



**SUPPORT MECHANISMS
AVAILABLE TO LOCAL AND
REGIONAL AUTHORITIES,
WITH RECOMMENDATIONS
TO BETTER TAILOR
THEM TO EUROPEAN
NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY
COUNTRIES, WITH A
SPECIAL FOCUS ON CROSS-
BORDER COOPERATION**

Dialogue and capacity building of
local and regional authorities
in EU partner countries
in the fields of development
and local governance

2015



PLATFORMA

The European voice of **Local** and
Regional authorities for development



AEBR - AGEG - ARFE

Support mechanisms available to Local and Regional Authorities (LRAs) with recommendations to better tailor them, including those specifically from the region that come from the Neighbourhood Policy, with a special focus on Cross-Border Cooperation (CBC)

PLATFORMA – 2015
AEBR – 2015

This document was prepared as a background document for the “Seminar for Dialogue and Capacity Building of Local and Regional Authorities in Eurasia in the Development and Local Governance Fields” held in Tbilisi, Georgia, 14-15 May 2014.

PLATFORMA Partners in the Project: Dialogue and capacity building of local and regional authorities in EU partner countries in the fields of development and local governance

Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR)
United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG)
French Association of CEMR (AFCCRE)
International Cooperation Agency of the Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG International)
Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SKL)
Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces (FEMP)
Cités Unies France (CUF)
Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR)
Association of European Border Regions (AEBR)
International Association of Francophone Mayors (AIMF)
Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF)
City of Paris
Province of Barcelona
Régions Unies – FOGAR

Disclaimer: This publication has been produced with the assistance of the European Union. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of PLATFORMA and AEBR and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union.

Design: acapella.be – Printing: Daddy Kate – Photo: EuropeAid Photo Library

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.





Summary

BACKGROUND	4
1. THE EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY (ENP) 2004-2020	7
Main elements of the new ENI and differences with the ENPI. Operational implications	8
Specific sector cooperation = Thematic Concentration	9
Financial support, legal agreements and programming — Keywords: “more-for-more” and concentration	10
Benefits of the ENP	11
ENP Association Agendas for Eastern partner countries	13
2. THE INSTRUMENT FOR PRE-ACCESSION ASSISTANCE (IPA)	14
IPA I (2007-2013)	14
IPA II (2014-2020)	15
3. THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP	16
The Eastern Partnership and EU-Ukraine relations	17
Relationship with the Russian Federation	18
The Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum	18
Some criticism from scratch and latest developments	18
4. THE ROLE OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES (LRAS) IN THE ENP	23
Current situation and perspectives	24
Measures involving LRAs in CBC Operational Programmes within the ENPI 2007-2013	25
Some recommendations for LRAs	27



BACKGROUND

During the second half of the eighties several processes in Central and Eastern European countries – legalization of *Solidarity* in Poland, Pan-European Picnic in Sopron, creation of the Republic of Hungary, Fall of the Berlin Wall, the Velvet Revolution, etc. – developed into their opening, the consolidation of democracy and their rapprochement to Western Europe.

In the nineties the conflict in the Balkans tested European and international community's solving capacities. At the turn of the Millennium, Mediterranean cooperation was growingly present in the EU agenda, but fifteen years later the area is still a challenge for the EU, with thousands of migrants arriving under very pitiful circumstances, while the EU has practically doubled the number of member States. Unstability in the Mediterranean, Near East and Ukraine further challenge cooperation in these days.

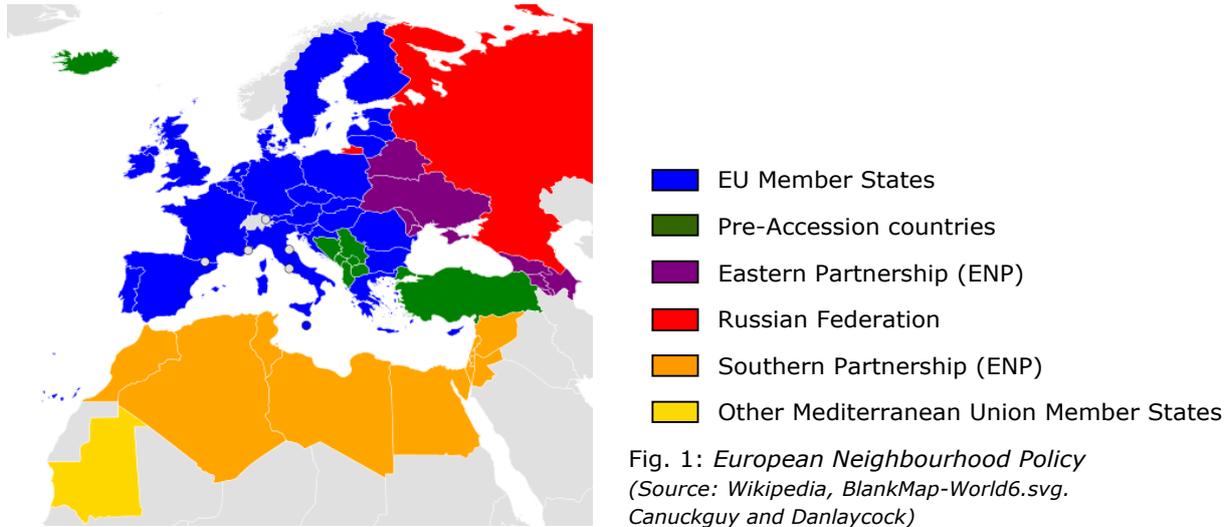
The EU designed several instruments for political and financial support which have been an important incentive to consolidate these processes, their progress to the EU accession (PHARE, TACIS, Neighbourhood and Pre-Accession) and the promotion of cooperation at the external borders of the EU, up to the current European Neighbourhood Policy, the Eastern Partnership or the Barcelona Process and the Union for the Mediterranean. The participation of Local and Regional Authorities (LRAs) in these instruments has only grown until today, when there are growing opportunities for LRAs to cooperate with their neighbours across the borders (cross-border cooperation), with their peers in other countries (interregional) or within transnational initiatives. Other fields of EU support have progressively opened its procedures to public authorities below the national level, their networks and cooperation structures and agencies, as well as to other players: universities, civil society organizations, enterprises.

The **European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP)** was designed to share the benefits of the enlargement in 2004 with the new EU neighbouring countries. It also aspired to prevent new dividing lines between the EU and its neighbours. These neighbours shape a ring of countries working towards a higher integration without the need to be full EU members. They are all coastal Mediterranean countries in Africa and Near East, as well as the European members of the Community of Independent States (CIS) in the Caucasus and Eastern Europe, with the exception of the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan. Russia insisted in creating four Common EU-Russia Spaces instead of taking part in the ENP, and keeps a bilateral but winding process with the EU.

The **Euro-Mediterranean partnership** or “Barcelona Process” is a wide framework for political, economic and social relationship between EU Member States and Southern Mediterranean countries. It was initiated on 27th and 28th November 1995 in a Conference of Foreign Affairs Ministers at the Catalonian capital. All 28 EU Member States take part in the Union for the Mediterranean, as well as the Mediterranean partners with the exception of Libya. Since the establishment of the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) in 2007, the Euro-Mediterranean partnership is part of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). Partnership agreements signed with Mediterranean states aspire to establish a Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Area, but this process faces enormous challenges.

The **Mediterranean Union** is currently the Southern branch of the ENP, while the Eastern one is the **Eastern Partnership**. The map in next page shows all states taking part in the ENP.





Several instruments have been used to promote decentralized and territorial cooperation in the neighbourhood countries. However, different regulation systems hampered early coordination of these programmes with, for instance, Interreg ones. The Commission overcame these difficulties by harmonising these regulations in several fields.

Examples of these instruments where:

- * **PHARE**: originally created in 1989 as “Poland and Hungary: Assistance for Restructuring their Economies (PHARE), it was one of the three pre-accession instruments financed by the EU to assist applicant countries of Central and Eastern Europe in their preparations to join the EU. Phare expanded from Poland and Hungary to ten countries. It assisted eight of the 10 accession countries in 2004: Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia, as well as those countries acceding in 2007 (Bulgaria and Romania), in a period of massive political and economic restructuring. Until 2000, some Western Balkan countries (Albania, Macedonia and Bosnia-Herzegovina) were also beneficiaries of Phare. Between 2001 and 2006, the CARDS Programme provided financial assistance to these countries and other Western Balkan ones.
- * An additional **Phare CREDO** Programme was created in 1996 to encourage East-East cross-border cooperation (CBC) between border communities and regions of Central and Eastern European countries, between them and the New Independent States. The main aim of CREDO was fostering good neighbourhood relations and social stability in border regions, promoting CBC to contribute to economic growth and community development, as well as to decentralization. This programme included many type of projects: economic development, socio-cultural cooperation, urban and regional services, human resources, environment and local and regional self-government. Beneficiaries were public entities as well as private and non-profit organizations.
- * **TACIS** (1991-1996) was an EU initiative to support the transition to the market economy and the strengthening of democracy in the Community of Independent States (CIS) – Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Russian Federation, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan – and Mongolia. In 2007, TACIS and MEDA programmes were integrated into the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI), the financial instrument of the European Neighbourhood Policy.

