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The European Neighbourhood Policy – How the EU is making a difference in partner countries

Since 2004 the **European Neighbourhood Policy** (ENP) is the EU response to the aspirations of its Eastern and Southern neighbours to **jointly promote prosperity, stability and security**. It provides the EU with a framework to contribute to ENP partners' political, economic and social reforms and modernisation efforts, in our common interest.

This document offers a **small selection of examples** of where the ENP already brings visible changes and improvements, taken from thousands of concrete actions and programmes conducted in a variety of areas.

Governance and political dialogue

- Supporting institutional, legal and administrative reforms in ENP countries.

To strengthen regional cooperation in the field of justice, the fight against organised crime and terrorism in the **Mediterranean**, training schemes have been put into practice for judges, prosecutors, lawyers and senior police officers from the Mediterranean partner countries. Almost 1,000 professionals have already been trained.

In **Moldova** a joint European Commission/Council of Europe programme is reinforcing the overall transparency of justice and improving citizens' access to and confidence in the system. The programme has helped to put in place a Legal Monitoring System, a permanent database of regulation and an advisory/expert group to advise Moldovan authorities in drafting judicial legislation.

- Deepening **political cooperation** with our neighbours.

The EU and its neighbours can now **align themselves with EU** Declarations and Common Positions in Common Foreign and Security Policy. **Ukraine, Moldova, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia** are already doing so. **Morocco and Jordan** have recently decided to follow.

Promoting democracy and human rights

Last year, the EU and its Mediterranean partners agreed on a joint work programme, which includes hands-on measures to **improve the participation of women in working life and economic decision-making**. One objective is to halve illiteracy among women by 2010 compared to its levels in 2000.

In **Morocco** the EU is pushing reform further and the "subcommittee on Human Rights, democratisation and governance" established last year is our new framework for dialogue in this domain. The EU is supporting the preparation of a national strategy and an action plan in the area of human rights and is contributing to the implementation of some of the recommendations of the national reconciliation commission. The EU is also supporting numerous NGOs that are active in promoting the protection of civil, political, economic and socio-cultural rights. Finally, the EU is also engaged in the modernisation of the justice sector, which will also contribute to the enhancement of human rights.

Moldova is involved in detailed expert work with experts of the Council of Europe, the OSCE and the European Commission to help move forward the reforms of its legal and institutional framework for the protection of human rights.

Ukraine and Morocco are the first partners to benefit from the new ENP **Governance Facility** through which additional support is provided to those countries more committed to reform. Ukraine consolidated the democratisation process, while Morocco launched and implemented reforms in the fields of democracy, public administration and rule of law. Morocco will use its allocation of €28 million to reinforce its on-going programme for the reform of the public administration and Ukraine will spend its €22 million on further reforming its energy sector with a focus on energy efficiency and renewable energy.

Economic integration and trade

Trade is one of the key instruments through which ENP partners can grasp many opportunities offered by the biggest market in the world. The first positive effects in terms of increased bilateral trade are beginning to show both for the EU and the neighbours:

- **Tunisia's** commercial exchange grew in 2006 by 10% reaching €21 billion, the EU being its first commercial partner - exchange with the EU represents 74% of its total trade. The abolition of tariffs should be completed next year.
- EU exports to **Moldova** in 2006 have increased by 21.4% while imports to the EU increased by 26%. Last year the mutual trade turnover reached €1.2 billion.

Bringing down barriers to trade and improving business climate

Ukraine started a reform of its legal and judicial system including reform of company law and elimination of inconsistencies between different legislative acts in order to ensure a more predictable and transparent business climate.

Armenia, with EU support, is working on its tax administration and improving its administrative and operational capacities in order to simplify and accelerate registration procedures for businesses; to allow taxpayers to submit their declarations electronically; to reduce the stock of VAT refunds owed to exporters; and to allow taxpayers to lodge complaints against the decisions of the tax administration. This will have a positive effect on the business climate in the country.

In the framework of the ENP the Commission actively provides information about the EU trade policy through the **Export Helpdesk** - a user-friendly service providing the relevant information required by third country exporters to facilitate them access to the EU market.

(<http://exporthelp.europa.eu/index.html>)

- Strengthening business capacity and attractiveness for foreign investors

In **Morocco** the Commission is supporting the modernisation of **professional associations** to allow them to offer more and better services to business in order to boost their activities.

And, to attract more foreign investors to **Morocco**, EU support is focusing on increasing the level of qualification of workers. 110 professional training centres in the public and private sector will be supported involving 240 companies and expecting to create 100,000 new jobs!

- Supporting **regulatory convergence** with the EU, helping neighbour countries to come into line with European standards and rules.

Enhancing **sanitary and phyto-sanitary (SPS)** standards in ENP partners and an approximation with EU rules and practices lead not only to bigger trade flows, but also to safer food for citizens. It requires however huge and long-term investments in better legal frameworks, control institutions, laboratories, slaughterhouses and hygienic practices in agricultural establishments. In 2007 cooperation has intensified including through twinning projects which put EU experts in contact with their counterparts in **Tunisia, Morocco** and **Jordan** to share expertise. The **Jordan** twinning project helped to draft a first framework food law in the country and contributed to equipping laboratories.

