

## Reviewing the European Neighbourhood Policy

The ENP was launched more than 10 years ago and Parliament is now considering a report on how to overhaul it, as part of the consultation procedure begun by the Commission and the European External Action Service on 4 March 2015.

### Beginnings

The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) was [devised](#) at the time of the EU enlargement to take in some of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe in 2004. The ENP was to act as a vehicle to help [bring](#) stability and prosperity to the EU's new neighbours, with no commitment to future [enlargement](#). The policy, which drew initially on experience gained up to that point and the existing enlargement [instruments](#), represented the EU's attempt to respond to security, strategic and diplomatic challenges by creating a [single framework](#) for its relations with the former Soviet republics to the East (except Russia) and the southern Mediterranean countries. With its neighbours, the EU established bilateral [action plans](#) which tailored the ENP's broader goals to each country's needs. Neighbouring countries undertook to implement reforms intended to bolster the rule of law, enhance democracy and civil society, and boost trade; in exchange, the EU would gradually open up access to the freedoms offered by the European market (chiefly free movement of goods, people and services).

### One common framework, two regional policies for the East and the South

France was the driving force behind the creation of the [Union for the Mediterranean \(UfM\)](#) in 2008. The initiative focuses on the particular context and needs of the ENP in the South and meetings are chaired by a north-south co-presidency. The UfM also has a forum for cooperation with [local authorities](#), a [Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly](#) and a secretariat located in Barcelona. The primary aim of the UfM was to work on major economic, environmental, energy, health, migration and cultural projects.

At the same time, Poland and Sweden [proposed](#) the establishment of a specific framework for relations with the EU's eastern neighbours. Since 2009, the Eastern Partnership has included Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan. Through the signing of [association agreements](#) and [mobility partnerships](#), which include visa facilitation and readmission provisions, the EU offers Eastern Partnership countries enhanced cooperation.

In 2011, the Arab Spring uprisings prompted the first [revision](#) of the ENP; the EU decided to offer more benefits to the countries which had demonstrated the clearest commitment to reform ([‘more for more’](#)). ENP initiatives were reorganised around three key concepts, namely [markets, financial support and mobility](#). While the EU has declared that it is satisfied with the progress made in [Tunisia](#) and [Morocco](#), the collapse of the state in [Libya](#), the civil war in [Syria](#) and the political unrest in [Egypt](#) have compelled Europe to do everything it can to help [stabilise](#) the situation and cope with the repercussions, in particular the impact on [migration](#).

The [Vilnius Summit](#) and Ukraine's rejection, in 2013, of an association agreement with the EU prompted an adjustment of the objectives of the [Eastern Partnership](#) and EU relations with Russia, which were re-assessed by Parliament in a recent [report](#).

Against this backdrop, in May 2015 the Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET) held an [exchange of views](#) with Commissioner Johannes Hahn, who is responsible for the ENP and enlargement negotiations, and Parliament is considering the [report](#) on reviewing the ENP (rapporteur Eduard Kukan, PPE, Slovakia). The report stresses the need to retain an overall framework, while taking a nuanced approach, tailored to individual countries, and being sensitive to relations that neighbouring countries have with their other neighbours. A Commission communication on this subject is expected in the autumn.