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THE EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY

The European neighbourhood policy (ENP) applies to Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia and Ukraine. It aims to strengthen the prosperity, stability and security of all. It is based on democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights and is a bilateral policy between the EU and each partner country, with regional cooperation initiatives: the Eastern Partnership (EaP) and the Union for the Mediterranean^[1].

LEGAL BASIS

- Article 8 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU);
- Title V of the TEU (external action);
- Articles 206-207 (trade) and 216-219 (international agreements) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

GENERAL OBJECTIVES

Through the ENP, the EU offers its neighbours a privileged relationship, building on a mutual commitment to common values (democracy and human rights, the rule of law, good governance, market economy principles and sustainable development). The ENP includes political coordination and deeper economic integration, increased mobility and people-to-people contacts. The level of ambition of the relationship depends on the extent to which these values are shared. The ENP remains distinct from the process of enlargement, although this does not prejudice how relations between neighbouring countries and the EU may develop in the future. In 2011, the EU reviewed the ENP and, responding to developments in Arab countries, strengthened its focus on promoting deep and sustainable democracy and inclusive economic development. Deep and sustainable democracy includes in particular free and fair elections, efforts to combat corruption, judicial independence, democratic control over the armed forces, and the freedoms of expression, assembly and association. The EU also stressed the role that civil society plays in the democratic process and introduced the 'more for more' principle, under which the EU develops stronger partnerships with those neighbours that make greater progress towards democratic reform. In March 2015, the Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS) launched a consultation process

[1] For information about bilateral relations between the EU and the eastern partners and Mediterranean partners, please refer to the fact sheets on those topics ([5.5.6](#); [5.5.7](#) and [5.5.8](#)).



for a new review of the ENP. One of its main aims was to adapt the policy's tools to take better account of the specific aspirations of partner countries. In this context, Parliament adopted a [resolution](#) on 9 July 2015 underlining the need for a more strategic, focused, flexible and coherent ENP. A [communication](#) from the EEAS and the Commission along these lines and based on the results of the consultation was published on 18 November 2015.

On 18 May 2017, the EEAS and the Commission published a [report on the implementation of the ENP](#) review. The report highlighted the more flexible and sensitive approach demonstrated by the EU in its cooperation with the ENP partners and the more efficient use of resources. On 27 March 2019, Parliament passed a [resolution on the post-Arab Spring and the way forward for the MENA region](#), which acknowledged some democratic gains in the region but also called for further economic, democratic and social reforms. On 19 June 2020, Parliament adopted a [recommendation to the Council, the Commission and the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy \(VP/HR\) on the Eastern Partnership, in the run-up to the June 2020 Summit](#), which called for 'a continuous impetus towards effective cooperation, intense dialogue and close partnership within the [Eastern Partnership]'.

The [joint communication](#) entitled 'Renewed partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood – A new Agenda for the Mediterranean' and the 'Accompanying Investment Plan for the Southern Neighbours', published on 9 February 2021 by the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and adopted by the European Council on 19 April 2021, aims at setting out a renewed agenda for the relaunching and strengthening of the strategic partnership between the EU and its Southern Neighbourhood partners.

A [joint statement](#) issued on 24 February 2021 by the Chairs of all the European Parliament Delegations dealing with the Southern Neighbourhood countries suggests holding a summit between the EU and all its southern neighbours, to which civil society representatives and national parliaments should be invited, in order to collectively define the best ways to implement this agenda in a spirit of genuine partnership and shared ownership.

INSTRUMENTS

The ENP builds upon the legal agreements in place between the EU and its partners – Partnership and Cooperation Agreements and, more recently, Association Agreements.

Central to the ENP are the bilateral action plans and partnership priorities that have been drawn up between the EU and most of the partner countries. These establish political and economic reform agendas with short- and medium-term priorities (three to five years). ENP action plans and partnership priorities reflect the needs, interests and capacities of the EU and each partner. They seek to develop democratic, socially equitable and inclusive societies, to promote economic integration and to improve the movement of people across borders.

The EU supports the fulfilment of the ENP objectives through financial support as well as political and technical cooperation. The European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI)



was the key EU financing instrument for bilateral cooperation between 2014 and 2020, with an allocation of EUR 15.4 billion for that period. The new Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) – ‘Global Europe’ will frame the EU’s cooperation for the period 2021-2027. The instrument’s approach includes grant funding, as well as blending grants with loans from European and international financing institutions. With an overall allocation of EUR 79.5 billion, the new instrument will cover EU cooperation with EU neighbourhood countries and other countries in Africa, Asia, the Americas, the Pacific and the Caribbean. In addition to a focus on sustainable development, Global Europe will advance key thematic aspects of EU external policy, including programmes promoting human rights, democracy and civil society. Funding from the instrument will also go towards global challenges, including climate change, migration, peace and stability, as well as cooperation with strategic partners and the promotion of the EU’s own foreign policy initiatives. Parliament gave its final approval for the establishment of the new Global Europe instrument on [9 June 2021](#), following two and a half years of negotiations. Parliament secured increased involvement in defining the main strategic objectives of the instrument, as well as an enhanced role in scrutinising the instrument’s implementation through a high-level geopolitical dialogue with the Commission.