* In December 2000 the EU adopted a new regulation¹ establishing a single framework to assist Balkan countries known as **CARDS** (Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stability in the Balkans). CARDS were to promote, among others, “the rapprochement between these countries, between them and the EU, and with candidate countries to join the EU, in coordination with other instruments for cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation with non-EU countries”. This meant that PHARE CBC programmes between Albania and Greece, and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) with Greece, were substituted by CARDS programmes, being possible the development of new ones, for instance, between Croatia and Slovenia, Croatia and Hungary, or Bulgaria and FYROM. Since 2007 this programme was replaced by the **Instrument of Pre-Accession (IPA)**. Croatia could only apply for assistance in projects and programmes of regional dimension, as already in 2004 was acknowledged as candidate country, being beneficiary of Pre-Accession strategy and instruments. The objective of CARDS was making this countries to take part in stabilization and partnership processes, particularly:

- reconstruction;
- stabilization of the regions;
- assistance to the return of refugees and displaced persons;
- support to democracy, the rule of law, human rights and those of minorities, civil society, independent media, and the fight against organized crime;
- development of a sustainable market economy;
- fight against poverty, gender equality, education and training, and environmental recovery;
- regional, transnational, international and interregional cooperation between beneficiary countries and those of the EU and other countries in the region.

A strategic framework was established for 2002-2006, as well as multi-annual indicative programmes for every country (three years).

* The **MEDA Programme**: the EU included modifications in the MEDA regulations (financial and technical support to non-EU Mediterranean countries) in order to get LRAs involved. Though EU support to cross-border MEDA actions was foreseen, there was no programmatic or institutional agreement equivalent to Interreg A or Phare CBC. There was a great need of establishing these agreements in order to achieve an efficient coordination with Interreg at some particular borders.

Despite simplification of procedures and political agreement, the evolution of events, especially in the South Mediterranean (Arab Spring), has not led to a normalized operation of these programmes. Nevertheless, Euro-Mediterranean dialogue has been highly strengthened due to the participation of LRAs in the framework of activities promoted by the EU institutions and, particularly, the Committee of the Regions. This has been the case of the ARLEM, the Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly.

¹ Council Regulation 2666/2000 of 5th December, on assistance for Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, repealing OBNOVA regulation and modifying PHARE. Amended by Council Regulation (EC) No 2415/2001 of 10th December.



1. THE EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY (ENP) 2004-2020

The ENP was developed in 2004 to avoid new dividing lines between the enlarged EU and its neighbours and, instead, strengthening the prosperity, stability and security of all. It is based on the values of democracy, rule of law and respect of human rights.

This ENP framework was proposed to the 16 of EU's closest neighbours – Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia and Ukraine – and, more than an integrated approach, it is essentially a bilateral policy between the EU and each partner country. It is complemented by more integrated regional and multilateral co-operation initiatives: the *Eastern Partnership* (launched in Prague in May 2009), the *Euro-Mediterranean Partnership* (EUROMED) (formerly known as the Barcelona Process, re-launched in Paris in July 2008), and the *Black Sea Synergy* (launched in Kiev in February 2008).

Within the ENP the EU offers its neighbours a privileged relationship, a mutual commitment to common values (democracy and human rights, rule of law, good governance, market economy principles and sustainable development). The deepness of the relationship depends on the extent to which these values are shared. The ENP includes political association and deeper economic integration, increased mobility and more people-to-people contacts.

It also offers to its partners a very concrete set of opportunities through sector policies: from employment and social policy, trade, industrial and competition policies to agriculture and rural development, climate change and environment. They include energy security, transport, research and innovation, as well as support to health, education, culture and youth.

In 2010-2011, the EU reviewed the ENP and put a strong focus on the promotion of deep and sustainable democracy, accompanied by inclusive economic development. Deep and sustainable democracy means in particular free and fair elections, freedom of expression, of assembly and of association, judicial independence, fight against corruption and democratic control over the armed forces. The EU also stressed the role of civil society bringing about deep and sustainable democracy. The EU unveiled a "more for more" principle, under which the EU would develop stronger partnerships with those neighbours that make more progress towards democratic reform.

The ENP remains distinct from the process of enlargement although, in accordance with Treaty provisions, it does not prejudice how the relationship of European neighbours with the EU may develop in future.

In 2011, total trade between the EU and its ENP partners was worth € 230 billion.

In 2007-2013, the EU provided partners with over € 12 billion in grants for the implementation of the ENP.

The EU issued 3.2 million Schengen visas to ENP partners in 2012.

The European Parliament and the Council to the Multiannual Financial Framework package adopted a new ENI² providing most of funding to the 16 partner countries of the ENP: Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan Lebanon, Libya, the Republic of Moldova, Morocco, the occupied Palestinian territory, Syria, Tunisia and Ukraine, in line with the principles of differentiation and the incentive-based approach. Building on the achievements of the previous European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI), the ENI supports the strengthening of relations with Neighbourhood countries. This support is provided through bilateral, multi-country and cross border co-operation (CBC) programmes.

² Regulation (EU) No 232/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11th March 2014 establishing a European Neighbourhood Instrument, Official Journal of the European Union, L77/27, 15th March 2014.

In line with the renewed Neighbourhood Policy launched in 2011, the support through the ENI mainly focus on the following priorities:

- Promoting human rights and the rule of law; establishing deep and sustainable democracy and developing a thriving civil society;
- sustainable and inclusive growth and economic, social and territorial development; including progressive integration in the EU internal market;
- mobility and people-to-people contacts; including student exchanges and strengthening civil society;
- regional integration, including CBC.

1.1 Main elements of the new ENI and differences with the ENPI. Operational implications

- * The **ENI budget** for the period 2014-2020 is € 15.433 billion, representing a comparable level to the previous ENP instrument. This is a significant decrease compared to the 2011 Commission proposal, but still a good outcome in the financial climate of November 2013, when the Multi-Annual Financial Framework of the EU for the period 2014-2020 was agreed. ENP countries also keep on benefiting from several other EU instruments.
- * The programming and implementation of ENI support have to be aligned with the policy framework (Communications, Council Conclusions, EP Resolutions, etc.).
 - * There is a growing **differentiation** between partners countries and an **incentive based approach**: the levels of support will be adjusted to every partner country needs and progress, based on clear criteria included in the regulation and regular assessment reports. Support will be increased for those genuinely implementing broad and comprehensive democratisation processes and other agreed reforms.
 - * Specific "more for more" mechanisms have been introduced to support this approach:
 - i. bilateral baseline budgets will take account of progress as well as needs;
 - ii. the SPRING³ and EaPIC⁴ programmes have been extended as an umbrella programme worth 10% of the ENI budget; and
 - iii. programmed bilateral allocations will be paid in a range of no more than 20% and will be adjusted within that range reflecting countries' progress in building deep and sustainable democracy and in implementing agreed political, economic and social reforms.
- * **Streamlining the scope** of this Instrument by focussing on key objectives reflecting political priorities in the ENP Action Plans or equivalent documents.
- * A more streamlined programming document, the **Single Support Framework** is based on the analysis of priorities in every Action Plan and equivalent document. It aims to improve coherence and co-ordination between funding under the ENI and other EU instruments.
- * A strong effort in simplification of procedures, highlighting both the need and the scope to streamline, shorten and better focus the programming process.
- * There are linkages with internal agencies, instruments and policies. The ENP gives partners the option to participate in EU agencies and programmes.

³ The SPRING Programme: *Support to Partnership, Reform and Inclusive Growth*, was adopted on 27th September 2011 by the EU as a direct response to the events of the Arab Spring.

⁴ The EaPIC Programme: the *Eastern Partnership Integration and Cooperation* (EaPIC) programme, adopted 26 June 2012, contributed further to an enhanced implementation of the Eastern Partnership.



* **Russia** is redefined as a Strategic Partner and will no longer receive bilateral support under ENI. Nonetheless it will continue to receive support under multi-country programmes (regional and Cross-Border Co-operation) and Erasmus. However current escalation in Eastern Ukrainian provinces set a question mark in this partnership.

* The ENI regulation sets out **indicative priorities and broad allocations** by type of programme in its Annex II.

* The **European Parliament** (EP) now has a greater say in how the ENI is used. Notably, a political level Strategic Dialogue with the EP has been established to guide programming which includes the discussion of country level priorities and indicative budgets.

