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**Promotion of Democracy in EU’s neighbourhood:**  
**The ENP and its effectiveness.**

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**Corinth, February 2016**

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Σχολή Κοινωνικών και Πολιτικών Επιστημών  
Τμήμα Πολιτικής Επιστήμης και Διεθνών Σχέσεων**

**Πρόγραμμα Μεταπτυχιακών Σπουδών  
«Μεσογειακές Σπουδές»**

**Προώθηση της δημοκρατίας στη γειτονιά της  
Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης: Η Ευρωπαϊκή Πολιτική της  
Γειτονιάς και η αποτελεσματικότητά της.**

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**Κόρινθος, Φεβρουάριος 2016**

# **Promotion of Democracy in EU's neighbourhood: The ENP and its effectiveness.**

**Keywords:** promotion of democracy, reforms, review of 2011, Action Plans, progress reports

## **Abstract**

In this dissertation we study the promotion of democracy and political reforms in the countries included in the ENP. The period of study is from the establishment of the policy until the year of 2014 and the end of service of J. M. Barroso in the Presidency of the European Commission. The basic features of the policy are presented along with its instruments, the rationale behind the proposal of the policy and the factors that motivated the review of the policy in 2011. The main objectives of the field of political dialogue and reforms of each Action Plan for every country are presented along with the results recorded in the progress reports for each country. This dissertation examines whether ENP has been equally effective in promoting democracy and political reforms in the two regions that are included in the policy and concludes that the two regions differ completely both to their needs to implement democratic reforms as well as their perception of the policy.

## **Προώθηση της δημοκρατίας στη γειτονιά της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης: Η Ευρωπαϊκή Πολιτική της Γειτονιάς και η αποτελεσματικότητά της.**

**Σημαντικοί Όροι:** προώθηση της δημοκρατίας, μεταρρυθμίσεις, αναθεώρηση του 2011, Σχέδια Δράσης, αναφορές προόδου

### **Περίληψη**

Στην παρούσα διπλωματική εξετάζουμε την προώθηση της Δημοκρατίας και των πολιτικών μεταρρυθμίσεων στις χώρες που περιλαμβάνονται στην Ευρωπαϊκή Πολιτική της Γειτονιάς. Η περίοδος της μελέτης είναι από την καθιέρωση της πολιτικής μέχρι το έτος 2014 και τη λήξη της θητείας του Ζ. Μ. Μπαρόζο στην Προεδρία της Ευρωπαϊκής Επιτροπής. Τα βασικά χαρακτηριστικά της πολιτικής παρουσιάζονται μαζί με τα όργανά της, τη λογική πίσω από την πρόταση της πολιτικής και τους λόγους που παρακίνησαν στην αναθεώρηση της το 2011. Οι κύριοι στόχοι στον τομέα του πολιτικού διαλόγου και των μεταρρυθμίσεων του κάθε Σχεδίου Δράση για κάθε χώρα παρουσιάζονται μαζί με αποτελέσματα που καταγράφονται στις αναφορές προόδου για κάθε χώρα. Η παρούσα διπλωματική εξετάζει εάν η Ευρωπαϊκή Πολιτική της Γειτονιάς έχει υπάρξει εξίσου αποτελεσματική στην προώθηση της δημοκρατίας και των πολιτικών μεταρρυθμίσεων στις δύο περιοχές που περιλαμβάνονται και καταλήγει στο συμπέρασμα ότι οι δύο περιοχές διαφέρουν απόλυτα τόσο στις ανάγκες να εφαρμόσουν δημοκρατικές μεταρρυθμίσεις όσο και στην αντίληψη τους για την πολιτική.

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## **List of Abbreviations**

AA	Association Agreement
AA/DCFTA	Association Agreement/Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area
AP	Action Plan
CSO	Civil Society Organization
EaP	Eastern Partnership
EaPIC	Eastern Partnership Integration and Cooperation
EIB	European Investment Bank
EIDHR	European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights
EIF	European Investment Fund
ENP	European Neighbourhood Policy
ENPI	European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument
ESS	European Security Strategy
EU	European Union
MEDA	MEsures D'Accompagnement (French- accompanying measures)
NGO	Non-Government Organization
PA	Palestine Authority
PCA	Partnership and Cooperation Agreement
SPRING	Support for Partnership Reform and Inclusive Growth
TACIS	Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States

## INTRODUCTION

For almost two decades the enlargement process became the main priority of the European Union (EU) in the external affairs sector. The EU of fifteen (15) member states was under negotiations for becoming the EU of twenty seven (27) initially and twenty eight member states (28) eventually. After the successful completion of the strategy a new era began for the Union since the turn of the millennium highlighted new challenges and opportunities in the European continent and the EU in particular. EU was given the opportunity to play leading role not only as a normative power but also as a key player in global politics and a hegemonic figure in the region bordering the Union, as new facts emerged and became a pushing factor for action. Emerson et al. described these factors (2007, pp.7-8), which are the following: a)the complete change of the scenery in the Middle East especially after the events of 9/11 and the rise of Al Qaeda, the invasion in Iraq and Afghanistan along with the deterioration of the relations among Iran and the West regarding the Iranian nuclear power programme, b)the rise of Russia and China as regional players. Russia's energy and gas reserves and its tactics in trade issues regarding its abroad, meaning the eastern neighbourhood of the EU, have strengthened the country's economy while China's influence in Europe and its neighbourhood is keep growing and makes it a new power under an authoritarian regime, c)the enlargement process of EU that even though a complete success, it has reached EU's limits and the failure of having ratified the Constitution has shown that the possibility of having the sixth enlargement round completed soon is not EU's future plans.

Besides these reasons, the shift on the EU borders raised new concerns regarding security matters, international and regional relations, and new neighbors for the Union etc. As far as security is concerned, even from 2003, the EU in the European Security Strategy (ESS) laid out its concerns about the new threats and challenges that the Union had to face in order to strengthen the sense of security to its billions of citizens and avoid or even tackle any factor for instability, not only to its periphery but to its territory too. In this strategy paper, the five threats identified are: i) terrorism, ii) proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, iii) regional conflicts, iv) state failure



and v) organized crime (High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, 2003, pp.3-5).

It is safe to say that the success of the enlargement process soon transformed to a problem for the Union. New questions emerged with the key one being ‘What would happen with the countries excluded by the enlargement wave?’ New borders were created and these new bordering countries were either politically unstable or economically or both<sup>1</sup>. This situation undermined EU’s goals for having as borders states that would be stable and with good level of governance as these were expressed in the ESS in 2003. The new borders of EU entailed almost all of the above mentioned threats with failed states, organized crime and regional conflicts to constitute main characteristics of the states forming the new borders.

The Mediterranean region, for instance, is characterized by the simultaneous presence of a number of both hard and soft security challenges like conflicts over territorial claims, terrorism, illegal migration, ongoing climate change accompanied with environmental degradation and strong disputes over recourses, proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction, cross – border organized crime and many other issues of great concern while the new neighbours of the EU to the east posed a series of soft security threats like terrorism and organized crime. Taking into consideration the fact that it is impossible to keep instability from spreading from the neighbouring countries, the main issue became how could the EU export stability and security to the near abroad, as researches have already expressed (Kahraman, 2005, p.4).

Thus, it was impaired for the EU to create close relations with these countries to promote peace and stability and try to mitigate the negative effects deriving from these countries. As Tonra explained (2010, p.64) EU mainly develops two types of relations with third countries. These are i) membership and ii) partnership. Since

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<sup>1</sup> The new borders of EU after the enlargement were to the North: Norway and Iceland both in economic cooperation with EU and in complete accordance with the Copenhagen criteria set for a country becoming a member state of EU, meaning that they could easily be accepted in the Union if they wished, to the West: the Atlantic Sea, to the South: the Mediterranean Sea and beyond the countries of North Africa that do not have any prospect of ever becoming EU members and to the East: Russia and other problematic countries or countries that can cause problems to EU peace, stability and prosperity in the future like Belarus, Ukraine, Georgia, Azerbaijan and Moldova. (Cameron & Balfour, 2006, p.15)

membership perspective is related to enlargement another kind of policy should be developed without the golden carrot of conditionality.

Over the years EU has developed a number of initiatives in the regions without offering membership perspective and the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) is one of them. It is both a tool of foreign affairs and an attempt of EU to demonstrate a hegemonic figure to its periphery. It is not the first time that EU attempts to bring closer states outside its borders but it is the first time that one policy includes two entirely different neighbourhoods. Additionally main features of ENP are bilateralism and differentiation. The established partnership on EU and each country is based on each country's capabilities and needs rather have one framework for all. ENP was not created to replace previous policies like the EMP but to work with them or even supplement them and it is much more certain than the previously proposed policy called 'Wider Europe'.

The two regions share some common challenges for the Union, like the need to combat terrorism and organized crime, environmental issues, health policy issues, differences on the rate the countries of the two regions develop economically, the demographic figures, dealing of poverty etc. But mainly the biggest challenge is the promotion of democracy and the rule of law.

In every EU's initiative the goal of promoting democracy or at least democratic type of governance assumes the first place in the priorities list. Most of the EU's policies are driven under the main notion that democracy promotes stability and security in the long run. ENP is not an exception and democratic reforms are top in the list of priorities.

The promotion of rule of law and democracy, along with the reforms regarding protection of fundamental freedoms and human rights are the means for these countries to become stable and prosperous and in this way stop being viewed as threats for the Union's stability and in reality format the ring of friends around its borders. The actual idea is for the EU to be surrounded by a ring of well governed friends and allies.

In this dissertation we will attempt to assess ENP's effectiveness regarding the promotion of democracy and political reforms from the establishment of the policy in 2004 until the year 2014 which is the end of Barroso's Presidency in the European Commission and the beginning of a new era. The objectives set regarding the political sector, meaning the establishment of political cooperation among EU and each partner state, the promotion or strengthening or enhancement of democracy or at least democratic rule of governance, promotion of respect of law and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms along with reforms on the administrative sector will be the field of study.

The field of study will be the two regions where ENP is simultaneously implemented as this will help us to comprehend the policy regarding the objective of political reforms and complete our assessment. It is the first time that the EU adopts and implements a policy covering such a wide and heterogeneous area that the question whether EU accomplished to pursue and fulfill the same objectives in both regions included, immediately surfaces. The comparison of ENP's effectiveness in promoting political dialogue and actual assisting in democratic transition of these countries that have already been identified as autocracies or governed by repressive regimes is the matter that we address in the study where the key question deals with the effectiveness of the policy in promoting democracy or democratic rule of governance and reforms on the political sector in these countries and the answer is that it hasn't due to the differences of the two regions in democratic features, the view of the policy by the countries of the two regions and EU's will to push the countries to actual perform reforms.

