Iraqi</i> instability and emigration affects Jordan's domestic stability.	26,7% of all exports to the EU are chemicals and 12,7% transport equipment. Insignificant amount.	Low	King's policy is mainly focussed on economic reforms. King Abdallah II. reclaims final authority in domestic politics. Top-down reform process. One of the most moderate authoritarian regimes.	0	Majority of people are aware of need for cooperation. EU seen as less interventional if compared to US. Traditional circles are worried about growing external influence.	Supportive
Lebanon	10.6%	Israel and Syria are perceived as threatening neighbours.	Main exports is agricultural goods (16,3%). Insignificant amount.	Rather High	Parliamentary democracy with a special system called confessionalism. Significant efforts to reduce external influence. Political elite split in two camps with little prospect of reaching a solution in the near future, effectively paralysing the government.	↗	Fragile political compromises make thorough reforms unlikely in short run. Precarious balancing of social forces is crucial.	Supportive
Libya	76,3%	No security threat.	90.1% of all exports to the EU is energy; substitute markets for this product is in principle available.	Low	Not even rhetorical commitment. Absolute power of Colonel Gadaffi and the "revolutionary sector"; trade unions and political parties are prohibited.	0	Most regime-critical people live outside the country. Insufficient data.	Non-supportive
Moldova	38.5%	Transnistria is a breakaway territory within the internationally recognised borders of Moldova. Russia's military presence is perceived as foreign military occupation.	35,9% of all exports to the EU are textiles and clothing and 18.5% agriculture. Substitute markets for most of these goods are difficult to find.	High	Clear commitment to additional reforms. Corruption of political elites; an illegal separatist regime in Moldova's Transnistria region defines its political and economic situation.	↑	Membership in the long-run as policy goal. Largely in favour of EU accession. Expectation of growing role in conflict mediation in Abkhazia and South Ossetia.	Supportive
Morocco	62.8%	Strained relations with <i>Algeria</i> due to support of separatist Polisario Front in Western Sahara conflict. <i>Spain</i> controls five "places of	34,5% of all exports to the EU are agricultural products. Substitute markets for most of these goods are difficult to	High	Mohammed VI presents himself as pro-reform. Establishment of reconciliation committee was remarkable. Parliamentary elections in September 2007 have been accepted by international observers; comparatively	0	Generally very positive attitude to the EU/ENP. Shared even by Islamists.	Supportive

		sovereignty” on and off the Moroccan coast.	find.		open debates about nearly any kind of topic except of the king himself. Mohammed VI reclaims final word in domestic affairs. Authoritarian regime even though it is one of the most moderate ones in the Arab world. Corruption is considered to be the main cause of country’s backwardness.			
West Bank and Gaza	n.a.	Israeli-Palestinian conflict is of overwhelming importance for all matters of domestic policy.	54% of exports to the EU are agricultural goods and 24.1% is textiles; difficult to find substitutes for EU markets.	High	Hamas and Fatah seem to support reforms. Extent of commitment unclear after civil war. Corruption and nepotism in West Bank, lack of internal stability in West Bank and Gaza, limited support for democratic values in Gaza.	n.a.	Insufficient data.	Non-supportive
Syria	32.3%	No peace agreement with Israel. Syrian Golan Heights occupied by Israeli forces.	87.3% of all exports to EU is energy. Substitute markets are available.	Low	Economic reform process without significant changes in political structures. Authoritarian regime with an omnipresent intelligence service.	0	Chambers of Commerce and business people might expect economic gains from political liberalisation.	Non-supportive
Tunisia	73.5%	No security threats.	35,6% of all exports to EU is textiles and 21.3% machinery. Substitute markets difficult to find.	High	Only rhetorical commitment to democracy and human rights. Substantial concentration of power by the party in office; high level of corruption.	0	Generally positive perception. Action Plan should put more pressure on government.	Non-supportive
Ukraine	25.6%	No security threats; but tensions with Russia over Black Sea fleet.	13.1% of all exports to EU is agriculture and 9.9% is energy (mainly transit); substitute markets only hard to find for agriculture.	Low	Two major parties are unambiguously pro-democracy. Internal political situation is strained; high level of corruption; weaknesses in the overall system of democratic and institutional checks and balances; deep fragmentation within main political forces.	0	Broad support for increasing cooperation with EU. Declining number of people who are in favour of accession to EU.	Supportive