The bilateral *Action Plans* or *Association Agendas* between the EU and each ENP partner are the core of the ENP (12 of them have already been agreed to date). These set out an agenda of political and economic reforms with short and medium-term priorities of 3-5 years. ENP Action Plans/Association Agendas reflect each partner's needs and capacities, as well as their and the EU's interests. The ENP is not yet 'activated' for Algeria, Belarus, Libya and Syria, though an Action Plan with Algeria is under negotiation for a long time (2015).

Under the ENP, the EU works together with its partners to develop democratic, socially equitable and inclusive societies, and offers its neighbours economic integration, improved circulation of people across borders, financial assistance and technical cooperation towards approximation to EU standards.

1.2 Specific sector cooperation = Thematic Concentration

A better cooperation in specific sectors to improve living conditions of citizens in a tangible way, in order:

- * ... to promote the respect for the basic principles of dignity and equality, human rights, and social and economic justice. These principles are embodied in democratic legal systems and the rule of law, and guaranteed by independent courts. Efficient and accessible courts protect citizens from arbitrariness, ensure respect for their fundamental rights and guarantee effective justice for all. Cooperation in reforming the judicial sector and in the fight against corruption forms one of the main priority areas of the ENP in partner countries.
- * ... to link partner countries with the internal market of the EU and its social and economic model. For partners, this means adopting basic rules on equal opportunities, economic participation and fair competition, together with well-governed institutions and access to social services for all citizens. It also involves the promotion of environmental and consumer protection standards, food safety, healthy and safe working conditions. On this basis, the ENP also promotes the right conditions for economic growth and job creation.
- * ... to connect the EU with its neighbours, promoting trade, building energy and transport networks, or fostering tourism. It builds bridges between people, facilitates mobility and fosters inter-cultural understanding. It pays particular attention to educational and youth exchanges, with the aim of fostering the development of talent and well-educated, strong and responsible societies.

Sector policy dialogue and cooperation are a basic element of the ENP and a concrete translation of the EU's foreign policy in the neighbourhood. By bringing the neighbours closer to its policies and standards, the EU promotes its core values of just, well-governed societies, promoting social development and economic opportunities to all their citizens.



1.3 Financial support, legal agreements and programming – Keywords: “more-for-more” and concentration

The financial support of the European Commission is provided through grants to partners; the *European Investment Bank* and the *European Bank for Reconstruction and Development* complement this support through loans.

Civil society plays an important role in contributing to democracy and the building of good governance in partner countries. The EU supports organisations via the *Civil Society Facility*, a new instrument created in September 2011 to strengthen the capacity of civil society to promote and monitor reforms, and increase public accountability.

The ENP builds upon the legal agreements in place between the EU and the partner in question: *Partnership and Cooperation Agreements* (PCA) or *Association Agreements* (AA). Implementation of the ENP is jointly promoted and monitored through the Committees and sub-Committees established in the frame of these agreements. The European External Action Service and the European Commission publish each year *ENP Progress Reports*. The assessments and recommendations contained in the Progress Reports are the basis of EU policy towards each ENP partner under the “more for more” principle.

The ‘more for more’ principle applies to all incentives proposed by the EU: policy developments as well as to financial assistance (excluded humanitarian assistance, refugee & external borders funds and support to civil society, which already have own funding). Partners determinedly embarking on political reforms should be offered, in addition to the incentives available to other partners, those that relate to the most ambitious elements of:

- market access: economic integration and development (DCFTAs⁵);
- mobility of people (mobility partnerships);
- a greater share of the EU financial support.

In that context, the Commission decided to set up specific programmes both for the Eastern (EaPIC) neighbours in 2011 and the Southern (SPRING) in 2012 in order to allocate extra financial support only to those neighbours taking clear and concrete steps on political reforms. A new Civil Society Facility was also created in 2011.

The ENP is supported by substantial EU financial assistance. Under the *ENPI 2007-2013*, nearly € 12 billion was provided in grants.

The main types of support and lists of individual programmes and projects are listed in: http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/neighbourhood/index_en.htm

In addition, Neighbourhood countries have benefited from a variety of other EU programmes.

For the period 2014-2020, the ENPI has been followed by a new European Neighbourhood Instrument (*ENI*). With a budget of over € 15 billion, the ENI builds on and strengthens some of the key features of the ENPI, in particular the greater differentiation between countries based on progress with reforms and two new mechanisms to support an incentive based approach (often referred to as “more for more”). These are: an umbrella programme of 10% of the ENI budget to be allocated to better performing countries; and the ability to vary bilateral allocations up or down with a range.

⁵ The *Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area* (DCFTA), a free trade area between the EU and Ukraine, expected to be established through the Ukraine–EU Association Agreement in 2016, with implications for Ukrainian participation at the *Eurasian Economic Commission's Customs Union of Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia*. The EU has signed DCFTAs with Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia, is under negotiation with Morocco, and has proposed it to Tunisia, but some experts doubt whether it is an appropriate instrument for these countries: <http://www.borderlex.eu/enp-overhaul-dcftas-still-good-idea-michael-leigh-shares-views/>



Four types of programme are supported:

- Bilateral programmes for the Neighbourhood countries;
- Regional programmes for the East and the South;
- An ENP-wide programme mainly funding Erasmus for All and the Neighbourhood Investment Facility;
- Cross-Border Co-operation programmes between Member States and Neighbourhood countries.

In addition to the ENI, Neighbourhood countries will continue to benefit from a range of **other EU instruments and programmes**. The most important of these are global or thematic programmes under the *Development Co-operation Instrument*, the *European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights*, the *Instrument for Stability* and interventions under the *Common Foreign and Security Policy* (CFSP) and the *Common Security and Defence Policy* (CSDP).

Following a political agreement to the new set of EU external assistance regulations covering the 2014-2020 period in December 2013, the EEAS and the Commission worked quickly to get the regulations adopted and published in 2014. In the meantime, programming (i.e. strategic planning) to establish priorities and multi-annual budgets for the instruments were under way. The programming allowed Single Support Frameworks or the equivalent to be finalised for each country or programme. Individual programmes could then be agreed and committed. Examples of current programmes and how they have supported ENP objectives, as well as many more informations, are available at the *EU Neighbourhood Info Centre*:

<http://www.enpi-info.eu/index.php>

The following link *Financial Cooperation Reference Documents* includes an archive of current and older documents related to ENP financial assistance (legal framework and programming documents of the ENI 2014-2020 and the ENPI 2007-2013):

http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/documents/financing-the-enp/index_en.htm

Programming is only required for the first years of the current period to allow adaptation of EU support to evolving situation in each country or region. In the spirit of differentiation, the timeframes of the programming documents differ and take into account the specificity of the country situation and/or programmes concerned.

The programming priorities were developed in close cooperation with the national authorities of partner countries concerned, civil society and other relevant stakeholders, and in coordination with EU Member States. Action plans and other jointly agreed documents are a key point of reference. They were also subject of a Strategic Dialogue on programming with the European Parliament.

Following the principle of aid effectiveness, programming documents present three priority sectors of concentration. Each of them contains sector-related capacity development and institution building activities, including technical co-operation to assist in the approximation to EU legislation and technical standards. Besides, a horizontal envelope allows a complementary support for capacity development and Civil Society.

1.4 Benefits of the ENP

The ENP shares EU knowledge and principles with neighbouring countries by means of strengthening stability, security and well-being for all partners, including EU citizens.

The ENP offers partner countries participation in various EU activities with the aim of increasing cooperation on political, security, economic and cultural matters.

The social and economic benefits of the ENP are considerable. The following thematic areas illustrate the scope of the cooperation between the EU and its partner countries through examples of projects launched through the ENP.