The first chapter is about the main features of the policy, the rationale behind its proposal and implementation, the need for review in 2011 and the main instruments that play key role in the establishment of the partnership. On the second chapter the Action Plans (AP) of the countries and the set goals on the matter of promotion of democratic reforms are explained and finally on the third chapter there is an assessment of the progress recorded on the political sector for each country with focus on the progress reports of the implementation of ENP for the year 2014. Finally the assessment regarding the ineffectiveness of the policy to equally promote democracy in the two regions will follow.

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **PRESENTATION OF ENP**

#### **1.1. Main features of the ENP**

The turn of the millennium brought to the fore the change of scenery in the EU and its periphery. A new era began where new challenges surfaced and the enlargement process as the main strategy of the Union at that moment, played key role in the decision making regarding the future and the new relationships that the EU was forced to create with its new neighbours after the shift in the Union's borders.

Peace and stability are the two pillars of EU's existence and simultaneously the main objectives on its every initiative. They are ensured with the establishment and maintenance of good relations with the neighbours and by keeping close cooperation with them. The goal is that borders will remain as borders and conflicts will be diminished, meaning that the risk of the borders transforming into frontiers; a notion related to war and confrontation, is minimized. Strengthening cooperation among countries is the means of achieving this goal. The extent of the cooperation and partnership depends on the extent of the commitment of the participating countries. Main features of this cooperation are the establishment of rule of law and respect and promotion of human rights.

For almost two decades, meaning from 1990 and the collapse of communist states in central and Eastern Europe, enlargement became the main policy of EU. The EU of fifteen (15) member states was under negotiations for becoming the EU of twenty five (25) members at first and of twenty eight (28) eventually. Enlargement gave EU the opportunity to demonstrate its normative power and play a leading role in managing the situation that rose after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the formation of new states. For this process, EU used its basic tool, the accession conditionality. Enlargement was characterized as a complete success and the next day found EU pondering for its next steps and for the next day regarding the enlarged Union.

The question that rose right after the completion of the fifth enlargement round was about the nature of the newly formed borders. The fear that prevailed was that the countries that were omitted by the accession process would share the feeling of exclusion leading to resentment, cold diplomatic relations, disbelief in joining cross-border programmes and inability to cooperate on critical matters where cross-border cooperation is essential. Could there be a cooperative scheme where the feeling of inclusion would flourish or would the feeling of exclusion prevail?

Obviously the successful enlargement process soon transformed to a problem for the Union which brought itself to the uncertain position of having as new neighbours, countries with unstable political situation or weak economies or both. This was completely controversial to the EU's goals for "*well-governed borders*" (High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, 2003, p.7).

A possible answer could be the immediate inclusion in the next enlargement round of the excluded countries, however this cannot be considered as a viable solution. Over-expanding the EU's could harm the Union's effectiveness according to Emerson (2004, p.1) and raise new matters regarding the geographical limits of EU. The notion that the Union had reached its limits became even more intense at that time along with two reasons as listed by Özgür Ünal Eriş (2012, p. 244):

- 1) EU reached its limits and any new immediate enlargement threatens the capacity of the institutions to be effective and
- 2) Countries that were not included in the fifth enlargement round are far away from being suitable candidates for membership.

Thus the Union had to search for other solutions close to the logic of enlargement but not the same. The need for a new policy was more compelling than ever and in 2003 the initiative named ‘Wider Europe – Neighbourhood Framework for Relations with the Eastern and Southern neighbours’ was proposed. It involved those countries with the fewest possibilities to become EU member states and simultaneously were those that the formation of close relations with the EU could result to a ‘win – win’ situation for both sides. However ‘Wider Europe’ as a plan was soon abandoned due to its vague narrative and the many uncertainties that rose from it.

The next step was the introduction of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) on May 2004. ENP is a summation of bilateral agreements which aim to create a periphery or zone of friendly countries that form EU’s new borders. It can be described as a tool of foreign policy and an attempt of EU to demonstrate a hegemonic figure to its periphery aiming to create ‘a ring of friends’ in order to formulate a neighbourhood characterized by peace and stability (Commission of European Communities, 2003 p. 4). This is not just an interpretation from the political scientists but it is actually articulated and set as a rationale of the policy in the strategy paper of ENP “*to prevent the emergence of new dividing lines between the enlarged EU and its neighbours*” (Commission of European Communities, 2004a p.3).

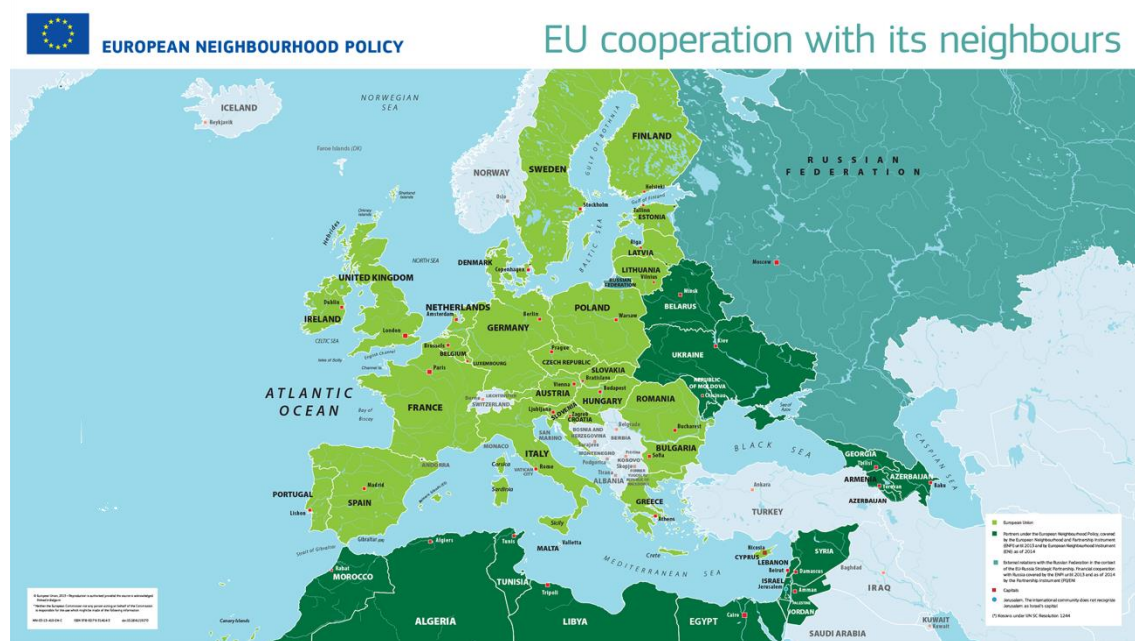
The planning of ENP began before even the conclusion of the enlargement “*as soon as the big enlargement from 15 to 25 members was becoming virtually certain...*” (Emerson & Noutchena, 2005, p.92). At that point, the focus of the EU was directed to Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus with special concern to Ukraine but some of the southern countries expressed their argument that Mediterranean countries should not be excluded for the reason that these countries should not be disadvantaged compared to the eastern ones. Eventually it was decided that the Mediterranean countries should not be omitted from the policy, especially if we take into consideration the failure of the Barcelona Process<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> The pre-existing Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (the Barcelona Process) failed in making a complete transformation regarding the economic development in the countries of the Mediterranean region. Neither was the political situation changed. However, the assessment of the Barcelona process can be that it did not succeed but it did not harm either. Its success is concentrated in bringing together the two parts of the partnership without generating any new tension.

The responsibility for planning and implementing the policy was granted initially to the Directorate – General for Enlargement in order to take advantage the know-how of bringing together different countries even though the ENP has nothing to do with membership. Nowadays it has been granted to the Directorate – General for Neighbourhood Policy and enlargement Negotiations.

It is addressed to sixteen countries, six of them to the East and ten to the South. The eastern countries are: Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine while the ten southern countries are the following: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, the Palestine Authority, Syria and Tunisia. The three countries of South Caucasus were included in the policy on June 2004<sup>3,4</sup>.



Source: EU External Action Service (EEAS 2013), enpi-info.eu, retrieved October 2015

<sup>3</sup> Their strategic importance and their possible contribution to EU’s supply in energy resources was the main factor for their conclusion in the policy.

<sup>4</sup> Russia did not participate in ENP though it was proposed to but later on, after negotiations among the two parties, meaning the EU and the Russian Federation, it was decided that a separate policy named EU – Russia strategic partnership would be more preferable. The excuse that Russia used to exclude itself from the new policy was that it did not “belong in the company of the ENP partner states” (Emerson, Noutcheva, Popescu 2007, p. 14). Russia considers itself as equal player to EU in the global political system and any participation in EU’s initiatives where the EU holds the leading or even hegemonic role, is simply unacceptable.

Proximity played pivotal role in the decision of which and how many countries will be involved in the Policy. After all, the EU throughout all these years has proven that it always takes into consideration in various initiatives and actions the possible contribution of its geographical closer neighbours.

Both regions have one common feature: non-democratic or authoritarian regimes govern the countries and protection of human rights is in most cases an unknown notion. However, the countries of the eastern region have shown some kind of progress in establishing democratic rule of governance while the reforms on political sector in the Mediterranean region are stuck in preliminary stage. Regardless the similarity the question of this paper is about the effectiveness of the policy in promoting democracy and the rule of law in both regions and the answer relates to the differences of the regions.

EU's rationale behind the policy is the promotion of cooperation in its periphery to ensure stability, development and compact of poverty. This is actually stated by the Commission (2003, p.3). There are two distinct but at the same time related logics behind the policy. Firstly, the EU wishes to reduce the socio-economic gap among the Union and its periphery through the promotion of reforms on political and economic level and secondly to stabilize the region and ensure security and tackling of already identified threats coming from external borders (Kahraman, 2005, p.26).

The policy promotes reforms on several sectors aiming and the promised reward is “*a reward for convergence towards the EU ‘Acquis’ on economic regulations and progress in the area of border security, prevention of illegal migration, an improved human rights record and expanded efforts towards democracy*” (Wesselink & Boschma, 2012, p.6).

