



EUROPE'S EASTERN NEIGHBOURS – WHERE DO THEY FIT IN?

When we talk of Development Cooperation, it is usually understood to refer to the poor countries of Africa, Latin America and Asia. In fact, what is commonly referred to as the 'Global South' includes countries that are not confined to such neat geographical blocks, and the relationship between the EU and its Eastern neighbours is one example of how the EU tackles this.¹

European Neighbourhood Programme – what is the basis for this cooperation?

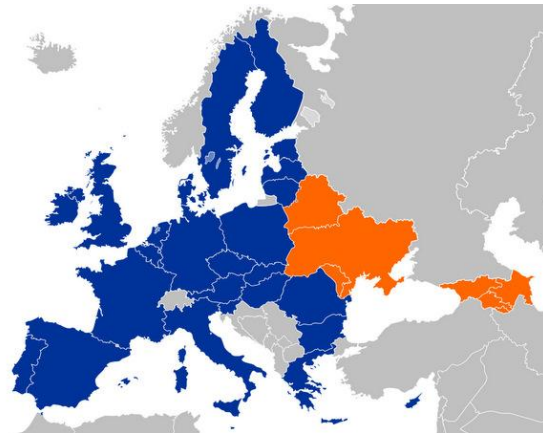
The European programme that covers the countries immediately to the East and South of the EU is the European Neighbourhood Programme (ENP), which came into existence in 2004 and covers 16 countries². It was brought in to avoid the creation of dividing lines between the enlarged EU and its new neighbours.

According to the [ENP website](#) "Our Neighbourhood Policy provides us with a coherent approach that ensures that the whole of the EU is committed to deeper relations with all our neighbours. At the same time, it allows us to develop tailor-made relations with each country."³ Despite sharing a European Commissioner, [Štefan Füle](#), the neighbourhood policy is separate from the EU's enlargement policy and neighbourhood countries do not have an explicit membership perspective, although this has been left open to some extent, allowing the EU to introduce this possibility in the future.

The ENP is seen as 'a privileged relationship', that builds on a 'mutual commitment to common values (democracy and human rights, rule of law, good governance, market economy principles and sustainable development).' Its added value, is 'political association and deeper economic integration, increased mobility and more people-to-people contacts.'⁴

As well as the bilateral agreements between the EU and each partner country, there are regional groupings⁵ that fall under the ENP, including the [Eastern Partnership](#), (EaP) which is directed at six countries of Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.

This briefing paper will focus on these six countries and outline their current relationship with the EU, taking in the EU programmes that affect them and the various documents that provide information about their partnership status.



¹ As an example, from the countries to the East of the EU, Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine are Lower Middle Income Countries and Azerbaijan and Belarus are Upper Middle Income Countries according to the OECD DAC list of ODA recipients; still part of the 'Global South'.

² [Algeria](#), [Armenia](#), [Azerbaijan](#), [Belarus](#), [Egypt](#), [Georgia](#), [Israel](#), [Jordan](#), [Lebanon](#), [Libya](#), [Moldova](#), [Morocco](#), [Occupied Palestinian Territory](#), [Syria](#), [Tunisia](#) and [Ukraine](#).

³ Štefan Füle, Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy.

⁴ [ENP website](#)

⁵ The Union for the Mediterranean, the Black Sea Synergy and the Eastern Partnership

The Eastern Partnership – what does this partnership mean?

The Eastern Partnership was launched in Prague in May 2009, and then revised following the Arab Spring and calls to go further in the East in early 2011. The policy includes new features such as the 'more for more' approach that rewards progress with additional support; the principle of mutual accountability between the EU and its partners, the need to include civil society in partnerships and the special role that women have to play. It also places new emphasis on differentiation. The funding provided under the ENPI was adjusted and the EC proposed umbrella programmes⁶ that make funds more rapidly available to support democratic transformation, institution building and growth.

As part of the monitoring and annual progress reports, on 15 May 2012, High Representative Catherine Ashton and Commissioner Štefan Füle launched the latest ENP package. This includes a communication on [Delivering on a new European Neighbourhood Policy](#) and progress reports for [Armenia](#), [Azerbaijan](#), [Georgia](#), and [Ukraine](#), with memos describing progress to date in [Armenia](#), [Azerbaijan](#), [Belarus](#), [Georgia](#), [the Republic of Moldova](#) and [Ukraine](#) in implementing key reform priorities.