See a description of every area and a set of examples of good practices in the following links:

* Energy:

http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/which-are-the-benefits/energy/index_en.htm

* Health:

http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/which-are-the-benefits/health/index_en.htm

* Small and Medium Enterprises:

http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/which-are-the-benefits/small-and-medium-entreprises/index_en.htm

* Sanitary and Phytosanitary:

http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/which-are-the-benefits/sanitary-and-phytosanitary/index_en.htm

* Public Finance Management:

http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/which-are-the-benefits/public-finance-management/index_en.htm

* Public Procurement:

http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/which-are-the-benefits/public-procurement/index_en.htm

* Competition:

http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/which-are-the-benefits/public-procurement/index_en.htm

* Customs:

http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/which-are-the-benefits/customs/index_en.htm

* Taxation:

http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/which-are-the-benefits/taxation/index_en.htm

* Trade:

http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/which-are-the-benefits/trade/index_en.htm

* Agriculture / Geographical Indicators:

http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/which-are-the-benefits/agriculture-geographical-indicators/index_en.htm

* Consumer Protection:

http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/which-are-the-benefits/consumer-protection/index_en.htm

* Statistics:

http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/which-are-the-benefits/statistics/index_en.htm

* Civil Protection:

http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/which-are-the-benefits/civil-protection/index_en.htm

* Climate Change:

http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/which-are-the-benefits/climate-change/index_en.htm





* Environment:

http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/which-are-the-benefits/environment/index_en.htm

* Fish and Maritime:

http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/which-are-the-benefits/fish-and-maritime/index_en.htm

* Intellectual Property Rights (IPR):

http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/which-are-the-benefits/intellectual-property-rights/index_en.htm

* Space:

http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/which-are-the-benefits/space/index_en.htm

* Education, Youth, Culture:

http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/which-are-the-benefits/education-youth-culture/index_en.htm

* Employment and Social:

http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/which-are-the-benefits/employment-and-social/index_en.htm

* Transport:

http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/which-are-the-benefits/transport/index_en.htm

* Information society:

http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/which-are-the-benefits/information-society/index_en.htm

* Mobility / Justice and Home Affairs:

http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/which-are-the-benefits/mobility-justice-and-home-affairs/index_en.htm

* Research:

http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/which-are-the-benefits/research/index_en.htm

1.5 ENP Association Agendas for Eastern partner countries

These action plans set out the agenda of every partner country for political and economic reforms. They are road maps with short and medium-term priorities of 3-5 years

They should reflect the needs and capacities of every country, as well as its interests and those of the EU.

Currently there are already Association Agendas for the following countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Moldova, Morocco, Palestine, Tunisia and Ukraine (updated). They can be downloaded at the EEAS website:

http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/documents/action-plans/index_en.htm

2. THE INSTRUMENT FOR PRE-ACCESSION ASSISTANCE (IPA)

2.1 IPA I (2007-2013)

The *Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance* (IPA) is an EU unified financial instrument which met in 2007 the whole assistance to pre-accession into a single instrument oriented to support the process to prepare candidate and pre-candidate countries in their access to the EU. During the programming period 2007-2013 this support had five components:

- * Assistance to Transition and Institutional Development
- * Cross-Border Cooperation (IPA-CBC)
- * Regional Development (transport, environment, regional and economic development)
- * Development of Human Resources (strengthening human capital and combating exclusion)
- * Rural Development

Most components offered support within every beneficiary country, while the second one (IPA-CBC), had a wider character. Cross-border initiatives were offered to candidate and potential candidate countries bordering the EU, and between IPA beneficiary countries. There was also a possibility to finance the participation of IPA countries in transnational cooperation programmes under the European Regional Development Funds (ERDF). IPA CBC has also promoted very much the participation of Local and Regional Authorities (LRAs).

The following were the IPA-CBC Programmes in the period 2007-2013. The implementation is still in progress in some cases:

* Adriatic:

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/atlas/programmes/2007-2013/crossborder/adriatic-ipa-cross-border-co-operation-programme-2007-2013

* Bulgaria-Serbia:

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/atlas/programmes/2007-2013/crossborder/bulgaria-serbia-ipa-cross-border-co-operation-programme-2007-2013

* Bulgaria-FYROM:

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/atlas/programmes/2007-2013/crossborder/bulgaria-the-former-yugoslav-republic-of-macedonia-ipa-cross-border-co-operation-programme-2007-2013

* Bulgaria-Turkey:

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/atlas/programmes/2007-2013/crossborder/bulgaria-turkey-ipa-cross-border-co-operation-programme-2007-2013

* Greece-FYROM:

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/atlas/programmes/2007-2013/crossborder/greece-the-former-yugoslav-republic-of-macedonia-ipa-cross-border-co-operation-programme-2007-2013

* Greece-Albania:

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/atlas/programmes/2007-2013/crossborder/greece-albania-ipa-cross-border-co-operation-programme-2007-2013



* Hungary-Croatia:

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/atlas/programmes/2007-2013/crossborder/hungary-croatia-ipa-cross-border-co-operation-programme-2007-2013

* Hungary-Serbia:

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/atlas/programmes/2007-2013/crossborder/hungary-serbia-ipa-cross-border-co-operation-programme-2007-2013

* Romania-Serbia:

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/atlas/programmes/2007-2013/crossborder/romania-serbia-ipa-cross-border-co-operation-programme-2007-2013

* Slovenia-Croatia:

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/atlas/programmes/2007-2013/crossborder/slovenia-croatia-ipa-cross-border-co-operation-programme-2007-2013

2.2 IPA II (2014-2020)

A draft proposal for a regulation of the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance for the period 2014-2020 (IPA II) addressed to Iceland, the Western Balkans and Turkey was developed in 2013-2014. In the Western Balkans the European Council has granted the status of candidate country to Montenegro, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia. It has also confirmed the European perspective for Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Kosovo, which are considered potential candidates.

It proposes a simplification of procedures in order to facilitate EU assistance to beneficiary countries and regions, civil society organisations, SMEs, etc. It also includes many references that can be used by LRAs to take more active part in the different programmes. It is important to follow up the elaboration and implementation of the "Strategy Papers" between every participating country and the EU. These programmes can be combined with other European programmes, like ENI ones.

IPA II builds on the results already achieved by IPA I through the allocation of € 11.7 billion for the period 2014-2020. Current beneficiaries are: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo*, Montenegro, Serbia, and Turkey. Only Turkey and FYROM are eligible for the five components, while potential candidate countries in the Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, and Kosovo⁶) are eligible only for the first two components. IPA II sets a new framework for providing pre-accession assistance for the period 2014-2020 and it has been prepared in partnership with the beneficiaries.

A strategic focus is the most important innovation of IPA II. *Country Strategy Papers* are the specific strategic planning documents for each beneficiary for the 7-year period. These provide for a stronger ownership by the beneficiaries through integrating their own reform and development agendas. A *Multi-Country Strategy Paper* addresses priorities for regional or territorial cooperation. Indicative Strategy Papers can be downloaded in the following link: http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/news_corner/key-documents/index_en.htm?key_document=080126248ca659ce

IPA II is also concerned by thematic concentration. It targets reforms within pre-defined sectors covering areas closely linked to the enlargement strategy, such as democracy and governance, rule of law or growth and competitiveness. This approach promotes structural reform of a given sector, brings it up to EU standards, and allows more targeted assistance, ensuring efficiency, sustainability and focus on results. It also allows for a more systematic use of sector budget support. It also takes more into account the measurement of performance: indicators agreed with the beneficiaries can help assess to what extent the expected results have been achieved.

⁶ under UN Security Council Resolution 1244/99.

The IPA II regulation came into force on 16 March 2014 and is applicable retroactively from 1st January 2014. It is complemented by the *Common Implementing Regulation* (CIR), a set of simplified and harmonised rules and procedures for all external action instruments, as well as the IPA II Implementing Regulation Choose translations of the previous link adopted by the Commission on 2nd May 2014.

3. THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP

A very accurate piece of information about the Eastern Partnership (EaP) can be found in Wikipedia, explaining this initiative of the EU for its relationship with the post-Soviet states of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, to provide a venue for discussions on trade, economic strategy, travel agreements, and other issues between the EU and its eastern neighbours. It includes some elements of criticism that are worth to be read.

The architecture of the project was initiated by Poland in co-operation with Sweden. It was presented by their foreign ministers at the EU's General Affairs and External Relations Council in Brussels on 26th May 2008. It was discussed at the European Council on 19th and 20th June 2008, along with the *Union for the Mediterranean*.

The Czech Republic endorsed the proposal completely, while Bulgaria and Romania were cautious, fearing that the *Black Sea Forum for Partnership and Dialogue* and the *Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation* could be undermined. Meanwhile, Germany, France, and others were not quite happy with the possibility that the Eastern Partnership could be seen as a stepping stone to membership (especially for Ukraine), while Poland and other Eastern states explicitly welcomed this effect.

The Eastern Partnership was inaugurated by the EU in Prague on 7th May 2009, when the Czech Republic invited the leaders of the six members of the initiative. Meanwhile, Germany attended the summit to signal their alarm at the economic situation in the East. There were some discussions between the EU and the Russian Federation highlighting the importance of this area for both. The first meeting of foreign ministers in this framework was held on 8th December 2009 in Brussels.

The Eastern Partnership complements the Northern Dimension (ND) and the Union for the Mediterranean (UM) as an institutionalised forum to discuss visa agreements, free trade deals, and strategic partnership agreements with the EU's eastern neighbours, while avoiding the controversial topic of accession to the EU.

The core policy of the Eastern Partnership is the promotion of democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law, as well as the principles of market economy, sustainable development and good governance." The idea was to provide the foundation for new association agreements between the EU and those partners who have made sufficient progress towards the principles and values mentioned". Apart from values, the EU has declared the region to be of "strategic importance" and the EU has an "interest in developing an increasingly close relationship with its Eastern partners..."