The partner states were urged to align their political and judicial system with the EU's ‘Acquis’ regarding the standards of democracy, protection of human and civil rights and standard of living. Additionally they had “*to adapt an extensive range of EU regulations in order to comply with the EU internal market standards*” (Wesselink & Boschma, 2012 p.10). The reward is enhanced relations on political, economic or other sectors nature or participation on many EU programmes like Erasmus Mundus.



For their progress partner countries are rewarded with the prospect of closer economic integration with the Union. Specifically, all the neighbouring countries should be offered the prospect of a stake in the EU's Internal Market "*and further integration and liberalisation to promote the free movement of –persons, goods, services and capital (four freedoms).*" (Commission of European Communities, 2003, p.10). In fact, it is viewed that the structure of ENP evolves "*around the four 'common spaces' of economics; freedom, security and justice; external security and research and education.*" (Tonra, 2010, p.65). Other incentives are cooperation against security hazards, promotion of dialogue and protection of human rights, enhancement of judicial system, "*establishment of student and professional exchange programmes*" (Gebhard et al. 2010, p. 96).

What differentiates ENP from other policies is that it is built on bilateral agreements. The logic of 'one suit fits all' meaning one framework simultaneously proposed to all parts involved, is clearly abandoned. The content of each agreement is based on the needs and abilities of each specific country. These agreements are called Action Plans (APs) and are the main documents of ENP. The agenda regarding the partnership among the EU and each country is set and described in the AP and all the priorities for reform are listed. More precisely it is the EU that sets the agenda and it is the country's choice on the level of the commitment in fulfilling the said goals/priorities. Of course, the methodology used by the Directorate – General for Enlargement came from "*the standard agenda of the accession negotiation process.*" (Emerson and Noutchena, 2005, p.92) meaning that although differentiation according to each case does exist, a framework of standard provisions based on the Copenhagen criteria also plays an important role in the policy. These provisions refer to democracy, protection of fundamental rights, and establishment of rule of law and in fewer words the 'acquis' of the EU<sup>5</sup>.

Another characteristic is that, contrary to enlargement ENP does not offer a membership perspective as reward for compliance to the reforms requested in the

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<sup>5</sup> Each country share common values with the EU in a different level and this shows different level of ambitions in cultivating good relations with the EU. Some of the values are: i)respect of rule of law and democracy, ii)protection of human rights, iii)protection of minority groups and their rights and freedoms, iv)promotion of civil society, v)freedom of elections, vi)freedom of expression, vii)freedom of association, viii)freedom of media etc. (COM 795, final, 2004, p.3).

various fields. It is not related to enlargement and cannot be perceived as a preliminary stage of it. The incentive that the EU offers to those countries for conducting the reforms is better integration in the economic sector with the final objective of total access to the unified market of the union. However, a country's participation in ENP does not exclude any future change on the status of its relationship with the EU and it does not ban any future application for membership<sup>6</sup>. This is another factor regarding the effectiveness of ENP. The Eastern countries expected more and were willing to use the policy as a step towards the ultimate goal – membership.

Even though the golden carrot of membership is lacking in ENP, one can argue that the silver carrot offered by the policy which entails 'a stake in EU's internal market' and promotion of the four freedoms is a substantial one. However it must be mentioned that the four freedoms are specifically mentioned in 2003 Wider Europe and not in 2004 ENP Strategy.

Unfortunately, without the 'golden carrot' of membership EU's capacities to convince other states, mainly from its neighbourhood, to follow the Union's path to political transformation diminish. After all, as remarked by Dannreuther, if the EU had the ability to provide sufficient incentives for convincing other states to perform reforms it wouldn't have offered the membership prospect with such a frequency (2006, p.188 - 189).

Finally, we should mention that the ENP stepped on existing programmes for previous initiatives till it absorbed them and "*defined more precise benchmarks and 'priorities for action' for each and every neighbour*" (Balfour and Missiroli, 2007, p.5) major contribution to that was by the APs.

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<sup>6</sup> This is mainly referred to the countries of the eastern neighbourhood since they are those that can apply for membership and not for the Mediterranean countries which are excluded from any membership perspective since they do not belong to the European continent.

## 1.2. The Action Plans and other Instruments

ENP is based on the Action Plans which are bilaterally agreed documents where each partner country and the EU pinpoint the areas for action after taking into consideration the unique situation or the capabilities of the country. In fact the APs are the main tools of the policy which “...do not introduce new legal instruments to govern relations between the EU and partner countries, but are policy documents designed to identify the priorities for action and the objectives of reform” (Balfour and Missiroli, 2007, p.16).

They “serve as a point of reference for providing EU assistance and ensuring a degree of formal institutionalization with the partners” (Kahraman, 2005, p.15).

Additionally, the APs have four (4) main elements which are:

- a) Joint agreement of the content by both parts (EU and the country involved)
- b) Minimum duration of three to five years
- c) Possibility of renewal under the provision that both parts mutually consent on the renewal
- d) Base of common principles but simultaneously differentiation for each country due to the specification of each neighbour’s needs and capabilities (Commission of the European Communities, 2004b, p.3).

Initially, they were proposed to those countries that were already linked to the EU with Association Agreements (AA) or Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (PCA)<sup>7</sup>.

Before signing the AP, a certain procedure must be followed. The first stage entails the drafting of a report by the Commission for each country where the main parts of the report are: i) description of the situation within the country on political, economical and social level, ii) the monitoring of the implementation of reforms; if there has been any and iii) the assessment of the possibility for the creation of a deep relationship among the EU and the country referred to the report. After the completion of the report by the Commission, it is sent to the Council of Ministers which is summoned with the objective of taking a decision on the next step regarding the

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<sup>7</sup> These countries were to the east: Moldova and Ukraine and to the south: Jordan, Morocco, Israel, the Palestinian Authority and Tunisia.

establishment of a relation between the said country and EU. In other words, the council is urged to decide whether the next step of the country report should be either an AA or an AP. Then the Council grants its approval the final step is the preparation and the signing of the AP. The main idea is that the priorities set in the APs are ambitious but at the same time enforceable. After the drafting of the APs the Commission sends the proposed document to the “*European Parliament, to the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions for information*” (Commission of European Communities, 2004b, p.3).

Committees and sub-committees, established in AAs or PCAs are mandated with the task to monitor the implementation of AP. Representatives of the Commission, the member states and the partner states participate in the committees. Periodical reports are prepared by the Commission describing the process of the implementation of the AP and list suggestions of future revisions.

The main structure of the AP “*derived from the standard agenda of the accession negotiation process*” (Emerson & Noutcheva, 2005, p.92) meaning a group of chapters covering a series of topics. In the first place we see political reforms deriving directly from the Copenhagen criteria for democracy and protection of human rights while the European norms and values for the four freedoms follow. The four freedoms cover the topics of movement of people and goods, capital, labour and services. Of course the similarity in the structure of the Action Plans cannot be interpreted as similarity in the content.

In the beginning, the pre-existing instruments MEDA and TACIS contributed in the implementation of the priorities set in the APs with financial support but after its establishment the European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument (ENPI) assumed this role and after 2014 it was substituted by ENI with the regulation No 232/2014. In Article 6 of this regulation there are listed the three types of programmes that the ENI supports and these are:

- a) bilateral programmes referred to participating countries in the ENP,
- b) regional programmes for the two specific partnerships under the policy of ENP and
- c) cross-border programmes aiming to support the establishment of the cooperation

among two or more neighbouring countries and the EU member states (European Parliament and European Council, 2014, article 6 par. 1)<sup>8</sup>.

With all the cross-border cooperation programmes, the EU aims to:

- a) promote both social and economic growth in both regions outside its borders
- b) enhance security in the borders
- c) deal with already existing problems or try to prevent them from emerging that concern both the EU and the neighbouring region such as terrorism, organized crime, environmental degradation etc. (European Neighbourhood & Partnership Instrument, Strategy Paper 2007-2013 Indicative Programme 2007-2010, p.5).

ENPI was considered to be an improved successor of the TACIS and MEDA instruments mainly because it provided more than just technical assistance. Actually the ENPI *“has the capacity to support a wider range of activities than is possible under existing financial instruments (MEDA and TACIS) and integrates a wide range of core policy objectives, including for example development policy.”* (Commission of European Communities, 2005).

Financial support is given through the European Investment Bank (EIB), the European Investment Fund (EIF) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. These instruments issue loans to fund projects characterized as strategically important or support programmes that combat unemployment or strengthen growth in the region (Ioannides & Schinas, 2011, p.4).

Moreover, instruments consisting part of the enlargement mechanism are also used in the ENP and other that were created later on like the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) that was launched in 2006 aiming to promote respect of human rights and freedoms, are also included in the mechanism of ENP, in the logic that every type of instrument of the EU, either established as part of

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<sup>8</sup> Before the launch of ENP reforms conducted by the neighbouring countries were supported by the EU through direct financial aid or through initiatives promising to strengthen regional relations. Initially the ENP used already existing for other initiatives and programmes mechanisms like MEDA and TACIS. MEDA programme was established with the aim to support cooperation among the EU and the countries of the Mediterranean region while the TACIS programme aimed to assist the countries lying to the east of Europe to complete their transition to market economies (Wesseling et al. 2012, p.7)

ENP or for other purposes and can actually assist in fulfilling the set goals, will be used.

EIDHR focuses on the fight against gender discrimination and particularly in supporting women in their struggle against social or employment exclusion (Balfour and Missiroli, 2007, p.11). Through the EIDHR civil society and non-governmental organizations get direct funding something “... *particularly important as many undemocratic countries have used national laws to limit the impact of aid intended to support democracy and human rights.....*” (Balfour and Missiroli, 2007, p.20).

Although Differentiation is one of the core characteristics of the policy and the APs serve it to the best, their structure is similar and the priorities of protection of human rights and reforms aiming to strengthen democratic rule of governance are always in high if not the first position in ranking.

The negotiations for drafting an AP point out another characteristic of ENP which is the sense of ‘joint ownership’. No country is obliged to participate in the ENP. The policy is proposed to certain countries and they are free to decide whether they will participate or not. Their volunteering participation in the policy and their collaboration in drafting the APs enhance the characteristic of ‘joint ownership’ as it is conceived not just as a European policy imposed in the two areas but as a partnership formatted under true cooperation.