↗ = improvement

↑ = strong improvement

0 = no significant changes

Annex II: State of the ENP

	<i>Eastern Dimension</i>			<i>Southern Caucasus</i>			<i>Southern Mediterranean</i>									
	Belarus	Moldova	Ukraine	Armenia	Azerbaijan	Georgia	Egypt	Algeria	Jordan	Lebanon	Libya	Morocco	Syria	Tunisia	Israel	West Bank and Gaza
PCA/AA	–	PCA, 7/1998	PCA, 3/1998	PCA, 1999	PCA, 1999	PCA, 1999	AA, 6/2004	AA, 9/2005	AA, 5/2002	AA, 4/2006	–	AA, 3/2000	–	AA, 3/1998	AA, 6/2000	Interim AA, 7/1997
ENP-AP	–	22/2/2005	21/2/2005	14/11/2006	14/11/2006	14/11/2006	6/3/2007	–	11/1/2005	19/1/2007	–	27/7/2005	–	4/7/2005	11/4/2005	4/5/2005
ENPI-CSP 2007-2013/ ENPI-NR 2007-2010	X	X	x	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	–	X	X	X	X	–
Financing 2007-2010 (Mio Euro)	20.0	209.7	494	98.4	92.0	120.4	558	220.0	265	187	8	654	130	300	8	632
Population (Mio)	9.8	4.2	47.1	3.0	8.4	4.5	74.0	32.9	5.4	3.6	5.9	30.2	19.0	10.0	6.9	3.6
GDP in bn US \$ ¹⁴	29.6	2.9	81.7	4.9	12.6	6.4	89.3	102.3	12.9	22.2	38.8	51.7	26.3	28.7	123.4	4.6 ¹⁵

AA Association Agreement
 AP Action Plan
 OS Observer Status
 ENP European Neighbourhood Policy
 ENPI-NR National Indicative Programme
 ENPI-CSP Country Strategy Paper
 PCA Partnership and Cooperation Agreement

¹⁴ World Bank, World Development Indicators database, April 2006.

¹⁵ World Bank, World Development Indicators database, April 2006, data of 2004.

Annex III: Membership in International and Regional Organisations and Party to Important Treaties

	Eastern Dimension			Southern Caucasus			Southern Mediteranean									
	Belarus	Moldova	Ukraine	Armenia	Azerbaijan	Georgia	Egypt	Algeria	Jordan	Lebanon	Lybia	Marocco	Syria	Tunisia	Israel	West Bank and Gaza
UNO	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	OS
NATO	PfP	PfP	PfP	PfP	PfP	PfP	MD	MD	MD	–	–	MD	–	MD	MD	–
WTO	OS	X	X***	X	OS	X	X	OS	X	OS	OS	X	–	X	X	–
OSZE	30/1/92	30/1/92	30/1/92	30/1/92	30/1/92	24/3/92	MedPfC	MedPfC	MedPfC	–	–	MedPfC	–	MedPfC	MedPfC	–
Council of Europe	Kandidat seit 12/3/93	13/07/95	9/11/95	25/1/2001	25/1/2001	27/4/1999	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	OS, Parl. Vers. seit 2/12/57	–
EHRC	–	X	X	X	X	X	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
GC	X*	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	–	–	–	X	–	X	X	–
Energy-Charta	**	22/6/96	X	19/1/98	23/12/97	12/7/95	–	–	–	–	–	OS	–	OS	–	–
Kyoto-Protocol	–	–	X	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
EMP	–	–	–	–	–	–	X	X	X	X	OS	X	X	X	X	X
5+5 Dialogue	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	X	–	–	X	X	–	X	–	–
Arabic League	–	–	–	–	–	–	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	–	X
OIC	–	–	–	–	X	–	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	–	X
AU	–	–	–	–	–	–	X	X	–	–	X	–	–	X	–	–
EURASEC	X	OS	OS	OS	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
OSEC	–	X	X	X	X	X	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
GUAM	–	X	X	–	X	X	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
GUS	X	X	X	X	X	X	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
SP for SEE	–	X	OS	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–

*Belarus signed only the 1967 protocol of the GC; ** not ratified yet.

***Ukraine will become member of WTO on 16 May 2008.

GFK Geneva Convention
 AU African Union
 OS Observer-Status
 BSEC Black Sea Economic Cooperation
 EMP Euro-Mediterranean Partnership
 EURASEC Eurasian Economic Community
 GUAM Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Moldova
 CIS Community of Independent States

MedPfC Mediterranean Partner for Cooperation
 OIC Organisation of the Islamic Conference
 SP for SEE Stability Pact for Southeastern Europe
 PfP Partnership for Peace
 PfC Partner for Co-operation
 EHRC European Human Rights Convention
 MD Mediterranean Dialogue of NATO (Nato+7)

SWP Berlin
 The ENP
 January 2008