The new generation of Association Agreements was negotiated with some countries on an individual basis. These replaced the *Partnership and Cooperation Agreements* concluded with partner countries (apart from Belarus) in the late 1990s. Many consider these agreements as merely symbolic; though the Eastern Partnership process envisages legal "approximation" and joint "institution building" leading to the creation of a new free-trade zone including the 28 EU States and the six partners. The policy would see visa-free travel to the EU for 76 million people – 46 million of them in Ukraine – living in the region. Steps toward "visa liberalisation" are to be taken on "a long-term perspective and on a case-by-case basis."





There are plans to model the concept on the *Stabilisation and Association Process* used by the EU in the Balkans, including a possible free trade area encompassing the countries in the region, similar to BAFTA⁷ or CEFTA⁸. A future membership perspective is not ruled out, either.

Regarding finances, the European Commission earmarked € 600 million for the six partner countries for the period 2010–2013 as part of the ENPI, about a quarter of the total funding for Eastern Partnership countries in that period. The funds were to be used for three main purposes⁹:

- * *Comprehensive Institution Building* programmes, aimed at supporting reforms (approximately €175 million);
- * *Pilot regional development* programmes, aimed at addressing regional economic and social disparities (approximately €75 million); and
- * *Implementation of the Eastern Partnership*, focusing on democracy, governance and stability, economic integration and convergence with EU policies, energy security, and contacts between people with the aim of bringing the partners closer to the EU (approximately €350 million).

Unlike the Union for the Mediterranean, the Eastern Partnership does not have its own secretariat, but it is controlled directly by the European Commission.

3.1 The Eastern Partnership and EU-Ukraine relations

Ukraine is one of six post-Soviet nations invited to co-operate with the EU within the multilateral framework that the Eastern partnership is expected to establish. However, Kiev pointed out that it remains pessimistic about the "added value" of this initiative. Indeed, Ukraine and the EU already started the negotiations on new, enhanced political and free-trade agreements (Association and Free-Trade Agreements) before the Russian-Ukrainian escalation.

Also, there was some progress in liberalising the visa regime despite persistent problems in the EU Member States' visa approach towards Ukrainians. Under the Eastern Partnership, Poland and Ukraine reached an agreement replacing visas with simplified permits for Ukrainians residing within 30 km of the border. Up to 1.5 million people may benefit from this agreement which took effect on 1 July 2009.

The approval of the political provisions of the Association Agreement with the EU in March 2014 is alleged to have provoked a revolution in Ukraine and the ousting of President Viktor Yanukovich, due to his refusal to sign the agreement. Russia, instead presented an association with customs union between Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Russia as an alternative. The EU and the new Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko signed the economic part of the Association Agreement on 27th June 2014, and described this as Ukraine's "first but most decisive step" towards EU membership. On 12th September 2014, provisional application of Title IV and related Annexes and Protocols was postponed to 31st December 2015. Provisional application of Titles III, V, VI and VII and related Annexes and Protocols came into force as of 1st November 2014.

⁷ The Baltic Free Trade Area (BALTA) was a free trade agreement between Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania that existed between 1994 and 2004. BAFTA was created to help prepare the countries for their accession to the EU. Hence, BAFTA was created more as an initiative of the EU than out of a desire of Baltic States to trade between themselves: they were more interested in gaining access to the rest of the European markets. On 1st May 2004, all three states joined the EU, and BAFTA ceased to exist. BAFTA was part of general co-operation between the three countries, modelled on Nordic co-operation (Nordic Council). Leaders met regularly and, as well as a free trade area, they formed a common visa area and started military co-operation due to the proximity of Russia.

⁸ The Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA) is a trade agreement between non-EU countries in Southeast Europe. As of 1st July 2013, the parties of the CEFTA agreement were Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia and the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) on behalf of Kosovo. Former parties were Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia. Their CEFTA memberships ended when they became member states of the European Union (EU). The original CEFTA agreement was signed by the Visegrád Group countries, i.e. by Poland, Hungary and Czech and Slovak republics (at the time parts of the Czech and Slovak Federative Republic) on 21st December 1992 in Kraków, Poland. It came into force in July 1994.

⁹ See the "Vademecum on Financing in the Frame of the Eastern Partnership", European External Action Service, last updated 24th September 2010: http://eeas.europa.eu/eastern/docs/eap_vademecum_en.pdf



Now we know that there are different views of the Eastern Partnership in different parts of Ukraine, being very difficult to foresee what is going to happen in the near future. When preparing this report, the situation in Eastern Ukraine is unclear, as well as its effects in the relationship with the EU.

3.2 Relationship with the Russian Federation

Russia voiced concerns over the Eastern Partnership since the very beginning of the process, while the European Union stressed that “the Eastern Partnership is not about spheres of influence in the quest for oil”. Russia also expressed concerns about too much pressure on Belarus due to their possible recognition of independence of the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The case of Ukraine was very strategic in the process, installed in the dilemma of joining the EU or a “custom union” with Russia and other CIS countries. Then, in 2014-2015, the escalation of events in Eastern Ukraine makes very difficult to see the future evolution. How the current situation between Russia-Ukraine and the EU will affect the Eastern Partnership is a main question mark. The capacities of the European External Action Service and the EU Member States face an enormous challenge at the very time of writing this paper.

This is a main challenge for the EEAS: the coordination of positions in a comprehensive approach towards such complicated situation. Russia is a sovereign and powerful state which should be a strategic partner of the EU for many reasons. A clear agreement on Ukraine should be established. And then, guarantees for current and potential cross-border programmes should be guaranteed, especially at the Russian-Ukrainian border, based on existing CBC structures (euroregions) and on the experience developed at the borders between the Russian Federation, the EU and Norway (e.g. Kolarctic or Barents Cooperation).

3.3 The Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum

The Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum (CSF) is an integral part of the Eastern Partnership program and creates a significant and institutional platform for civil society organisations to monitor and discuss the developments regarding democracy building and human rights development in the six partnership countries. It consists of six national platforms and five thematic working groups. The CSF meets annually to discuss the latest developments and to set their working program. It has promoted the implementation of several major projects and it is campaigning for an EU response to the situation of Human Rights in Azerbaijan. It is also preparing to monitor the Association Agreements planned in the ENP between the EU and Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.

3.4 Some criticism from scratch and latest developments

Although the Eastern Partnership was inaugurated on 7th May 2009, academic research critically analysing the policy became available by early 2010. Research findings from a UK ESRC (Economic and Social Research Council) research project examining the EU's relations with three Eastern Partnership member states, Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova noted both conceptual and empirical dilemmas. First, conceptually the EU has limited uniform awareness of what it is trying to promote in its eastern neighbourhood under the aegis of 'shared values', 'collective norms' and 'joint ownership'. Secondly, empirically, the EU seems to favour a 'top-down' governance approach (based on rule/norm transfer and conditionality) in its relations with outsiders, which is clearly at odds with a voluntary idea of 'partnership', explicitly limits the input of 'the other' in the process of reform and hamper their ownership and accountability. On the other hand, the promotion of a bottom-up approach may mobilize new energies, more connected with the citizens, their needs and values and, of course, including the valuable inputs of LRAs and civil society.

This is an overview (only headlines) of the news appeared at the EEAS website, They can be read by accessing through this link: http://eeas.europa.eu/eastern/news/index_en.htm



- * 26/04/2014, G-7 Leaders Statement on Ukraine
- * 25/04/2011, EU-Ukraine: Commissioner Füle met with Minister Deshchytzia in Prague
- * 25/04/2014, Speech: Time to show stronger, more resolute and determined Eastern Partnership. As the EU has expanded, these countries have become closer neighbours, and their security, stability and prosperity increasingly affect the EU's. Closer cooperation with its eastern European partners is very important for the EU's external relations.
- * 25/04/2014, Speech: Time to show stronger, more resolute and determined Eastern Partnership, Štefan Füle, European Commissioner for Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policy
- * 29/04/2014, Eastern European partners deserve a different future
- * 30/04/2014, Judicial cooperation between BiH and Montenegro
- * 05/05/2014, Statement to the media after meeting with President of the Republic of Serbia Tomislav Nikolić
- * 06/05/2014, Closer to the EU: additional funding for Georgia and Moldova
- * 06/05/2014, Statement by Commissioner Štefan Füle following the meeting with Prime Minister Hashim Thaçi, Prime Minister of Kosovo
- * 09/05/2014, Fact sheet on the Eastern Partnership, issued in occasion of the Day of Europe
- * 12/05/2014, Remarks by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton following the Foreign Affairs Council
- * 13/05/2014, Joint statement after the meeting between the European Commission and the Ukrainian Government
- * 14/05/2014, EU's support to partners in transition links values with economic and social progress
- * 15/05/2014, Joint statement following the meeting between the European Commission and the Government of the Republic of Moldova
- * 15/05/2014, European Commission's support to the Republic of Moldova
- * 19/05/2014, EIB supports construction of Beskyd railway tunnel linking Ukraine with the EU, within the Eastern Partnership regional network
- * 21/05/2014, Joint statement following the meeting between the European Commission and the Government of Georgia
- * 21/05/2014, European Commission's support to Georgia
- * 21/05/2014, Statement on the adoption of the Memorandum of Peace and Concord by the Parliament of Ukraine
- * 23/05/2014, Increased EU support for the OSCE's work in Ukraine
- * 08/06/2014, Statement by the Spokesperson on the elections in the breakaway region of South Ossetia in Georgia
- * 12/06/2014, Remarks by President Barroso following his meeting with the Prime Minister of Moldova, Iurie Leancă
- * 12/06/2014, Opening remarks at the Moldova Investment Conference