For the APs to be successful and to the point must be set based on an agreement about the common interests and the prioritization of them. If the EU just set a series of predetermined goals and priorities the policy would be a guaranteed failure as the partners would not accept these goals and would not implement any reform in pursuing them<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> “*Joint ownership of the process, based on the awareness of shared values and common interests, is essential. The EU does not seek to impose priorities or conditions on its partners. The Action Plans depend, for their success, on the clear recognition of mutual interests in addressing a set of priority issues. There can be no question of asking partners to accept a pre-determined set of priorities.*” (Commission Of European Communities, 2004a, p. 8).

### 1.3. The Revised Policy

The year 2011 was a breaking point for ENP. On 25<sup>th</sup> of May 2011 the European Commission launched the ‘New Response to a Changing Neighbourhood’ which is in reality a review of ENP. In the Joint Communication of the European Commission and the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the promotion of rule of law and the respect of human rights are set to be the core of the revised policy. The exact phrase used is “...and a shared commitment to the universal values of human rights, democracy and the rule of law”. (European Commission, 2011, p.2)<sup>10</sup>.

The implementation of ENP up to the year 2011 has shown that despite the rhetoric about promotion of human rights and democratic rule, the main focus remained on bringing stability to a troubled area and reinforcing security measures, rather than fulfilling all the other objectives.

The terms ‘democracy’, ‘respect of human rights’ and ‘respect on rule of law’ are most commonly used on all of EU’s initiatives. They are used to constitute the pillars of the future partnerships. However, in the revised ENP, we experience a historic change in the rhetoric used in the Commission Paper regarding democracy. From the vague term democratization we move to the more specified term ‘deep democracy’. The Commission itself sets out the content of the term by including the features that term ‘deep democracy’ entails. These are:

- 1) the capability of a country to hold free elections, meaning having to decide about its representatives without obstructions/barriers and without any previous knowledge of the outcome or any attempt to prejudge the outcome.
- 2) to provide a country to its citizens the right and freedom to express themselves freely, to have the right of association and gathering and free and unbiased media

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<sup>10</sup> “The new approach must be based on mutual accountability and a shared commitment to the universal values of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. It will involve a much higher level of differentiation allowing each partner country to develop its links with the EU as far as its own aspirations, needs and capacities allow. For those southern and eastern neighbours able and willing to take part, this vision includes closer economic integration and stronger political co-operation on governance reforms, security, conflict-resolution matters, including joint initiatives in international for a on issues of common interest.” (European Commission, 2011, p.2).

3)the ongoing fight against corruption with the aim to minimize it and if possible to finally achieve its extinction.

4)the ability to deliver changes/reforms in the judicial system to ensure its independence and rapid enforcement

5)the ability to perform reforms to the police and army units (European Commission, 2011, p.4).

In the same document, the aims of the reviewed approach are also described and these are:

1) To grant greater support to those countries involved in the ENP that are willing and determined to enhance the notion of ‘deep democracy’ in their territories along with the promotion of civil rights; notions that the EU and its member states take for granted.

2) To achieve greater development on the sector of economy for the partner states in order to reach a level of sustainable growth that reduces inequalities, promotes job creation and better living conditions for their citizens.

3) To further strengthen the two dimensions of the policy, meaning the Eastern and the Mediterranean in order for regional initiatives about energy, trade and migration to flourish and

4) To accelerate the creation of new instruments or enforce existing ones mandated with the task to assist the partner countries in delivering the agreed reforms (European Commission, 2011, p.2).

The new approach is based on the ‘more for more’ conditionality by which any progress in the field of consolidation democracy and promotion of the rule of law will be rewarded with greater support on EU’s behalf. More progress is rewarded with more support by the EU either in funding, technical assistance *“increased funding for social and economic development; more ambitious programmes for comprehensive institution – building; greater market access; increased EIB financing in support of investments and greater facilitation of mobility”* (Ioannides & Schinas, 2011, p.2).

Additionally, after the review the EU holds the right to impose sanctions to the countries that are graded poorly on the matter of performing reforms in the political sector and on promoting human rights and respecting fundamental freedoms which



are related either to the extent on financial assistance or to the participation on certain programmes.

The review cannot be seen outside the Arab Spring. The revised policy was the Commission's response in order to promote stability to in an area suffering from continuous turmoil and unstable regimes. All the historic events that took place in North Africa and Southern Mediterranean in 2011 that led to regime change in countries like Egypt, Libya and Tunisia and the upheavals in most of the Arab countries highlighted the importance and at the same time need for an urgent reassessment of EU's policy regarding the region. At the same time this response is clearly an acknowledgement of failure on EU's behalf regarding the policy's effectiveness in the Mediterranean region.

An immediate response was the launch of the SPRING Programme which means Support for Partnership Reform and Inclusive Growth and is a programme by which the EU provides to the Southern partners the support they need to carry out democratic reforms, institutional development and economic growth. Once again is not a costume made policy and the support will be provided to each country accordingly to its needs.

Moreover, the revised policy recognized the importance of Civil Society in fulfilling the goal of creating deep and sustainable democracy. Civil society can be a great partner in pursuing the establishment of democracy, more human rights, equality for the genders, activities aiming to enhance environmental protection, protection of minorities or of civil rights and even to pressure for legislative reforms in order to pursue these goals and strengthen the judicial system. Important components for realizing these are the freedom of expression and association and their pivotal role was recognized in the review of ENP. Thus the Civil Society Facility was established in 2011 through which the EU was granted easier access to Civil Society Organizations of the neighbouring countries and trained them to monitor the process of reforms.

Furthermore, the European Endowment for Democracy was created mandated with the task to promote the cooperation among non registered Non-Government

Organizations, political parties and shorts of Civil Society Organizations making them major actors of the policy; an element that did not exist in previous initiatives or in the very same ENP so far (Ioannides & Schinas, 2011, p.2).

In the ENP package press release of 15 May 2012 and the assessment of the first year of implementation of the revised ENP the proposal regarding the Eastern Partnership is quiet promising and it gives “*further impetus to the implementation of the Eastern Partnership*”. The results of the assessment are the following:

- a)two new programmes, SPRING for the Southern rim and EaPIC for the Eastern Neighbourhood were created and through them EU was able to channel more money.
- b)the new approach of ‘more for more’ provided the EU the chance to reward these partner countries that supported the reforms on their ground and Tunisia is a fine example since for the year 2011 the EU doubled the financial assistance.
- c)the EU also had a better response against those countries that kept violating human rights by imposing sanctions to the regimes and trying to channel its funds directly to the population through NGO’s and civil society.
- d)the revised ENP also launched a civil society facility (Press release/ ENP Package/ 15 May 2012).

What is actually aimed by the ENP is ‘Europeanization’ without any prospect of accession. Of course this creates tensions and raises concerns to the citizens of the two regions and in order for the EU to mitigate these concerns, highlights the idea of ‘shared values’, meaning the notions of good governance, respect of human rights, respect of rule of law, market economy, ongoing development, better living conditions etc. (Kahraman, 2005, p.20) The APs play key role in forwarding the ‘Europeanization’ and on next chapter the goals set in the APs on the countries of both region will be listed.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **THE ACTION PLANS: THE OBJECTIVES FOR POLITICAL DIALOGUE AND REFORMS IN THE TWO REGIONS**

#### **2.1. The objectives set in the Action Plans of the Eastern Countries in the political sector**

As already mentioned the main documents of ENP are the APs where the EU and the partner country set the agenda of the reforms need to be conducted by the country in order for the close relation of the two parts to be established. The first APs were proposed to those countries that were already connected to EU with AA and PCAs. Up to 2007 the EU had active Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (PCAs) with five of the six countries of the eastern region of ENP with the exclusion of Belarus which had signed a PCA with the EU but had not ratify it up to that time, while in the Mediterranean region the EU had eight out of ten Association Agreements with the exclusion of Libya and Syria. In fact there was an agreement for AA with Syria but it was not signed at that moment. In the first two years of the implementation of ENP only five APs were drafted for the countries of the Eastern neighbourhood and seven for the Southern. (Table 2.1.a.)<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Algeria and EU have been under negotiations for ratification of an AP and until that day they have agreed on a roadmap which contains five priorities

**Table 2.1.a. The first Action Plans**

2004 - 2007							
	Country		Action Plan		Country		Action Plan
Eastern Countries	1	Armenia	November 2006	Southern Countries	1	Algeria	Negotiations for AP
	2	Azerbaijan	November 2006		2	Egypt	March 2007
	3	Belarus	Not yet		3	Israel	May 2005
	4	Georgia	November 2006		4	Jordan	January 2005
	5	Moldova	February 2005		5	Lebanon	January 2005
	6	Ukraine	February 2005		6	Libya	Not yet
					7	Morocco	July 2005
					8	Palestinian Authority	May 2005
					9	Syria	Not yet
					10	Tunisia	July 2005

Source: Data retrieved from Wesselink & Boschma, 2012, p. 9

The procedure as elaborated is specific and after the successful ending of all the stages the AP is signed and ready to be ratified by the country. Committees and sub-committees, established in the AAs or the PCAs are mandated with the task to monitor the implementation of APs as stated in the 2004 paper of European Commission for the APs (Commission of European Communities, 2004b, p.3). These committees are staffed by representatives of the Commission, the member states and the partner states. Periodical reports are prepared by the Commission which describe the progress if any of the implementation of the AP and provide a list of suggestions for future revisions. These reports will be the means of our evaluation on the progress reported for the participating countries in the policy in the sector of political dialogues and reforms and in particular the latest reports for all the countries for the year 2014 which is the last year of Barroso's Presidency in the Commission.

According to Balfour and Missiroli (2007, p.16) the distinction of the two regions led to compromises in the middle regarding the set goals in the APs. Initially there was a strong focus on the security matters in the prioritization of the goals meaning the illegal migration, trafficking and cooperation on cross border programmes aiming to strengthen security.

Core idea is that the priorities set in the Action Plans are ambitious but at the same time enforceable. After the drafting of the APs the Commission sends the proposed document to the *“European Parliament, to the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions for information”* as stated in the Commission’s document for the APs (Commission of European Communities, 2004b, p.3).

The structure of the Action Plans *“derived from the standard agenda of the accession negotiation process”* as Emerson and Noutcheva stated (2005, p.92), meaning a group of chapters covering a series of topics. In the first place we see political reforms deriving directly from the Copenhagen criteria for democracy and protection of human rights while the European norms and values for the four freedoms follow. The positioning of the political dimension in the first place emphasizes on the importance the Union gives to this sector and the reforms needed to be conducted. The four freedoms cover the topics of movement of people and goods, capital, labour and services. Additionally reforms on judicial system are often set in the APs. Of course the similarity in the structure of the Action Plans cannot be interpreted as match in the content for each AP. Usually the APs consist of 40 pages more or less which are divided into 5 sectors: a) Introduction, b) New Partnership Perspectives, c) Priorities for Action, d) General objectives and Actions and e) Monitoring.

