

First meeting of Ministers from the EU and the European Neighbourhood

On 3 September, Benita Ferrero-Waldner, Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy, will host in Brussels the first ever meeting of Ministers and other representatives from all of the countries covered by the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) with their counterparts from the European Union. This international conference: "Working Together – Strengthening the European Neighbourhood Policy", organised and hosted by the European Commission, will include a ministerial-level morning session, which will focus particularly on the opportunities for trade liberalisation, mobility, and the challenges of climate change and energy security. The afternoon session will open up the debate to other stakeholders including business groupings and non-governmental organisations. The conference will be opened by José Manuel Barroso, President of the Commission, Luis Amado, Foreign Minister of Portugal and the current EU Presidency, and Benita Ferrero-Waldner.

Benita Ferrero-Waldner said: "This is a partnership of equals and it is essential that we listen carefully to the aspirations of our neighbours. I believe it is time to bring together all partners to exchange ideas on the strengthening of this policy. We would like to hear our neighbours' views: where should we place the greatest emphasis in our relations? Where do they see their interests reflected, and where, perhaps, they still feel that there are gaps to be filled?"

She added: "We have set out a number of areas in which we want to further develop our relationship with our neighbours, especially with regard to trade, mobility and economic support. The EU offers every neighbour country the chance to choose its own path. Those who want to advance relations through the ENP are already seeing their commitment matched with new opportunities. This conference will underline the EU's determination to develop individual and differentiated partnership that reflects the interest of each neighbour."

The European Neighbourhood Policy

The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) has been developed with the objective of increasing mutual prosperity, stability and security of the EU and its neighbouring countries.

In December 2006 the European Commission presented new ideas to increase the impact of the ENP, proposing additional opportunities for partner countries, and even greater support for neighbours already engaged in political and economic reforms. At the end of the German EU Presidency, these ideas were broadly endorsed by the European Council.

The ENP offers privileged political and economic relations to 16 countries¹ neighbouring the EU and builds upon existing relationships (Partnership and Co-operation and Association Agreements, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership). Co-operation with these countries is based on a mutual commitment to common values (democracy and human rights, rule of law, good governance, market economy principles and sustainable development).

All the information on the "Working Together – Strengthening the European Neighbourhood Policy" Conference at:

http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/conferences_2007_en.htm.

For additional information on the European Neighbourhood Policy, see also:

http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/index_en.htm.

EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD CONFERENCE – MEDIA ADVISORY

What: "Working Together - Strengthening the European Neighbourhood Policy", organised by the European Commission. For the first time, Ministers from the countries covered by the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and of the EU will come together to exchange views on the way forward for the policy.

Where: European Commission, Charlemagne Building, rue de la Loi 170, Brussels

When: **Monday 3 September 2007**

FOR THE PRESS

Europe by Satellite and a **photographer** will cover the opening session.

<http://ec.europa.eu/avservices/ebs/schedule.cfm>

Stockshots on the subject prepared by Europe by Satellite can be found at:

http://ec.europa.eu/avservices/annonce/template_en.cfm?prodid=1358

A **video** on the ENP will be available to all participants.

A **technical briefing** off the record will take place on **Thursday 30 August** after the midday briefing in the Commission press room (Berlaymont).

¹ [Algeria](#), [Armenia](#), [Azerbaijan](#), [Belarus](#), [Egypt](#), [Georgia](#), [Israel](#), [Jordan](#), [Lebanon](#), [Libya](#), [Moldova](#), [Morocco](#), [the Palestinian Authority](#), [Syria](#), [Tunisia](#) and [Ukraine](#). Relations with Russia are not covered by the European Neighbourhood Policy, but rather by the [EU-Russia Strategic Partnership](#).

AGENDA

- 09:30 – 10:15 **Opening** by Jose Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission, Luis Amado, Foreign Minister of Portugal, and Benita Ferrero-Waldner, European Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy
- 10:15 – 12:00 Sessions on **Strengthening the European Neighbourhood Policy** and **Energy and Climate Change** issues, moderated by Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner
- 14:30 – 15:15 Session on **Supporting Reforms**, moderated by Eneko Landaburu, Director General for External Relations in the European Commission
- 15:15 – 17:45 Simultaneous Workshops and presentation of summaries:
- **Connecting the Neighbourhood**, moderated by the European Investment Bank
 - **Connecting Neighbours**, moderated by the Anna Lindh Foundation
 - **Governance and Stability**, moderated by (tbc)
- 17:45 – 18:00 **Conclusions**, presented by Eneko Landaburu

BACKGROUND

ENP is already making a significant contribution to deepening relations and strengthening ties between the EU and its neighbours. Last December the Commission made far-reaching proposals on how to strengthen the opportunities for partner countries. At the European Council in June these were endorsed by EU Member States.

Now the EU wants to seek ENP partners' input and ideas about the best way to take these proposals forward: where they would like the EU to put the greatest emphasis, where they see their interests reflected, and where, perhaps, they still feel there are gaps to be filled.

PARTICIPANTS

Ministers and government representatives from the EU and its neighbouring countries will participate in the Conference as well as other stakeholders including business groupings and non-governmental organisations.

MORE INFORMATION

ENP web page at:

http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/index_en.htm

Conference web page at:

http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/conferences_2007_en.htm

Strengthening the ENP page at:

http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/strengthening_en.htm