- * 12/06/2014, Frequently asked questions about Ukraine, the EU's Eastern Partnership and the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement
- * 13/06/2014, Remarks by President Barroso following his meeting the President of Georgia, Giorgi Margvelashvili
- * 13/06/2014, EU releases €250 million of grants to support Ukraine
- * 13/06/2014, Remarks by President Barroso following his meeting with the Prime Minister of Georgia, Irakli Garibashvili
- * 14/06/2014, Speaking points for President Barroso's press point with President Aliyev von Azerbaijan
- * 17/06/2014, Statement by the Spokesperson on the local government elections in Georgia
- * 19/06/2014, Statement by the Spokesperson on recent deaths of journalists and a civic activist in eastern Ukraine
- * 20/06/2014, Statement on the peace plan announced by President Poroshenko of Ukraine
- * 23/06/2014, The EU's Association Agreements with Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine
 - * 23/06/2014, Remarks by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton following the Foreign Affairs Council
 - * 26/06/2014, EU and the Republic of Moldova adopt Association Agenda
 - * 26/06/2014, EU and Georgia adopt Association Agenda
 - * 27/06/2014, Remarks by President Barroso at the signing of the Association Agreements with Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine
 - * 29/06/2014, Statement by the Spokesperson on the release of OSCE Special Monitoring Mission monitors
- * 03/07/2014, Statement by the Spokesperson on media freedom and the safety of journalists in Eastern Ukraine
- * 04/07/2014, High level meeting to coordinate international support for Ukraine
- * 04/07/2014, EU-Ukraine Human Rights Dialogue
- * 08/07/2014, Speech: Making support for Ukraine more effective
- * 08/07/2014, High Level Meeting on Ukraine: Coordinating and Implementing the International Support
- * 16/07/2014, Conclusions of Donors conference for Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina "Rebuilding Together"
- * 16/07/2014, Speech: Rebuilding together, by Štefan Füle European Commissioner for Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policy, at the International donors' conference for Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia after the floods Brussels
- * 17/07/2014, Speech: Eastern Partnership reached important historic milestone., says European Commissioner Štefan Füle for Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policy
- * 17/07/2014, Statement by the Spokesperson on kidnapped Ukrainian military pilot





- * 22/07/2014, Opening remarks by Commissioner Füle at the plenary session of the Foreign Affairs Council on Eastern Partnership
- * 22/07/2014, Remarks by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton upon arrival at Foreign Affairs Council, 22 July 2014
- * 22/07/2014, Fact sheet: The European Union and Belarus (updated)
- * 22/07/2014, Statement by the Spokesperson on the first meeting of the Working Group on Mitrovica bridge
- * 29/07/2014, European Union supports key reforms in the Republic of Moldova
- * 31/07/2014, Statement by the Spokespersons on criminal charges being filed against former President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili
- * 08/08/2014, EUAM (European Union Advisory Mission for Civilian Security Sector Reform) Ukraine Head of Mission Kálmán Mizsei arrives in Kyiv
- * 12/08/2014, Statement by the Spokesperson following today's extraordinary meeting of the Political and Security Committee
- * 15/08/2014, Remarks by High Representative Catherine Ashton on arrival at the extraordinary Foreign Affairs Council
- * 15/08/2014, Remarks by High Representative Catherine Ashton, following the extraordinary Foreign Affairs Council, Brussels
- * 26/08/2014, Press remarks of the EU representatives at Minsk meetings, particularly the meeting between President Poroshenko and President Putin
- * 09/09/2014, EU-Eastern Partnership meeting in Baku: next steps to enhance relations
- * 11/09/2014, EU scales up its assistance for the conflict-affected people in Ukraine. The European Commission is mobilising funding of €22 million to assist the population of Ukrainian regions suffering from the consequences of the conflict.
- * 11/09/2014, Herman Van Rompuy on further EU restrictive measures against Russia 11/09/2014, Reinforced restrictive measures against Russia
- * 12/09/2014, Fact Sheet – EU-Ukraine relations (Updated) 12/09/2014, Statement by President Barroso following his meeting with Petro Poroshenko, President of Ukraine
- * 12/09/2014, Joint Ministerial Statement on the Implementation of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement
- * 12/09/2014, José Manuel Durão Barroso's Speech : Working together for a united Ukraine in a united continent
- * 15/09/2014, Statement on the reported holding of local "elections" in Crimea
- * 15/09/2014, Statement by the Spokesperson on the second Russian "humanitarian convoy" dispatched to Eastern Ukraine



- * 15/09/2014, President Barroso's phone call with President Putin
- * 16/09/2014, EU-Ukraine: there is no time to rest
- * 16/09/2014, Joint statement by José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission, and Herman Van Rompuy, President of the European Council, on the ratification of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement
- * 18/09/2014, Statement by the Spokesperson on the ongoing intimidation of Medzhlis of Crimean Tatars in Crimea
- * 21/09/2014, Statement on the ceasefire implementation agreement in Ukraine
- * 02/10/2014, Statement by the Spokesperson on violations of the ceasefire in Eastern Ukraine
- * 02/10/2014, Statement by the Spokesperson on attacks in Iraq and Syria
- * 03/10/2014, EU and Eastern Partners enhance cooperation on CSDP
- * 03/10/2014, Joint statement by HR/VP Catherine Ashton and Commissioner Kristalina Georgieva on the killing of a Red Cross worker in Eastern Ukraine
 - * 20/10/2014, Catherine Ashton upon arrival at the Foreign Affairs Council
 - * 27/10/2014, Joint statement on the parliamentary elections in Ukraine by the President of the European Commission José Manuel Barroso and the President of the European Council Herman Van Rompuy
 - * 29/10/2014, Statement by the Spokesperson on early local elections in Eastern Ukraine
 - * 01/12/2014, Joint Statement on the parliamentary elections in the Republic of Moldova
- * 13/01/2015, Statement by the Spokesperson on the death of civilians in eastern Ukraine
- * 27/01/2015; Statement by the Spokesperson on the call of High Representative Federica Mogherini with Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko
- * 18/02/2015, Statement by High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini on the violation of the ceasefire in Debaltseve.
- * 03/03/2015, Statement by the Spokesperson on the refusal to allow MEP Sandra Kalniete enter the territory of the Russian Federation.
- * 04/03/2015, Press release – Towards a new European Neighbourhood Policy: the EU launches a consultation on the future of its relations with neighbouring countries.
- * 04/03/2015, Watch the video - Towards a new European Neighbourhood Policy: the EU launches a consultation on the future of its relations with neighbouring countries.
- * 16/04/2015, Statement by the Spokesperson on the sentencing of Rasul Jafarov, a prominent Human Rights Defender in Azerbaijan.
- * 04/03/2015, Joint press conference by High Representative/ Vice-President Federica MOGHERINI and Commissioner Johannes HAHN on European Neighbourhood Policy Review.





- * 01/04/2015, Statement by the Spokesperson on the shutdown of Crimean Tatar ATR TV
- * 16/04/2015, Statement by the Spokesperson on the sentencing of Rasul Jafarov, a prominent Human Rights Defender in Azerbaijan.
- * 26/04/2015, Statement by High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini following her call with Foreign Minister of Ukraine, Pavlo Klimkin.
- * 07/05/2015, Eastern Partnership Ministerial Meeting on Trade
- * 21-22/05/2015, Eastern Partnership summit, Riga. At the occasion of the fourth Eastern Partnership summit in Riga, EU leaders met representatives of the EaP partner countries to reconfirm the importance the EU attaches to its Eastern Partnership (EaP).
- * 21/05/2015, The Eastern Partnership – a policy that delivers
- * 22/05/2015, Joint Declaration of the Eastern Partnership summit (Riga, 21-22 May 2015)

4. THE ROLE OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES (LRAS) IN THE EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY

The participation of LRAs has been promoted very much within the ENP, particularly in Cross-Border Cooperation (CBC) and other territorial cooperation programmes. Nevertheless most relevant activities are usually implemented by national authorities (top-down approach). Until now there has not been a clear place-based approach in these territories with functioning structures like those developed in the EU during the last twenty years. But there are evidences of a growing political will to develop, strengthen and support decentralized cooperation. There is no doubt that LRAs, as well as NGOs, are playing a growing role in many fields. National governments are also focusing and strengthening this role, even in countries where the sub-national level is underdeveloped or practically irrelevant. They have acknowledged the importance of involving LRAs to promote good governance, especially in border territories, but real implementation of their participation is difficult due to the lack of financial means and technical capacity. The latter is being improved lately and this will pressurize national agendas from the bottom. As a consequence, the participation of the sub-national level should become a main factor for the development of these areas in the new programming period.

