The European Neighbourhood Policy: A Framework for Modernisation?

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European University Institute
1-2 December 2006
Badia Fiesolana
The Theatre

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European Neighbourhood Policy, 2004-2006: the growing need for a Strategy
The European Union’s decision to extend the area of democratic stability and freedom around Europe of 25, (ring of friends) was a promising signal of growing identity and a readiness to act outside its own, newly enlarged, territory. The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) is great and needed plan: had it not been existed, it should be invented! However, after 2 years in operation, the initial hopes seem bleakly while the concerns are growing. The coincidence between the Enlargement of 1 May 2004 and the ENP, launched 12 days later, was carefully planned to send the message that policy of enlargement will be replaced by the good neighbourhood policy. This policy change was, from the beginning, disputed by some new member states which preferred to keep the membership perspective open for those ENP’s partner countries (5-6 countries among 16) which have vocation europeenne, as Poland did in case of Ukraine. In turn, the south-western member countries prefer the Mediterranean focus for the ENP and see it as a sort of extension and continuation of the Barcelona process. This difference of approach was never seriously debated in the EU and the existing division may hamper the progress of the ENP as a strategy. Another important assumption of the ENP which was, without debate, taken for granted, is that:

“This privileged relationship with neighbours will build on mutual commitment to common values (underlined by A.H.) principally within the fields of the rule of law,

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2 P. Buras and K. Pomorska, The Eastern Focus of Polish Policy towards the ENP, Centre for Eastern Studies, Warsaw 2006, p.34: “Drawing Ukraine closer to the Union and granting Kiev the prospect of EU membership is part of the Polish raison d’etat (...) Consequently, as long as the ENP does not address this crucial issue of Polish foreign policy it is not likely that Poland will fullheartedly share its objectives or priorities…”
good governance, the respect for human rights, including minority rights, the promotion of good neighbourly relations, and the principles of market economy and sustainable development.”

The alleged existence of “mutual commitments to common values” is a risky point of departure and this hypothesis was never proved. The good experiences imported into the ENP from Central Europe’s accession process and 2004 enlargement can hardly give the rationale for this assumption. Many arguments might be used to show that the experiences of 2004 enlargement cannot be the base for the ENP (membership perspective, common attitude on Europeanization, democratization and modernization, common threats’ perception, cultural and religion proximity, positive historical links).

Europe, embracing present 25 members of the EU, has had turbulent relations with the regions covered by the ENP now. Their warrior empires conquered and kept for centuries vast lands of Spain, Balkans, Greece and Russia, approached southern Poland, Bohemia, Hungary and suburbs of Vienna in 1683. In turn, the whole area of Northern Africa and Middle East was in XIX-XX centuries subordinated to European colonial rules, often harsh and they are still present in peoples’ memories. Also, the present situation in European neighbourhood is far from stable: “The EU is surrounded by an arc of instability, running from Belarus in the north east, down through Ukraine and Moldova, into the Western Balkans, across the Black Sea to the Caucasus, down into the Middle East and westward into North Africa”

In fact, this is the most turbulent region on the globe where directly meet three world’s religions and strategic interests of the EU, United States and Russia, as well as Turkey and Iran. The political systems in the EU’s neighbourhood are composed of regime types ranging from new but weak democracies to regimes with authoritarian features and limited political participation. The relations, always uneasy, have been worsened further after terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 and “war on terrorism” declared by the USA. Numerous tensions and claims concentrate around basic values, such as freedom, human rights, open society, religion. The general socio-political frame for these tensions was built since ages on the mirror contrasting threats’ perceptions, where both sides have been watching each other with