In the introduction of the APs there is reference on the existing relations among the EU and the country of reference and the need for further deepening of these relations through the ENP justifying this way the list of priorities that are set in the AP. Additionally, there is always a reference on the level of ambition of the relationship that depends on the commitment of the country to common values and to fully implement the reforms listed in the document. This way it is clearly a matter of the countries will to formulate the relationship and to carry out the reforms. It is not an

imposed policy but mutually agreed and it depends to each country to determine the level of the relationship that will eventually be created. Finally there is always a specific timeframe mentioned regarding each AP. Usually it is set to be round three to five years but when talking about cultivating political dialogue and promoting democracy, the period of five years is most suitable. Making political reforms is time consuming and the results are not visible right away.

As far as priorities set in the APs are concerned, Whitman and Wolf (2010, p. 7) categorize them in the following way:

- a) ensure commitment of the partner states to shared values of democracy, rule of law, respect of human rights,
- b) facilitation of political dialogue
- c) implementation of policy of economic development
- d) forwarding market convergence accordingly to the principles of World Trade Organization
- e) cooperation on issues of Justice and Home Affairs
- f) development of energy policy, innovation and research, educational issues and
- g) implementation of people-to-people programmes.

On every EU's initiative political reforms and promotion of democracy and rule of law or at least of a democratic type of governance are always top priority or highly in the agenda. We should not forget that the main objective of the policy is to promote peace and stability in a periphery round EU's newly formatted borders through the creation of a ring of well governed countries. The very best way to achieve this objective is through the implementation of political reforms that promote stability and democracy and by cultivating the sense of security and the need for a type of governance that respects and promotes rule of law, equality and human rights.

The timeframe of the APs (table 2.1.b.) and the objectives regarding democracy and establishment of political dialogue for the countries of the eastern region are:

**Table 2.1.b. Timeframe of APs of eastern countries**

Country			Timeframe
Eastern Countries	1	Armenia	4 years
	2	Azerbaijan	5 years
	3	Georgia	5 years
	4	Moldova	3 years
	5	Ukraine	3 years

Data retrieved from the Action Plans from the European Union's website

### MOLDOVA

On the matter of political dialogue and reform, the ENP AP of Moldova sets the following (European Commission, n.d. h): strengthen the institutional effectiveness as to guarantee democracy, ensure the independence of judicial sector and parliamentary immunity and make sure that elections will be held accordingly to European standards. Additionally proceed with fight against corruption and the promotion of respect of human rights and freedoms like the ones of expression and association. Moreover there is the matter of review of the existing legislation for judiciary independence; promote equality on the two genders. Finally, there is the objective of establishing cooperation on the matter of resolving the Transnistria conflict.

### AZERBAIJAN

In Azerbaijan, main objective has been the strengthening of the effectiveness of the democratic institutions which includes improvement of the electoral system in both effectiveness and transparency and harmonization with international standards. Ensure that the human rights along with the fundamental freedoms are truly respected. Reforms on the penitentiary system and the police forces, respect of fundamental freedoms like assembly and being a member of a minority group are the means of accomplishing this objective along with reforms on the judicial sector which will be in complete accordance with the Union's standards. Moreover, the fight against corruption and the establishment of cooperation with the EU in order to address common security threats are also sat as objectives in the AP of Azerbaijan (European Commission, n.d.a).

## ARMENIA

Main priority is the strengthening of the effectiveness of democratic institutions through the separation of the powers and independence of the judicial system. In this objective cooperation of EU and Armenian political parties is included along with the establishment of transparency in every aspect of political parties' organization, operation and financing. Additionally, an important objective set in the AP (European Commission, n.d. b) is the implementation of reforms in the judicial system through improved training of the officials in the judiciary and publication of the judicial acts which will ultimately increase the level of transparency and accuracy of the judicial system. Reforms on the civil service are deemed as a necessity and finally the anti-corruption measures are set as means of strengthening the democratic rule. Moreover compliance with the international standards for protection of human rights is listed as the second priority depicting the need for reforms in the political sector more than other ones.

Although neutral AP in nature, in reality it assists the efforts of democratization of the country through the outlined objectives. Unfortunately, on the matter of civil society and the strengthening of its role, it is a rather poor AP.

## GEORGIA

The very first priority of the AP for Georgia (European Commission, n.d. d) has been the strengthening of the rule of law which derives from reforms on the judiciary and by recreation of the institutional framework of the country. Separation of powers is as well listed as a specific action in the AP and the adoption of a reform strategy for the sector of public services. Additionally the holding of elections in compliance to international standards is also set as a goal expressing the depth of the reforms needed to be implemented on the sector of political dialogue. Moreover, center to the judiciary reform are the programmes for training of the judges, the establishment of an effective legal aid system that will provide easy access to the judicial system to all citizens, without exclusions and the adoption of a new Criminal Code.

Special attention is given to the protection of freedom of media and of the rights of minority groups and in gender equality in both social and economic life. Finally, for Georgia, corruption is a matter of concern like all the other countries of the Southern Caucasus region and thus special attention is given to anti-corruption measures.



## UKRAINE

The strengthening of the institutional effectiveness is also the first priority set in the AP of Ukraine (European Commission, n.d. 1) and it is related to conducting elections in accordance to European standards and legislative reforms. Additionally reforms in the judicial system in order for independence of the judiciary to be strengthened are also listed as necessary. The support of human rights and fundamental freedoms, the improvement of the legal framework for the freedom of media and the fostering of civil society are also listed but in a vague manner raising concerns along with the small timeframe of how these reforms/objectives are going to be accomplished. Finally the fight against corruption is mentioned in this AP as well.

As far as Ukraine is concerned it is stated that (Cameron & Balfour, 2006, p.12), although the freedom in electoral procedures were a priority in the AP, EU's reaction to the election of 2004 as a result of the Orange Revolution, was the least modest and in complete accordance to EU's principle not to intervene in the internal affairs of a country outside its jurisdiction. Nevertheless, the second round of elections changed EU's response since the fear of a civil war was present and thus the EU tried to facilitate the negotiations of the two parts and avoid any episode of violence. Even though EU's interference was motivated by the need to prevent conflict, its choice to proceed through promotion of democracy and rule of governance by facilitating negotiations depicts EU's view of democracy and conflict prevention and as a means of exporting stability and prosperity and by this way reduce the gap among the EU and the bordering countries, rather than constantly facing the risk of importing instability.

The vagueness of the original ENP AP for Ukraine was lifted later on with the Agenda of the Association Agreement which promotes further political reforms and more strengthening of the institutional effectiveness through the promotion of constitutional reforms and reforms in the public administration system (European Commission, 2009, p.6).

Initially Ukraine was disappointed by the AP that was negotiated in 2004 since there was no reference on membership and because of the fear that the involvement of the Mediterranean countries in the policy could draw back Ukraine's future prospects.

The wish was for more than close relationship with the EU and further integration in EU's market or social structures. On the other hand, for some eastern countries like Armenia, Georgia and Moldova, their expectations were close to their prospects. (Emerson, 2004, p.8)

Finally, when describing the objectives for democracy and promotion of rule of law in the eastern region we should not omit the establishment of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) in 2008. It is said that the notion of creating an Eastern Partnership which was proposed on May 2008 and initiated by December 2008 emphasized on the actual division of the policy and the Union's focus on the eastern region (Sasse, 2010, p. 183). The establishment of the EaP forwarded the strengthening of the relations with the countries of the eastern region and marked the beginning of an era of change where democratic progress prevailed than other sectors of reform (European Commission and High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, 2011, p.13). The EaP is also structured round the values of democracy and respect of human rights.

## **2.2. The objectives set in the Action Plans of the Southern Countries in the political sector**

As far as the APs of countries of the southern region, the timeframe is again between three to five years (table 2.2.a.), which is considered to be a rather small timeframe for major progress and real positive steps for such a complex matter:

**Table 2.2.a. Timeframe of APs of southern countries**

Country		Timeframe	
Mediterranean Countries	1	Egypt	3 – 5 years
	2	Israel	3 years
	3	Jordan	5 years
	4	Lebanon	5 years
	5	Morocco	3 – 5 years
	6	Palestinian Authority	3 – 5 years (the new AP)
	7	Tunisia	3 – 5 years

Data retrieved from the Action Plans from the European Union's website

### ISRAEL

Both EU and Israel are bound by their commitment to common values and respect of fundamental freedoms and the rule of law. The formatted relation depends on the depth of this commitment and the partner's country capability to implement reforms.

The AP is a step towards the development and even deepening of the relationship. The very first objective is the enhancement of the political dialogue among the two parts. This action entails cooperation for promoting the value of rule of law, democracy and respect of human rights, promotion of gender equality and of minority rights, promotion of programmes for disabled people and the fight against anti-Semitism, racism and Islamophobia. Additionally, important issue is set to be the fight against terrorism and to intensify the efforts for peaceful resolution of the Middle East conflicts. Finally, both parts are committed to assist the PA in the necessary reforms for democratic governance and transparency (European Commission, n.d. e).

### LEBANON

The first priority set in the AP (European Commission, n.d. g.) is enhancement of cooperation and dialogue among EU and Lebanon. The cooperation will be based on values of democracy and respect of rule of law. Means for achieving that will be reform on the public sector, efforts to promote transparency and dialogue among the two Parliaments. Moreover the ongoing fight against corruption and efforts to reform

the electoral law aiming to a better representation of women contribute to the general goal of promoting democracy.

The protection of human rights especially the ones of minority groups are also clearly stated in the same AP. The human rights and freedoms that are listed are the following: freedoms of expression and assembly, freedom of media, implementation of the international standards against the use of torture, support of women and children through encouragement to participate in social and political life and in the electoral process.

### PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY

One of the first states to have a new AP correlated to the review of ENP. From the first priorities of the new AP besides the efforts for peaceful resolution of the Middle East conflict, is the formation of a state of Palestine based on the pillars of rule of law and respect of human rights under the framework of functional democratic institutions. In this context, protection of fundamental freedoms such as freedom of assembly, association, expression, belief and media are included along with the protection of women's rights and exclusion of discriminations. All these need a proper national legislation in full accordance to the international standards.