The participation of local authorities is becoming more important and they could play a crucial role to involve all sectors of society in development and, in the case of border regions, to be aware of their proximity to the neighbouring country. Therefore, cultural, historical, economic, and social aspects of mutual interest are acknowledged and valued as maximising element for their successful development. This needs to be perceived by stakeholders as an own process (developing accountability through empowerment).

4.1 Current situation and perspectives

Up to now there is no targeted staff training enough for this type of programmes addressed to LRAs. It would be ideal to build these capacities, so that LRAs could develop common programmes or strategies, organise permanent collaboration, and establish institutions/structures for cooperation and, in this way, create necessary added value for their citizens. With a view to targeted training, we will use the example of CBC to identify a series of challenges to be addressed:

- * to avoid the terms “administration level” and “competences” for a cross-border structure. It is only about “practicable instruments” to cooperate and the “execution of necessary cross-border tasks”;
- * not to compare structures, competences, legislation, etc., on both sides of a border (they will never be or become comparable);
- * to overcome the lack of expertise and skills of the LRAs and relevant organisations in the field of CBC;
- * to build up communication and exchange mechanisms based on a system of trust and to contribute to change people’s attitudes, perceptions and approaches;
- * to encourage a bottom-up approach in regional/local development (in close partnership with the respective national authorities), involving all key actors and taking into account the targeted regional specific conditions (geographic, economic, social, cultural and political);
- * to build up trust as the main element for future successful CBC.

On the other hand, in Western Europe it turned out that the regional/local level is the most suitable to implement CBC (in partnership with the national authorities on both sides of a border, and the EU), because:

- * the actors on site are the most familiar with the cultural, social, geographical, economic and political conditions, as well as with obstacles and problems for cooperation;
- * they do not only know about barriers and problems, but are also able to offer very practical solutions;
- * they have the strongest interest in successful CBC, as their daily life is concerned;
- * they are more interested in practical cooperation based on partnership than in clarification of questions of competence (always on table when the national level is involved);
- * step-by-step development of CBC (first the tasks, then the structure).

Successful cooperation will depend on functional partnership. And, partnership within a decentralised structure for CBC would require:

- * External partnership with the national governments on both sides of the border, because of political, strategic and financial reasons. National plans/programmes have to be taken into account. Political and financial support is needed.
- * Internal partnership in order to involve all actors within a cross-border area (economic, social, cultural actors, public authorities and equivalent bodies, NGOs) to mobilise already available knowledge at national level for CBC.



Handling partnership in this way will avoid any conflict of competences and will not build up new bureaucratic structures. Here, it is important to mention that the definition of a cross-border area is not purely depending on administrative and geographical factors. In Western Europe most partners cooperate because they have identified common interests/concerns, joint issues and problems.

4.2 Measures involving LRAs in CBC Operational Programmes within the ENPI 2007-2013

In the period 2007-2013 there were 13 Operational Programmes within ENPI CBC with a growing participation of LRAs. Most of these programmes are not finished yet in the middle of 2015. INTERACT¹⁰ elaborated factsheets on every of them and here the links to the full version of these factsheets can be found. There links to the official websites of every programme can also be found.

Most measures have an impact in local and regional development, being the overall objective of the programmes to intensify and deepen the cooperation in all fields between regional, county and local authorities in the eligible areas. We have selected those priorities and main measures for LRAs in all ENPI CBC programmes. And we have chosen to present first the Black Sea Programme, which can be of upmost interest for Eurasian stakeholders:

* **Interact** (2013) Fact Sheet *Black Sea Basin* Programme [AM, BG, GE, GR, MD, RO, TR, UA (AZ, RU)]:
http://enpi.interact-eu.net/downloads/1307/INTERACT_Factsheet_ENPI_CBC_Black_Sea_Basin_Programme_2013.pdf

- Priority 1 “Supporting cross border partnerships for economic and social development” includes the following measures:
 - Strengthening accessibility and connectivity for new intra-regional information, communication, transport and trade links.
 - Creation of tourism networks in order to promote joint tourism development initiatives and traditional products.
 - Creation of administrative capacity for the design and implementation of local development policies.
- Priority 2 “Sharing resources and competencies for environmental protection and conservation”:
 - Strengthening the joint knowledge and information base needed to address common challenges in the environmental protection of river and maritime systems.
 - Promoting research, innovation and awareness in conservation and environmental protection for protected natural areas.
 - Promotion of cooperation initiatives aimed at innovation in technologies and management of solid waste and wastewater management system.
- Priority 3 “Supporting cultural and educational initiatives for the establishment of a common cultural environment in the Basin”:
 - Promoting cultural networking and educational exchange in the Black Sea Basin communities.

* **Interact** (2013) Fact Sheet *South-East Finland-Russia* Programme:

- http://enpi.interact-eu.net/downloads/1318/Factsheet_ENPI_CBC_South_East_Finland_Russia_Programme_2013.pdf
- Priority 1 “Economic development” includes many joint measures to strengthen local and regional sustainable economic development in the programme area, including rural development.
 - Priority 2 “Common challenges - border-crossing and the environment” also includes many measures on security, transit and management of the border, through the cooperation between LRAs and organisations in order to minimise risks.
 - Priority 3 “Social development and civic society” includes measures to strengthen people-to-people and civic society contacts at regional and local levels, as well as to enhance cross-border contacts between civic society groups and NGOs in view of promoting local governance and mutual understanding.

¹⁰ The network for cooperation and exchange between territorial cooperation programmes, operational since Interreg III.

* **Interact** (2013) Fact Sheet *Baltic Sea Region* Programme [BY, DE, DK, EE, FI, LV, LT, NO, PL, SE (RU)]:
http://enpi.interact-eu.net/downloads/1308/INTERACT_Factsheet_ENPI_CBC_Baltic_Sea_Region_Programme_2013.pdf

- Priority 1 “Generation and dissemination of innovations across the Baltic Sea Region” also includes selected non-technical innovations, and making special social groups of citizens better at generating and absorbing knowledge.
- Priority 2 “improving the external and internal accessibility” highlights the promotion and preparation of joint transnational solutions in the field of transport ICT overcoming functional barriers.
- Priority 3 “environmental pollution” stresses a broader framework of sustainable management of the sea resources.
- Priority 4 “cooperation of metropolitan regions, cities and rural areas” enhances its attractiveness for citizens and investors, including the strengthening of urban-rural partnerships. The priority is also open to prepare a pan-Baltic strategies, action programmes, policies and subsequent investments. A special feature under this priority is joint actions dedicated to the social sphere of regional and city development.

* **Interact** (2013) Fact Sheet *Estonia/Latvia/Russia* Programme:
http://enpi.interact-eu.net/downloads/1317/INTERACT_Factsheet_ENPI_CBC_Estonia_Latvia_Russia_Programme_2013.pdf

- Priority 3 “Promotion of People-to-People Cooperation” promotes small scale activities to develop local initiatives, and to increase administrative capacities of LRAs.

* **Interact** (2013) Fact Sheet *Hungary–Slovakia–Romania–Ukraine* Programme:
http://enpi.interact-eu.net/downloads/1312/INTERACT_Factsheet_ENPI_CBC_Hungary_Slovakia_Romania_Ukraine_Programme_2013.pdf

- Both priority 1 “Promoting economic and social development” and 2 “Enhance environmental quality” stress the need to face jointly the development, sustainability and attractiveness of the eligible regions.

* **Interact** (2009) Fact Sheet *Italy-Tunisia* Programme:
http://enpi.interact-eu.net/downloads/1309/INTERACT_Factsheet_ENPI_CBC_Italy_Tunisia_Programme_2009.pdf

- Priority 1 “Regional development and integration” includes the support to institutional cooperation (regional organisations, chambers of commerce ...) for local development purposes.

* **Interact** (2013) Fact Sheet *Karelia* Programme (FI-RU):
http://enpi.interact-eu.net/downloads/1319/INTERACT_Factsheet_ENPI_CBC_Karelia_Programme_2013.pdf

- Priority 1 “Economic development” and priority 2 “Quality of life” focuses on increasing cross-border activity in many fields: economic, business, tourism, services, wellbeing, environment, society, etc., which means a stronger involvement of local and regional players.