Mobility and border management

- Co-ordination on migration issues.

In **Ukraine**, more than 13,400 falsified travel documents (passports and visas) were discovered on the Ukrainian borders in 2006. The EU is assisting the Ukrainian authorities in dealing with this problem. The EU trained and equipped a group of Ukrainian instructors so that they themselves were capable to train more than 700 officials of the Ukrainian State Border Guard Service and Ministries on how to apply EU control standards. Study trips were organised to EU Member States (Netherlands, Hungary) to learn about the EU border protection system and the information exchange.

- Facilitating mobility for legal travellers.

Visa facilitation agreements will enter into force soon with **Ukraine** and **Moldova**, linked to readmission agreements.

Sectoral policies

- Deepening our energy partnerships

Memoranda of Understanding on Energy have been concluded with **Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Egypt** and are under negotiation with **Algeria** Joint Declarations on Energy cooperation have been signed with **Morocco** and **Jordan**. These agreements are designed to strengthen integration with EU markets, consolidate policy on sustainable energy development and offer technical assistance to develop legislative and regulatory framework in this domain.

Joint efforts with **Ukraine** for transparency and reliability of gas supplies within the region and to the European markets have resulted in the establishment of the Gas Metrology Centre in Boyarka. The project will be extended in the future to cover oil and oil products, pipeline network satellite monitoring and training. The Commission and Ukraine have also undertaken together an audit of the Ukrainian gas transit network.

In November 2007, the **EU-Africa-Middle East Ministerial Energy Conference** was held in Sharm-el-Sheikh, bringing together key energy players from the region including Mediterranean ENP partners. The Commission will build on the results achieved in Sharm-el-Sheikh as well the already ongoing actions such as the EU-Maghreb Project for Integration of Electricity Markets and the Euro-Mashrek Natural Gas Market Centre which is facilitating development of regional gas market and bringing additional gas supplies to the EU. These actions will follow: supporting development of the Arab Gas Pipeline as one of future suppliers for the Nabucco project; promoting the development of a green energy market drawing on the strong potential for solar and wind energy of the southern neighbours; and facilitating exchange of know-how on clean energy technologies.

➤ Environment and climate change

The EU is actively supporting environmental **protection in the Black Sea**, which is a key priority of the Black Sea Synergy launched in April 2007. In November, following the violent storms the oil spilled out in the Kerch Strait, the Commission urgently mobilised the European Community Civil Protection Mechanism (on the basis of cooperation agreement signed with Ukraine in 2007). A team of EU experts from Denmark, Latvia, Portugal, France and Italy were dispatched to the region to prepare a first assessment of the environmental damage and the needs for pollution remediation efforts.

The Horizon 2020 initiative aims to tackle the main sources of **Mediterranean pollution** for the wellbeing of people living in the region. The Commission, the partner countries, financial institutions and other stakeholders have identified bankable projects to tackle key pollution sources. In early 2008, the parties will meet to agree how to prioritise, prepare and finance the **cleanup of 43 polluting sites**. These range from construction of wastewater treatment plants in Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt, landfill rehabilitation in Israel and treatment of industrial hazardous waste in Jordan, to recycling and treatment of oil sludge in Syria.

➤ **Transport links** are key to increase contacts and economic integration with the EU

The recent Aviation Agreement with **Morocco**, the first of the kind in the region, will increase flight connections with Europe and will further support the tourist sector. Moroccan and EU citizens will profit from more competition, meaning reduced fares and improved choice of airlines.

Human dimension

➤ **Promoting public health** reforms and improving the capacity of partners to enhance the quality of the lives of their citizens

In **Georgia**, assistance has contributed to the construction and rehabilitation of 38 health facilities, their medical equipment and general health promotion in the Kakheti Region. The final aim is to have 52 such facilities which will cover a total population of around 400,000 people.

The Commission now routinely invites representatives of **Moldova** and **Ukraine** to its HIV/AIDS Think Tank, while **Mediterranean** partners are associated to the EU 'EpiSouth' network on communicable diseases in the Mediterranean. For 2008, it is intended to prepare participation of ENP partners in the new Community Health Programme (running till 2013) as well as encourage enhanced cooperation with the Stockholm based European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control.

➤ Education - Developing the human capital

In **Egypt** the Commission supports the reform of the education sector launched by the government with a view to improve equitable delivery of quality educational services, through a pro-poor and anti-exclusion approach, the revision of curricula, the reform of examination systems and the promotion of teachers' professional development.

A new scholarship scheme for the ENP enables more than a thousand students and lecturers to come to the EU in 2007/8 and several hundred from the EU to go to study to ENP countries.

The Commission's support is providing targeted training to the **media** of the ENP countries to upgrade their skills while encouraging the establishment of a permanent network of media professionals and building a more independent and confident landscape for journalism. More than 400 journalists and editors have already benefited from this initiative.

➤ Education is also a path to **more freedom**

In October 2006, the EU financed **scholarships** for **Belarusian students** expelled from university on political grounds. Thanks to these scholarships, and to an earlier grant scheme to the European Humanity University (EHU) in Vilnius (Lithuania), approximately 500 Belarusian students are able to study in Ukrainian universities and at the EHU. An additional 65 Belarusian students are studying in 2007 at the EHU, and further assistance is being planned.