The effort aiming to build a deep democracy has been set as priority after the review of 2011 which means a sustainable one that prioritizes the respect of fundamental freedoms. Additionally as objective is set the preparation of the state to cultivate the capacity to hold free and fair elections in complete compliance to the international standards. Complementary objective is the cultivation of the notion of allowing women's participation in the electoral procedure.

Deep democracy cannot exist without independent judicial system and the insurance that all citizens have free access to it. Moreover the state should adopt measures to reform the administration branch so as the citizens to have access to well organized and operating public services. (European Commission, n.d. j).

### TUNISIA

In the ENP AP for Tunisia (European Commission, n.d. k.), the planning and implementing reforms for ensuring rule of law and democracy is articulated as the first priority for action. Moreover we see the strengthening of the effectiveness of the institutions to guarantee democracy, an objective that correlates with the enhancement

of judiciary independence and improvement of the living conditions of the prisoners and there are also objectives for support and protection of freedoms and rights like the freedoms of expression, assembly, association, gender equality and promotion of children's rights. Finally, attention is also given to the adoption and implementation of anti-terrorism measures.

### JORDAN

Efforts to enhance the dialogue and the relations among EU and Jordan are prioritized. This can be achieved through good governance and reforms on the political sector. The base of the enhanced dialogue will be the respect on freedoms and rights, on democracy. On the matter of democracy and good governance the objectives are transparency on the parliamentary and the holding of elections accordingly to the international standards, the cultivation of citizens' interest in participating in the electoral and political process, the allowance of CSOs to participate in the decision making and enhancement of the judiciary independence. As far as human rights and freedoms are concerned the focus is on ensuring the freedoms of expression and association, freedom of belief, promotion of gender equality through proper legislation, support of children through the elimination of child labour and finally support of anti-discrimination measures (European Commission, n.d. f).

### MOROCCO

First priority is set to be the enhancement of the respect for democracy and the rule of law which can be achieved through cooperation with the EU on the framework for political parties and reforms in the administrative sector. There is also the objective for reforms on the judicial system and better training of judges along with modernization of the administration of prison facilities. Additionally, there is also the objective for anti-corruption measures, like in some other APs. Finally the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms are in the first places of the agenda of reforms identified by the AP. Finally, as priority we see the alignment of legislation for human rights with the UN conventions, promotion of freedoms of association and expression and protection of women and children's rights with the aim of total elimination of any kind of discrimination (European Commission, n.d. i).

The first observation one makes after reading the APs is that the two regions have diverse goals regarding political dialogue and promotion of democracy. Even though in almost all the countries the first priority is relevant to the political sector with the exception of the countries that have an open conflict in their territories, in the countries of the eastern region the objective evolves around the word ‘strengthening’ and in the southern region we discuss about ‘enhancement’. The word strengthen recognizes the existence of a relatively good level of democratic elements while for the southern region this is not the case and thus the use of the word enhancement.

**Table 2.2.b. Differences in the objectives of AP of two regions**

EAST	SOUTH
Strengthen democracy	Encourage democracy
Fight against corruption	Fight against terrorism
Neutral narrative	vague

Secondly, the rhetoric of the APs of countries of the eastern region is rather neutral while vagueness prevails in the AP of the countries of the southern regions. Vagueness that does not assist in the clarification and finally implementation of the goals and permits the governments to select those reforms to implement that seem less threatening to their existence.

The third point to make is that in the APs of the eastern countries the fight against corruption evolves to a core objective while in the southern region, key objective is the fight against terrorism. Thus, the EU initially, overlooked the very slow pace, at best, of reforms in the political sector in the countries of southern region. For sake of security EU kept close relations with those regimes that identified as corrupted and authoritarian and the objective of promoting democracy remained only as a line in a ‘to do list’.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **ASSESSMENT OF THE PROGRESS OF THE POLICY IN THE TWO REGIONS**

#### **3.1. The policy until the review. Success or not?**

The first years of the implementation of ENP are characterized as the period of transition where the policy stepped on mechanisms and instruments of previous policies until the harmonization and institutional integration from 2007 and onwards where all the funding came from the ENPI and other instruments.

The very first evaluations of ENP showed that the policy was successful in promoting reforms on the area of trade and economic sector in general (Commission of European Communities, 2006, p.2), while reforms on political level by strengthening democracy and rule of law; as set in the objectives, were at best performed in a very slow pace. The promised rewards were not credible since the EU refused to open the labour and agriculture markets where full access in them has been the partner countries target and the first APs set diverse objectives with no obvious hierarchy (Missiroli, 2010, p.261). As Wesselink and Boschma explained, these evaluations put the blame on the structure of ENP since from its very beginning it rewarded short term reforms with financial aid and integration to the EU's market (2004, p. 17). After all, in a policy covering a wide range of sectors, economic reforms and trade related topics are always easier to fulfill than other sectors. We should also keep in mind that EU started as an economic union and after the successful completion of economic integration the countries moved forward to a political union by fulfilling the necessary reforms.

Initially, Jordan and Morocco from the South and Ukraine from the East scored highly while Egypt and Tunisia had the least progress. The worst performance of all countries came from Belarus<sup>12</sup> and Libya since they had no progress at all and were simply characterized as problematic cases (Missiroli, 2010, p.263). It is not a surprise that these were the countries with the best and the worst performance at that time. Ukraine had already expressed its wish for the formation of a deeper relationship with the EU assuming its identity as more European while Jordan and Morocco from the southern region were the ones with closer relationship with the Union. Accordingly, it was not a surprise that Libya and Belarus had no progress at all at that time.<sup>13</sup>

Furthermore, as Bicchi (2010, p.219) stated that “*North African countries sailing at different speeds, as the ENP has created a different pace and a different political momentum for cooperation*”. For example, in Tunisia, despite the economic advancement, the political dimension of the relationship formed under ENP had not even started. The very same AP has few references on political issues and Tunisia was not ready to initiate political dialogue even if that meant losing the economic benefits (Bicchi, 2010, p. 216). Algeria, in the beginning had no need to forward the reforms due to the ratification of the AA on October 2005 and the very little time that was spent between the two documents. Additionally a)the post-colonial legacy and b)the oil and gas reserves that make Algeria a regional player (Emerson and al., 2007, p.10) did not allow the need for AP to be cultivated. Furthermore, Egypt for years enjoyed a leading role in the region and was reluctant to implement the ENP AP. Finally, in the Middle East countries the lack of EU’s comprehensive approach made it almost impossible to avoid vulnerability due to the ongoing conflicts in the region and thus the ENP had limited success in the beginning (Carlos, 2010, p. 254).

For the countries of Southern Caucasus, the beginning was not ideal either. Armenia and Azerbaijan did not develop close relations with the EU at that point besides trade<sup>14</sup>. All three South Caucasian countries signed APs with the EU that set many

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<sup>12</sup> For many years the notion of democratic reforms was completely unknown in Belarus and the economy of the country remains mainly centralized. (European Neighbourhood & Partnership Instrument, Strategy Paper 2007-2013 Indicative Programme 2007-2010, p.9).

<sup>13</sup> The leadership in these countries had no kind of cooperation with EU at that time and they were often accused for repressing human rights and fundamental freedoms.

<sup>14</sup> Until 2010 Georgia was left behind in the goal of strengthening the effectiveness of democratic institutions. The distribution of powers remained source of problems, judiciary independence was far



common priorities. These are: strengthening democracy and institutions promote respect for human rights and freedoms, forward economic growth and make improvements on business climate and the sector of investments, promote regional policies and make efforts to solve regional conflicts with their neighbours and finally work on the energy sector. Only Armenia had to focus on “*development of an internal energy strategy, including an early decommissioning of the Medzamor Nuclear Power Plant*” (Ghazaryan, 2010, p. 231). All these objectives show that their energy recourses prioritized over democracy and rule of law in reality.

Additionally, in the first two years of ENP cooperation of the EU with the civil society and other political parties besides the parties in power has been quiet limited. This was mainly observed in the southern partner countries and to a certain degree can be explained by the fact that initially, the EU was reluctant to negotiate with Muslim parties. Actually the EU seemed to fear their rise in power and thus the ENP for many years was characterised by the contradictive element of the EU seeking promotion of democracy in one hand and to the other to negotiate with regimes that had been accused for been autocratic and repressive. For the Mediterranean countries, the ongoing promotion of democracy and human rights is viewed as a threat from the regimes which are EU’s allies in the war against terrorism and this is the reason why EU does not push for the reforms in these countries, even though they are priorities in the APs or in the Strategy Paper as researches have elaborated (Cameron & Balfour 2006, p10). Actually, EU avoided having any kind of relations with political Islam which was either the winner of elections or the opposition in the existing regimes in the countries of the Mediterranean region and in any way an important actor in the southern region and by refusing to recognize its existence and its role in reforms the EU proved this way that democracy and democratization process in the Mediterranean region mainly, was just a written goal in the APs and not a true objective. A good example can be the case of Palestinian Authority where the EU refused to negotiate with Hamas.

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from becoming a reality and media freedom and transparency was not realized. (European Neighbourhood Policy: Implementation of the EU – Georgia Action Plan, Open Society Georgia Foundation, 2010, p.5)

From 2007 the need for a reassessment was obviously necessary. However we should remark that regarding democracy, human rights and education as priorities set to all the participating countries APs, the countries of the eastern region started from a relatively better position than the Mediterranean countries. As Emerson stated the countries of the eastern region that can also be called 'European' "*are members of the Council of Europe and accept the jurisdiction of its Conventions and Court of Human Rights exist already for the whole of Europe*" (2004, p.10) and participate in programmes of EU regarding education or research. Additionally we should point out the fact that most of the countries demonstrated progress on the matter of the elections but on the matter of freedom of association, of expression, of media and of supporting an independent judicial system progress was not considerable.

The implementation of ENP up to the year 2011 has shown that despite the rhetoric about promotion of human rights and democratic rule, the main focus remained on bringing stability to a troubled area and reinforcing security measures, rather than fulfilling the other objectives. However, until 2011 there has been small progress on the matter of political reforms. After 2011 and the Arab spring EU was forced by reality to reassess the neighbourhood policy due to the new circumstances that rose in Mediterranean region of the. Egypt and Tunisia overthrew their regimes, Libya entered a period of continuous conflicts and Syria collapsed. Of course there have been some success stories like Morocco and Jordan that at that time announced constitutional reforms by granting more powers to the citizens and the progress made in some of the countries of the eastern region like the implementing reforms in Moldova or the negotiations for an AA with Ukraine. However, in 2011 it was evident that political reforms had few results so far compared to the economic front.