The main advances during the first three years of the Eastern Partnership are set out in the communication: 'intensified...dialogue on human rights...negotiations on Association Agreements...launched with all countries (except *Belarus*) and...completed with Ukraine...negotiations on Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas...progressing.'

A regional report: [Implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy in 2011 – Regional Report: Eastern Partnership](#) and three specific strategy documents related to the Eastern Partnership were also launched: [Eastern Partnership: A Roadmap to the autumn 2013 Summit](#), [Eastern Partnership Roadmap 2012-13: Multilateral Dimension](#) and [Eastern Partnership Roadmap 2012-13: Bilateral Dimension](#).

These documents cover the progress made in 2011 and set out the path ahead to the second half of 2013, when the next EaP Summit will take place.

The regional report starts by saying that despite progress both on the bilateral and multilateral tracks, there are strong challenges that remain in the Eastern Partnership countries, namely, those related to democracy, the rule of law and human rights. The role of all stakeholders and the central role of CSOs is underlined – this is detailed on page 3 of this briefing paper – and mobility of citizens is highlighted as an area where considerable progress has been made. The difficult situation of Belarus is described in detail, with the EU's approach consisting of strengthened support to civil society.

The roadmap was agreed at the EaP summit in Warsaw in September 2011; and the communication containing the roadmap covers the bilateral and multilateral dimensions of the eastern Partnership, 'guided by the principles of joint ownership, differentiation and conditionality.'⁷

The roadmap works through the EaP objectives and outlines the current situation followed by expected achievements by the time of the 2013 EaP summit. It also covers the interaction with other stakeholders and builds on the general statement made at the beginning of the communication: 'Civil society is a fundamental element in a well-functioning democratic system. EU support for and engagement with civil society in Eastern European countries is therefore being significantly strengthened.'⁸

⁶ Eastern Partnership Integration and Cooperation Programme (EaPIC) for the East and Support for Partnership, Reform and Inclusive Growth (SPRING) for the South

⁷ Page 2 http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/docs/2012_enp_pack/e_pship_roadmap_en.pdf

CSOs in the EU and Eastern Partners – how do we work together?



The Eastern Partnership was launched in tandem with the [Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum](#) (EaP CSF), which is specifically targeted at CSOs in the EU and the six partner

countries concerned. The EaP CSF has the mandate to present recommendations to EaP representatives in order to influence EU institutions and national governments. It has four working groups and a fifth was agreed at the last EaP CSF meeting in Poznan, Poland in November 2011.

Working Group 1	Democracy, human rights, good governance and stability
Working Group 2	Economic integration and convergence with EU policies
Working Group 3	Environment, climate change and energy security
Working Group 4	Contacts between people
Working Group 5	Social Dialogue

The May communication on delivering on new ENP highlights some elements of what the EU has done to reach out to civil society in neighbouring countries:

- A Neighbourhood **Civil Society Facility** was launched in September 2011, with an initial budget of €26 million for 2011 and similar amounts planned for 2012.
- The Eastern Partnership human rights dialogues were complemented by joint civil society seminars and the **Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum** has become a permanent member of all four multi-lateral platforms
- The EC has established a facility for supporting the **Council of Europe's** work in the Eastern Neighbourhood
- In parallel with the suspension or redirection of assistance, the EU has increased **financial support** for CSOs in countries where continued human rights violations persist.
- The EU has offered to negotiate **visa facilitation** and readmission agreements with Belarus to facilitate people-to-people contacts, although there has been no response from the authorities

There is also an [EU-Neighbourhood East Parliamentary Assembly](#) (EURO-NEST PA)⁹ which brings together MEPs and nationally elected parliamentarians, not to mention the [Conference of the Regional and Local Authorities for the Eastern Partnership](#) (CORLEAP)¹⁰, which was set up by the Committee of the Regions.

The [Eastern Partnership Community](#) brings together news, calendar events, analysis and debate on all issues relevant to the Eastern Partnership – join the community and share your views!

⁸ Page 3 http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/docs/2012_enp_pack/e_pship_roadmap_en.pdf

⁹ Established 3 May 2011

¹⁰ Established 8 September 2011