In addition, tools have been developed under the ENP to advance market access, in particular through the negotiation of deep and comprehensive free trade areas, and to enhance mobility and the management of migration. As such, mobility partnerships and visa facilitation and/or liberalisation have been offered and concluded with some partners, while a dedicated financial instrument – the [Mobility Partnership Facility](#) – was launched in 2016. In the southern region, a number of regional and bilateral initiatives on migration and mobility are being funded under the North of Africa window of the [EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa](#).

While the ENP has been designed as a common policy toolbox, it also allows the EU to adapt and differentiate its policy according to the specificities of each partner.

REGIONAL DIMENSIONS

A. Eastern Partnership

The Eastern Partnership (EaP) was formed to upgrade the EU’s relations with most of its eastern neighbours: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. The EaP was agreed in 2008 and inaugurated in 2009, and builds on the ENP.

1. Objectives

The main goal of the EaP is to ‘accelerate political association and deepen economic integration’ between the EU and its eastern neighbours. The level of integration and cooperation reflects each partner country’s commitment to European values, standards and structures and its progress towards them. The EaP aims to promote democracy and good governance, strengthen energy security, encourage sectoral reforms (including environmental protection), encourage people-to-people contacts,



support economic and social development and offer additional funding for projects to reduce socioeconomic imbalances and increase stability^[2].

2. Structures

EaP summits are held every two years, with the participation of EU and partner countries' heads of state or government and representatives of Parliament, the Commission and the EEAS.

Flagship initiatives have also been launched and include: an integrated border management programme; a facility for small and medium-sized enterprises; regional electricity markets; and efforts to improve energy efficiency, increase the use of renewable energy sources, promote good environmental governance and prevent, prepare for and respond to natural and human-induced disasters.

As 2019 marked the 10th anniversary of the Eastern Partnership, the Commission carried out a broad and extensive consultation with all interested stakeholders to define the future priorities of this policy and thereby ensure that it continues to deliver tangible benefits to people across Europe.

On 18 March 2020, the Commission and the VP/HR released a [joint communication](#) entitled 'Eastern Partnership policy beyond 2020: Reinforcing resilience – an Eastern Partnership that delivers for all'. This document highlights five long-term policy objectives for future cooperation:

- A partnership that creates: the EU and the partner countries will work together towards resilient, sustainable and integrated economies;
- A partnership that protects: the EU and partner countries will renew their commitment to the fundamentals of the partnership, in particular to accountable institutions, the rule of law and security;
- A partnership that greens: the EU and partner countries will work together towards a resilient and sustainable future;
- A partnership that connects: the EU will invest further in the digital transformation of partner countries and will aim to extend the benefits of the digital single market;
- A partnership that empowers: the EU and partner countries will work together towards resilient, fair and inclusive societies.

This document served as a basis for discussions at the [18 June 2020 Video Teleconference of the Leaders of the Eastern Partnership](#). Against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic and its heavy socioeconomic fallout across the entire continent, the leaders acknowledged the strategic importance of this partnership and underlined the need to continue building an area of shared democracy, prosperity and stability, anchored in their shared values, through a rules-based international order and international law.

Following this, [post-2020 Eastern Partnership priorities](#) were announced in July 2021. The EaP policy will continue to be flexible and allow for substantial differentiation,

[2]For more information, please refer to the section of the [EEAS website](#) on the EaP.



tailor-made approaches and incentive-based enhanced cooperation that benefits the countries most engaged in reforms. In this respect, it will emphasise:

- Together for resilient, sustainable and integrated economies;
- Together for accountable institutions, the rule of law and security;
- Together for environmental and climate resilience;
- Together for a resilient digital transformation;
- Together for resilient, gender-equal, fair and inclusive societies; and
- An overarching objective that reinforces strategic communication.

Accordingly, during the programming period 2021-2027, the promotion of human rights, democracy and the rule of law will continue to be supported.