The Arab Spring was the pushing factor for ENP focusing to political reforms and support for human rights from 2011 and onwards. Libya, Syria and Belarus did not reach an Agreement with the EU for Action Plan simply because they didn't meet EU's criteria for minimum level of democracy and human rights protection. Actually the review of ENP in that year has only one interpretation. EU recognized and admitted its total failure in implementing political reforms and promoting democracy and the rule of law in the countries of the Mediterranean region and Middle East. The fact that the EU had to take a few steps back and elaborate on basic elements of the

notion of democracy like respect of human rights and free and fair elections, notion that EU takes for granted, clarifies why ENP was not successful at that time in the southern region and reveals EU's inability to truly comprehend the exact needs and capabilities of the partner countries of the southern region on the political sector.

In the first two years after the review, the progress in the implementation of the reforms was not the same for all countries (European Commission and High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs, 2013, p. 4). Most of the countries demonstrated progress on the matter of the elections but on the matter of freedom of association, of expression, of media and of supporting an independent judicial system progress was not considerable. Finally, the role of civil society needed to be boosted in these countries in order for the promotion of human rights to be strengthened on a regional level (European Commission and High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, 2014, pp. 2-3).

### **3.2. The latest recorded progress for the two regions.**

As already elaborated the period of study in this essay is from the initiation of the policy until the year 2014, the end of Barroso's Presidency in the European Commission and the latest progress reports of the implementation of ENP for each country will be our tool. For the countries of the eastern region the progress recorder on the sector of the political dialogue and democracy is the following:

In the document regarding the progress of implementation of ENP in **Armenia** for the year 2014 the outcome for democracy and promotion of human rights is little progress (European Commission and High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security, 2015a, p.2) Although a draft was presented proposing transition of the political system and certain changes regarding the electoral system, political parties did not grant their consent. Positive step was the AP on Human Rights but it did not prioritize sectors such as actions against tortures.

The overall assessment made in the document regarding Armenia's progress was that it had **limited progress** with the simultaneous acknowledgment of the country's

efforts to “*establish deep and sustainable democracy and put sound macroeconomic policies....*” (ibid, p.3).

Freedoms of association and assembly are respected in Armenia but this does not mean that incidents of violation of these freedoms are extinct. On the contrary freedoms of expression and media independence have left behind as shown in the same report (2015a, p.5). The judicial code has been amended and judicial system has been strengthened regarding its independence. On the matter of fight against corruption focus was given to education. Finally, legislation on gender equality remains a draft. Reform of the public sector kept a slow pace.

For **Georgia** there is recorded progress in the political sector and on promotion of human rights and freedoms. There has been constitutional amendment which led to strengthening the role of parliament and reduction of the presidential power. However fundamental freedoms were not ensured with the exception of freedom of media. Finally elections were held in the country with compliance to international standards (European Commission and High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security, 2015d p.2). The overall assessment was that **Georgia** made **some progress** regarding the implementation of the AP with its best performance in the sector of human rights and freedoms. Additionally there was progress on the fight against corruption, a crucial matter in the AP. On the positive we also record the adoption of legislation against discrimination and the strengthening of the cooperation with the civil society (ibid, p.3). The freedom of media was enforced and the ownership of the media became even more transparent. Additionally the Criminal Code was found to be in accordance to international standards and the quality of the prison system was improved. The conditions for dialogue among the CSO’s and the parliament were really good but not with the government. (ibid, pp.5-7).

In the working document of the implementation of ENP in **Azerbaijan** the overall assessment was that the country had **limited progress** implementing the AP (European Commission and High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security, 2015b, pp. 2-3). CSO’s could not operate freely, the electoral code was amended but it was not implemented, legislation for protection of freedoms and human rights was not adopted and judicial independence remained an unknown

concept. In fact, in the year 2014, the democratic environment deteriorated than previous years.

The political dialogue among Azerbaijan and the EU was strengthened due to the project of the southern gas corridor however the level of democracy and human rights deteriorated over the past year. Media had limited freedom of expression and remained under extremely strict legislation Freedom of assembly is restricted and prior authorization is needed in order for any gathering to take place. Freedom of belief is even more repressed and the only progress is recorded on the fight against corruption. Additionally there has not been any development on independence of the judicial system<sup>15</sup> (European Commission and High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security, 2015b, pp. 6-7).

Regarding **Ukraine**, we should take into consideration the difficulty in the political, economical and security level in the country due to the armed conflict and the annexation of two regions by Russia. The year 2014 was the peak for concrete political dialogue among EU and Ukraine and in the same year an Association Agreement was signed (European Commission and High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security, 2015 1, p.2). Additionally the EU decided to provide Ukraine with a support package for carrying the relevant reforms in this fragile environment. The assessment recognized that despite the dramatic incidents Ukraine recorded **good progress** on the field of deep democracy and human rights. The elections held were in complete accordance with the international standards. However there was no progress on the reform of the laws on conducting elections in the country (Ibid 2015 1, pp. 3- 5). Initially the freedoms of expression and of media were repressed but later on the same years the situation improved. Moreover there has been a significant improvement on the field of gender equality but the country hasn't reached the EU's standards.

Contrary to the instability that prevailed in Ukraine, **Moldova** was characterized by overall political stability where the agenda towards European Union was implemented to the fullest. In fact 2014 was the year that the relation between the Union and Moldova reached the deepest level. Compared to previous years political dialogue and

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<sup>15</sup> Additionally there have been reports for tortures of prisoners.

democracy recorded less progress but they had already reached a high level and it is difficult for a country to move even higher. The freedom of media was well respected but transparency regarding the media ownership is still a matter of concern for the country (European Commission and High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security, 2015g, p.2).

In the previous year Moldova signed an AA/DCFTA with the condition to maintain its alignment to the European standards meaning to keep the development of democratic institutions<sup>16</sup>. Unfortunately corruption remains high and the country doesn't seem to have work towards the extinction of the problem. Corruption is one of the reasons why the reforms on public are not set up. Finally advancement was made in the matter of gender equality with specific mentioning to their participation in political parties (ibid, 2015 g, p.9)

Regarding the countries of the south and the reported progress we observe the following:

The armed conflicts that took place in Gaza during the summer 2014 were characterized as the worst of the past decade and they hampered PA's ability to implement the AP or even to govern the country. Human rights remained limited protected (European Commission and High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security, 2015 i, p.2) and women remained in vulnerable position Despite the very small progress recorded in the issue of human rights this remains a matter to be addressed more intense in sectors like the freedom of expression and the repeated violation of it, the violation of freedom of assembly expressed through the repression of the demonstrations and the poor position of women in **Palestine Authority**. In 2014 the PA made **limited progress** implementing the AP but we should take into consideration the specific parameters that made it impossible for progress to be achieved. Actually journalists and activists expressed complaints for having these freedoms repressed (European Commission and High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security, 2015 i, p.5) Positive steps were taken on the matter of prohibition of tortures with the revision of the Code of Conduct for the country's

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<sup>16</sup> In fact, the Constitutional Court made the ruling that “*any position against Moldova's alignment with Europe would be 'a priori unconstitutional'*” (European Commission and High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security, 2015g, p.5).

agencies. However lot more need to be done. Unfortunately children's use in the labour market remains high and disabled people kept being in exclusion<sup>17</sup>.

The overall progress for the implementation of the ENP AP of **Israel** for the year 2014 was **limited** but we should take into consideration the armed conflicts that marked the year 2014. The respect of human rights and the promotion of fundamental freedoms in the territories being under occupation and the protection of minorities remained a matter of concern even though Israel respects the freedoms of expression and association. However the conflicts undermine the positive environment for human rights and freedoms to be flourished. Real advancement was recorded in gender equality<sup>18</sup> by intensified efforts by the government to promote gender equality especially on the judicial sector and generally on public sector (European Commission and High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security, 2015j, p.5).

The ongoing instability in Syria put extreme pressure in the institutional system of **Lebanon** since more than one million refugees from Syria and Iraq moved to the country. Institutional pressure and security at risk prevailed. Due to the fact that the New President was not elected in 2014 and in combination with the security risks the service of the Parliament was extended and the elections were postponed for the year 2017 (European Commission and High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security, 2015f, p.2). All these contributed for the notion of deep democracy to remain a distant goal for Lebanon<sup>19</sup>. However, the very same year we record some progress on the matter of respect of children and women rights and particularly their protection from domestic violence. Fortunately the freedoms of expression and media are kept in a high level while independence of the judicial system remains a utopia and there have been no results, at least visible ones, for the time being on the matter of fight against corruption. Additionally the legal framework for banning the use of torture by the armed forces and the law agencies is still lacking (ibid 2015f, pp. 5-6)

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<sup>17</sup> In fact the due to the conflicts the number of this group increased and the facilities were destroyed leading to a deterioration of the situation than the previous years.

<sup>18</sup> in example law for women to be the recipients of equal salaries to men and legislation against sexual harassment.

<sup>19</sup> The postponing of the elections meant in reality that the citizens of the country were not allowed to vote for the country's leadership, a condition that cannot be described as a step towards democracy.

and the use of the death penalty remains although nowadays the legislation that allows the death penalty to be commuted to life imprisonment is being adopted.

The year 2014 was for **Egypt** the marking point for the re-launch of the dialogue and cooperation among Egypt/EU. Democratic rule of governance and promotion of human rights experienced limited progress. Even though the new Constitution was more liberal the absence of Parliament in order to implement the Constitution and enforce it with the proper legislation allowed the President to keep the power to himself and “*to issue legislation by decree.*” (European Commission and High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security, 2015c, p.2). All these led to severe restrictions of fundamental freedoms and human rights while development on the judicial system or the fight against corruption remained distant goal. The use of death penalty remained and peaceful demonstrations were also restricted.

The overall assessment regarding Egypt for the year 2014 for the implementation of ENP AP was that it made **limited progress** with the worst performance recorded on the matter of deep democracy (European Commission and High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security, 2015c, p.3). However, we should bare in mind the peculiar situation that Egypt faces over the last years with serious challenges on the security of the country either by militant groups or the ISIS and the flow of migrants from Libya. Finally the rate of child labour remained high and so were the children exploitation and trafficking.