* **Interact** (2013) Fact Sheet *Kolarctic* Programme (FI, NO, RU, SE):
http://enpi.interact-eu.net/downloads/1320/INTERACT_Factsheet_ENPI_CBC_Kolarctic_Programme_2013.pdf

- Priority 1 “Economic and social development” stresses to focus on the specific needs of the participating regions.
- Priority 2 “Common challenges” stresses the need to jointly face common issues.
- Priority 3 “People-to-people cooperation and identity building” highlights local governance and mutual understanding between all stakeholders.

* **Interact** (2013) Fact Sheet *Latvia/Lithuania/Belarus* Programme: http://enpi.interact-eu.net/downloads/1316/INTERACT_Factsheet_ENPI_CBC_Latvia_Lithuania_Belarus_Programme_2013.pdf

- Priority 1 “Promoting sustainable cross border development and social development” includes common regional and local development/territorial planning.



→ Priority 2 “Addressing common challenges” stresses coordination and joint planning, with a strong focus on the protection and sustainable management of the environment.

* **Interact** (2013) Fact Sheet *Lithuania-Poland-Russia* Programme:

http://enpi.interact-eu.net/downloads/1314/INTERACT_Factsheet_ENPI_CBC_Lithuania_Poland_Russia_Programme_2013.pdf

→ Priority 2 “Pursuing social, economic and spatial development” includes, amongst other measures, the development of human potential by improvement of social conditions, governance and educational opportunities, as well as joint spatial and socio-economic planning.

→ Priority 3 (Horizontal priority) “people-to-people cooperation” aims at developing local initiatives to increase the administrative capacity of LRAs.

* **Interact** (2009) Fact Sheet *Mediterranean Sea Basin* Programme (CY, DZ, EG, ES, FR, GR, IT, MA, LY, MT, PT, TN, TR, UK,):

http://enpi.interact-eu.net/downloads/1306/INTERACT_Factsheet_ENPI_CBC_Mediterranean_Sea_Basin_Programme_2009.pdf

→ Priority 1 “Promotion of socio-economic development and enhancement of territories” stresses innovation, research, and the creation of economic clusters in local development.

→ Priority 4 “Promotion of cultural dialogue and local governance” includes the improvement of governance processes at local level.

* **Interact** (2013) Fact Sheet ENPI CBC *Poland-Belarus-Ukraine* Programme:

http://enpi.interact-eu.net/downloads/1313/INTERACT_Factsheet_ENPI_CBC_Poland_Belarus_Ukraine_Programme_2013.pdf

→ Priority 3 “Networking and people-to-people cooperation” includes regional and local CBC capacity building, as well as local communities’ initiatives.

* **Interact** (2013) Fact Sheet ENPI CBC *Romania, Ukraine and Republic of Moldova* Programme:

http://enpi.interact-eu.net/downloads/1311/INTERACT_Factsheet_ENPI_CBC_Romania_Ukraine_Republic_of_Moldova_Programme_2013.pdf

→ Priority 1 “Towards a more competitive border economy”, includes the improvement of productivity and competitiveness of the region’s urban and rural areas by working across borders as well as cross-border initiatives in transport, border infrastructure and energy.

→ Priority 2 “Environmental challenges and emergency preparedness” includes water and sewage management systems as well as environmental emergencies.

→ Priority 3 “People-to-people cooperation” promotes greater interaction between people and communities living in border areas, including local and regional governance; support to civil society and local communities.

See also in this document the section “How does the new European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) look like for the period 2014-2020?”

4.3 Some recommendations for LRAs

Regional networks and local and regional partners in Western Europe have already recommended very strongly that LRAs should take part in the processes to determine the programmes. These processes have happened in 2014 both in the EU, at the external borders, and within the Neighbourhood countries. It is very important for LRAs to take direct or indirect part in these processes. LRAs should get involved from scratch, from the definition of concepts, strategies and indicators to the design of the implementation processes and evaluation procedures.

Taking again the example of decentralised CBC, practising it at regional/local level in partnership with national governments and supra-national or inter-governmental organisations is the most suitable instrument to pave the way for a new quality of borders as meeting places offering a wide range of opportunities. At the same time there is a chance to transform the national peripheral situation of border areas in many countries into a more favourable internal position within the continent. CBC is not about abolishing borders, but reducing them to administrative limits like those between provinces and departments.

This requires the following framework conditions and steps:

- * Political will of all states concerned.
- * Bottom-up approach, where regional/local actors play the main role in partnership with the national government (external partnership, avoiding conflicts of competences).
- * Involvement of politicians at all levels from both sides of the border to build up lobby in favour of CBC.
- * Hands-on participation of all actors in both sides of the border (public, private and public-equivalent bodies, NGOs, universities, etc.) in order to create a solid basis for CBC by using already existing knowledge on both sides of the border (internal partnership, avoiding conflicts of competences).
- * Awareness that socio-cultural cooperation is as important as economic cooperation (and often a precondition for successful CBC as a whole).
- * In the starting phase, informal cooperation based on private law.
- * At the end, creation of permanent cross-border structures based on public law¹¹.

It is recommended to use the following instruments:

- * permanent advisory support and training (on-site or web-based);
- * exchange of experiences on best practices and information;
- * workshops and seminars, including targeted training;
- * international conferences.

Permanent advisory support and training should be taken very much into account and has to be secured by a team of experts with European-wide practical and strategic expertise in cooperation (drafting and implementing joint programmes and projects, legal aspects and structures, evaluation) together with local experts. Without this practical and European-wide experience the aim “to help actors at regional/local level to help themselves” cannot be achieved and consultants will remain the main actors in the field.

For cross-border programmes, but also valid for any other programme with a permanence aim, a multi-annual approach is needed as well. The experience in Western Europe shows that, in the “old” EU, CBC developed quite fast with targeted training by qualified experts over more than one decade. Under the regulation of PHARE-CBC and TACIS-CBC programmes in the new member states and third countries, the period for training and advice lasted only a few months, while the need for support was much stronger. And many different experts with strong varying ideas for CBC have been involved.

As a result advice and training were not consistent, stopped after one year at most, and were not completed. People on the ground contributed with some new expertise, but also very different practices, and were always expecting a new contract. Most of them finally left to other jobs where they could capitalise their knowledge. And, when advice and training started up again after the break, they had to be implemented from zero.

¹¹ Euroregions or similar structures, founded under the *Madrid Outline Convention* (Council of Europe, 1980), *European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation* (EGTCs) at the internal and external borders of the EU, or *Euroregional Groupings of Cooperation* (EGC), created under the Third Additional Protocol to the Madrid Outline Convention.



Besides, with sound capacity building at regional/local level and a more sustainable and strategic CBC the following practical results can be achieved step by step:

- * stronger bottom-up approach;
- * better distribution of tasks and responsibilities;
- * genuine cross-border programmes and projects;
- * solutions for daily border problems;
- * solutions for social problems;
- * improving CBC of SMEs;
- * development of new CBC between manufacturers and suppliers;
- * intensified cooperation in sectors like health, environment, innovation and research, and tourism;
- * improved cooperation in education, especially bilingual schools;
- * stronger role of universities through cooperation in targeted analyses and studies (cross-border infrastructure, environment, diversification of economy, service sector, development of city centres, spatial planning);
- * creation of a network for a cross-border labour market through cooperation between workers, trade unions and public authorities;
- * promotion of cross-border vocational training and the mutual acknowledgement of national qualifications;
- * creation of cross-border commercial sites;
- * long-term cross-border development plans taken into account in national programmes;
- * CBC between police, customs and border police departments.

ENI and IPA II open many new possibilities through main actions included in the agreements, but there are also instruments for smaller actions such as:

- * **TAIEX**, the Technical Assistance and Information Exchange instrument of the European Commission to support public administrations with regard to the approximation, application and enforcement of EU legislation as well as facilitating the sharing of EU best practices. Eligible actions are workshops, expert missions and study visits: <http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/tenders/taix/>
- * **TWINNING**, originally designed to help candidate countries acquire the necessary skills and experience to adopt, implement and enforce EU legislation, since 2004 is also available to some of the eastern and southern Neighbourhood partner countries.
- * **SIGMA** (Support for Improvement in Governance and Management), a joint European Commission and OECD initiative to strengthen public management: <http://www.sigmaweb.org/about/>

In general, there is plenty of information available at the EU Info Points, in Internet, through national and international associations of local and regional authorities, and through initiatives such as Platforma, the European voice of LRAs to promote development and decentralized cooperation.







PLATFORMA

The European voice of **Local** and
Regional authorities for development

www.platforma-dev.eu

Secretariat ensured by CEMR

Square de Meeûs, 1

B-1000 Brussels

Tel: +32 2 265 09 30



With the financial support of the European Commission

The Commission is not responsible for any use
that may be made of the information contained therein