Established in 2011, [the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly](#) is the parliamentary component of the EaP and is responsible for the consultation, supervision and monitoring of the partnership. Its main goal is to bring together the parliaments of the EaP countries and the European Parliament and to enhance people-to-people contacts, promote the active participation of civil society and engage more actively in cultural dialogue. It is rooted in mutual interests and commitments, and in the principles of differentiation, shared ownership and responsibility. One of its roles is to scrutinise the EU's support for EaP countries, and it can also issue recommendations to the intergovernmental structures of the EaP with a view to fostering deeper political and economic integration of these countries with the EU.

The assembly has held ten ordinary sessions to date, the last one on 19-21 February 2023 in Chişinău. One highlight of the agenda was a key debate entitled 'What future for the Eastern Partnership policy in the aftermath of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine? New regional security context, challenges and opportunities'.

The assembly comprises 60 Members of the European Parliament and 10 members from each partner country's parliament. However, as the European Parliament does not recognise the Belarusian National Assembly as a democratically elected institution, no Belarusian 'parliamentarians' currently participate in Euronest. However, owing to exceptional circumstances, representatives of the Belarusian democratic forces were invited to attend the ninth and tenth ordinary sessions. The Euronest Parliamentary Assembly has four standing committees, namely the Committee on Political Affairs, Human Rights and Democracy, the Committee on Economic Integration, Legal Approximation and Convergence with EU Policies, the Committee on Energy Security and the Committee on Social Affairs, Employment, Education, Culture and Civil Society. It also comprises a Working Group on the Rules of Procedure, a Working Group on Association Agreements, a Working Group on Belarus, as well as an informal Women's Forum.

In addition, an EaP Civil Society Forum^[3] issues recommendations 'to influence EU institutions and EaP national governments'.

[3]For more information about the civil society forum, please refer to the [CSF website](#).



B. Union for the Mediterranean

The Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) includes the 27 EU Member States, the European Union and 15 Mediterranean countries (Albania, Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Mauritania, Montenegro, Monaco, Morocco, Palestine, Syria (whose membership has been suspended because of the civil war), Tunisia and Turkey). The League of Arab States has participated in all meetings since 2008 and Libya has observer status.

1. Objectives

The UfM is an intergovernmental partnership, a multilateral framework for political, economic and social relations between the EU and the southern and eastern Mediterranean countries. It was launched in 2008 at the [Paris Summit](#) as a continuation of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership also known as the Barcelona Process. The UfM is inspired by the goals set out in the Barcelona Declaration of 1995, namely to create an area of peace, stability, security and shared economic prosperity, with full respect for democratic principles, human rights and fundamental freedoms, while promoting understanding between cultures and civilisations in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

2. Structures

The UfM is chaired by a co-presidency, highlighting the co-ownership that characterises the group. Since 2012, the EU has assumed the northern co-presidency and Jordan the southern co-presidency. The main governing body of the UfM is the Senior Officials' Meeting, which oversees and coordinates the UfM's work. The Senior Officials' Meeting also approves the budget and the work programme of the Secretariat, prepares meetings of foreign ministers and other ministerial configurations, and appoints the Secretary-General and the six Deputy Secretaries-General. The meeting also discusses the project proposals submitted by the Secretariat for approval and endorsement. The UfM Secretariat's role consists of, above all, identifying, processing, promoting and coordinating technical projects in sectors such as transport, energy, water, environmental protection, higher education and mobility, research, social affairs, the empowerment of women, employment and business development, all of which enhance cooperation and directly affect the livelihoods of people living in the UfM countries. The EU is the largest contributor to the UfM Secretariat's budget.

The [Parliamentary Assembly of the UfM](#) (PA-UfM) builds on the work of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly and comprises 280 members: 132 EU members (83 members from the EU national parliaments and 49 members from the European Parliament), eight members from European Mediterranean partner countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Monaco and Montenegro), 130 members from the 10 countries on the southern and eastern shores of the Mediterranean (Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Israel, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Syria (currently suspended), Tunisia and Turkey), and 10 members from Mauritania.

The PA-UfM holds one plenary session per year; the most recent was in Strasbourg on 13 and 14 February 2019. The 2020 plenary session, initially scheduled to take place in Antalya (Turkey) on 7 and 8 March, was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



The Presidency of the PA-UfM is currently held by Morocco (2022-2023). Spain is due to take it over in 2023. The PA-UfM adopts resolutions or recommendations on all aspects of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation that concern the executive organs of the UfM, the Council of the European Union, the European Commission and the national governments of partner countries.

The PA-UfM has five standing committees, each consisting of 56 members:

- Political Affairs, Security and Human Rights;
- Economic and Financial Affairs, Social Affairs and Education;
- Improving Quality of Life, Exchanges Between Civil Societies and Culture;
- Energy, Environment and Water;
- Women's Rights in Euro-Mediterranean Countries.

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