The armed conflicts in Syria and Iraq hampered the already grave situation in **Jordan**. However, despite this environment Jordan made progress in the matter of sustainable and deep democracy. There was new legislation proposed for the political parties and considerable steps were taken regarding the impartiality of the judicial system and the efforts to combat corruption were intensified. However the situation on human rights and fundamental freedoms had mixed results. The freedoms of media, assembly and association remained sensitive issues for the country and the dialogue among the government and the CSOs remained weak as exhibited by the progress repor (European Commission and High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security, 2015e, pp. 2-4).



On the contrary, **Tunisia** recorded substantial progress in promoting democracy. Elections were conducted in complete accordance with EU's standards and transparency of the electoral procedure was enriched and the adoption of the New Constitution, almost unanimously further protected human rights and fundamental freedoms for all citizens. Freedoms of belief, of assembly and expression were more protected by the Constitution amendment but the opportunity for the country to abolish death penalty was lost (European Commission and High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security, 2015k, pp.2-7). Women's position was improved after the increase of the number elected and the role of Civil Society was enriched but phenomena of abuse, either physical or verbal remained at a high rate. Despite the progress on most sectors of political dialogue, the terrorist attacks on Tunisia's grounds mark the incapability of dealing this problem and raised concern to the EU.

Finally **Morocco** the previous year maintained the 'advanced status' that enjoys since 2008. The dialogue among EU and Morocco was strengthened and the country continued the implementation of reforms that had initiated from previous years. Regarding human rights and freedoms the progress report of 2014 characterizes Morocco's progress as significant which is the aftermath of the adoption of a number of regulations towards the protection of human rights. Important steps were taken in the judicial sector with the strengthening of the rights of the defendants and the efforts to ensure fair trials. Finally the drafted law against discriminations and promotion of protection of people with disabilities was a positive step, however it is viewed as too general, meaning difficult to implement and make a difference in their lives (European Commission and High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security, 2015h, pp. 2-7).

From the above we understand that despite the fact that EU used ENP as a tool of foreign affairs tested to the near neighbours and simultaneously as a policy promoting democracy and rule of law, the maintenance of security dominated for years the policy. Valuable time regarding the spread of democracy in the Mediterranean countries was lost due to EU's unwillingness to initiate an actual political dialogue with the regimes in the area. Thus we observe that ENP was not equally successful in promoting political dialogue and democracy on both regions do.

It would have been utopia to believe that all the countries involved in the policy would exhibit simultaneously the same level of progress in adopting and implementing political reforms. After all the main feature of the policy is diversification meaning that the relationship formed is based on the capabilities of each country. However, the pace of progress on the two regions is significantly different.

Initially, progress was achieved on other sectors rather than the political one since it is the one that needs the longest to have remarkable results. The eastern region performed better with Moldova and Ukraine, despite the upheavals in its ground over the past years, demonstrating the biggest success. On the contrary, the countries of the Mediterranean region had a late start in the implementation of deep democracy with Jordan and Morocco achieving the highest scores.

The sector of conducting free and fair elections in complete accordance to European standards was the one that all the countries succeeded in while on the contrary, combating corruption had the least progress for most of the countries on both regions. The countries of the eastern region performed better than the southern on the matter of promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms while conflicts and crisis in the Mediterranean region delayed and hampered any reforms. Besides that, important element has been the lack of conditionality. The proposed incentives do not motivate the countries to intensify their efforts to perform political reforms.

Finally, ten years after the establishment of the policy, the distinction among the two regions is more than obvious and the different pace on the progress/success will definitely cause changes in the policy in the near future and the question that rises concerning the future is about the division of the policy into the two sub regions.

## **Conclusion**

This study addressed the matter of ENP's effectiveness regarding the promotion of reforms in the political sector and especially in promoting democracy, respect of rule of law and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Initially we presented the main features of the policy, meaning its rationale, the objectives, the instruments mandated with the task to assist the implementation of the reforms and monitor the progress, if any, and the reasons that led the EU to revise the policy only a few years after its establishment. On the second chapter we described the main features of the APs, since they are the main tools of the policy and then moved on the description of the objectives set on the APs for each country, regarding the promotion of democracy and political dialogue. The third chapter was about the progress recorded for each country in both regions from the establishment of ENP until the year 2014 and the progress reports of 2014 for each country were our main tool for conducting our evaluation. The following remarks constitute our assessment.

Although ENP is not a radical differentiation from previous policies, nevertheless, it is a new strategy aiming to establish close relationship among the EU and its immediate neighbourhood and in confronting major challenges in the region. The new approach targets to a better policy coherence and allows EU to step up as global actor and to influence or even control the future prospects of the neighbouring region.

It is the Union's answer to the dilemma that arose after the successful completion of the fifth enlargement round and the formation of new borders with the aim to avoid the emergence of dividing lines among the countries and mitigate the feelings of

exclusion that the countries excluded in the enlargement wave could have. The policy is a tool of foreign affairs just like enlargement and even though it stepped on its mechanisms it is clearly differentiated by enlargement since ENP does not offer the 'golden carrot' of membership. The promised rewards are of economic nature mainly and the prospect of the partner states to participate in EU's programmes along with a stake in EU's market.

In fact the lack of conditionality and at the same time the main feature that differentiates the policy from enlargement, which has been the most successful tool of foreign affairs of the Union, becomes the main weakness of the policy. The countries of the eastern region expected more from the policy than the stake of the EU's market and viewed the policy as a step towards membership, while the economic incentives were sufficient as rewards for the southern countries but not leverages for complete reforms on the political sector. The regimes were reluctant to mitigate their power and EU showing forth security over democracy, did not push at the begging for reforms.

Even though ENP is a great idea promoting partnership and good relations among the EU and the partner states based on bilateralism rather than having the 'one size fits all' characteristic of previous strategies, it is not a policy based on equality. The partner states are expected to carry out a number of extensive commitments and reforms while on the other hand EU's commitments are articulated in a more vague way or quite modest; fact that does not enhance the notion of partnership leading the countries, especially of the southern region to express concerns and to proceed to a more selective approach on the sectors of reforms that will implement, especially on promoting democratic reforms that would limit their powers.

Moreover we should not forget that the two regions did not start from the same point regarding their political situation and the notion of democracy. Thus it is completely understood that the two regions, ten years after the establishment and implementation of the policy could not have progressed equally in political reforms and promotion of democracy and rule of law. After all, the policy attempts to create a wide area of friends round EU's borders but this area is too heterogeneous to have identical progress throughout the whole region. The two sub regions could not have been more

different with each other and this heterogeneity only highlights the incapability of the countries of both region to promote reforms and democracy on an equal level. Politically, culturally, economically etc, these region differ and even though they are implementing the same policy with the same targets, the results could not have been the same. Thus each country is requested to perform reforms on the matter of democracy accordingly to its capabilities and needs.

Additionally, the planning of the policy was in the beginning targeted to the eastern countries and the southern were just a last minute addition. Thus the inequality in the effectiveness of the policy among the two regions is not surprising. To this result contributed the fact the EU did not push for reforms in the begging simply for not disturbing the relations built with the regimes with the common target to fight terrorism. EU refused to lose its allies in the war against terrorist groups and thus tolerated and in some cases cooperated with those regimes that had already accused as being repressive.

In the beginning, both regions recorded progress in other sectors rather than the political one. Trade and economic sector flourished but promotion of rule of law and of fundamental freedoms followed a rather slow pace. The countries that recorded the best performance in the political sector were Ukraine from the eastern region and Morocco and Jordan from the southern. Nevertheless these were the countries that had already a close relation with the EU even before the launch on ENP and simultaneously they are the countries that today, ten years after have the closest cooperation with the EU. Moldova from the eastern region is added to this group of overachievers. Belarus and Libya didn't agree on an AP, acting like they didn't participate in the policy.

However, the Arab Spring changed radically the situation in most of the countries in the Mediterranean region and EU was motivated to push through ENP for more reforms in the political sector in this region and especially for motivating through the 'more for more' approach the establishment of deep democracy. The fact that in the Commission's document for the revised policy, the notion of democracy was articulated in a more definite manner highlights the ineffectiveness of the neighbourhood policy in promoting democracy and political dialogue in the southern

region until then. Furthermore the role of civil society was limited even though CSO's can be major contributors to the promotion of rule of law and push for protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The latest progress reports of the implementation of ENP in the countries involved in the policy, for the year 2014, highlighted the fact that the two regions did not promote reforms in establishing democracy equally. Even though all the countries in both regions demonstrated good results in the matter of conducting free and fair elections in compliance to international standards, other important elements of deep and sustainable democracy did not record equal progress. The countries of the eastern region progressed on the matter of protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. With the exception of Armenia media freedom progressed in the eastern region while it is still a matter of concern for the southern region. Additionally, progress was recorded in the protection of freedoms of association and assembly and in promotion of gender equality. The least progress for these countries was relevant to the CSO's and their operation and cooperation with the governments and this mainly refers to the Southern Caucasus countries. Finally, the crisis in the Ukraine –Russia relations seem to affect Ukraine's performance but not to a level to become an obstacle to the country's political development, highlighting the fact that Ukraine and the other countries of the region have reached a level of stable democratic advancement.

On the contrary for the southern countries reforms on the judiciary remained a priority without actual results and most countries demonstrated a really slow pace in reforms aiming to protect fundamental freedoms. Furthermore, corruption remained on a high rate and the use of death penalty is a concerning factor. However, the biggest concern regarding the southern region derives from the collapse of Syria and the negative effects it has to its neighbours due to the migration flow, the pressure in the institutions and the rise of ISIS which managed to organize terrorist strikes on the European ground, deteriorating the relationship of EU with the southern countries. Voices of concern were raised in the Union expressing the fear that instead of the 'Europeanization' of the area, the Europe is being led to complete 'Islamization', a fear that contributes to the drifting apart of the two parts rather than strengthening political dialogue.

All these contribute to answer emphatically in the study's question regarding the inequality in the results on political reforms and promotion of democracy for the two regions. As far for the future is concerned, this difference in the pace of progress in the two regions will soon transform to a problem for the Union since the initial goal of mitigating the feelings of exclusion will soon re – emerge. It is only a matter of time for the countries of the eastern region to start articulating their disappointment for not having a deeper engagement with the EU especially considering the fact that both regions are rewarded with the same incentives even though they are not recording the same level of progress. Now, ten years after the establishment of the policy a new question emerges and perhaps, it is time for the policy to be divided into the two sub-regions for recording better results.

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