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the fear, mistrust and little understanding. Today, both sides seem dissatisfied and frustrated. The partners do not know or understand each other well, and disrespect too often: Christians feel endangered, while Muslims feel offended.\footnote{T. Garton Ash, Islam in Europe, The New York Review of the Books, vol.53, no 15, Oct.5 2006, opines that “Europe’s difficulties with its Muslims are also the subject of hysterical oversimplification (…) As an inhabitant of Eurabia, I must insist on a few elementary distinctions. For a start, are we talking about Islam, Muslims, Islamists, Arabs, immigrants, darker-skinned people, or terrorists? These are seven different things. (…) In the relationship with Islam as a religion, it makes sense to encourage those versions of Islam that are compatible with the fundamentals of a modern, liberal, and democratic Europe. (…) Islamic reformers such as Tariq Ramadan (…) insists that Islam, properly interpreted, need not conflict with a democratic Europe. Where the Eurabianists imply that “more Muslim Europeans means more terrorists,” Ramadan suggests that the more Muslim Europeans there are, the less likely they are to become terrorists (…) that you can be both a good Muslim and a good European.”}

According to Arab Human Development Report prepared by the United Nations Development Program, there are three basic deficits in Arab countries: 1/ a freedom deficit in political and civil liberties; 2/ a knowledge deficit in terms of education and access to information; 3/ a gender deficit (women’s empowerment). These deficits, combined with world’s lowest growth \textit{per capita} (except Sub-Saharan Africa), until eliminated, will block the structural reforms, which must go far beyond the economic realm and must encompass the social and political sphere as well. Thus, the ground for the ENP’s implementation is highly unstable. That mix of politico-social deficits and mutual poor understanding, makes the ENP a challenge of strategic importance and this is why the ENP’s both, the success or failure, might become a real test for EU’s external relations, its stability and viability.

After two years since its launching in May 2004, things go rather badly in the vast regions covered by the ENP. According to the Commissioner responsible for the ENP, Benita Ferrero-Waldner, this policy “…is facing a delicate mixture of relative slow economic growth and entrenched poverty, coupled with strong population growth and an instable political environment”. One cannot speak on real progress and “the region has been losing market share in global trade and investment flows”, and nobody knows “how to turn this vicious circle into a virtuous one?”\footnote{Benita Ferrero-Waldner, The German World Bank Forum in Hamburg, 2 June 2006.}

The same applies, in her opinion, to Southern Caucasus:

“Generally however, the last weeks and months have shown worrying trends in the South Caucasus. Three negative strands are coming together, the combination of
which is, frankly, alarming. First, we have seen little or no progress towards settling any of the frozen conflicts - Abkhazia, Nagorno-Karabakh, South Ossetia. All parties have failed to deliver on their responsibility to find a solution. Second, defence expenditure in the region is going through the roof. Quite apart from the negative message this sends for resolving the conflicts, this cannot be good policymaking in a region where human development indicators are a matter of deep concern. How can governments justify spiralling defence spending when their countries are in desperate need of investment in education, health and small businesses? Third, increasingly inflammatory rhetoric, as we have seen over the past months, is shaping public opinion in a counterproductive direction. There is a serious danger of the rhetoric lowering the threshold for war.\textsuperscript{7}

Other European Union’s institutions: the European Parliament, the Committee of the Regions, and the Economic and Social Committee (ECOSOC), while generally supporting the idea, expressed also critical opinions on the progress of the ENP and its main shortcomings: bureaucratic instead of wide scale political action, weak cooperation with other players and among partner countries, too weak incentives, neglecting social dialogue and the role of the small and medium size enterprises...

The European Parliament:

Emphasizes the need to establish an effective monitoring mechanism and a readiness to restrict or suspend aid and even to cancel agreements with countries which violate international and European standards of respect for human rights and democracy, and calls on the European Commission to operate a vigorous policy of support for democratic forces in those neighbour countries, in particular by ensuring access to independent media and information.\textsuperscript{8}

The ECOSOC is concerned at no real role for the social dialogue in the ENP:

Unfortunately, none of the documents examined (Commission documents and Action Plans), apart from a few vague hints at the need for consultation with certain social actors, envisages the explicit and substantial involvement of consultative

\textsuperscript{7} Benita Ferrero-Waldner, \textit{Political reform and sustainable development in the South Caucasus: the EU’s approach}, “Caspian Outlook 2008” Bled Strategic Forum, Bled, Slovenia, 28 August 2006

bodies, the social partners or civil society organisations in the implementation of the policies covered by this report.⁹

The ECOSOC expresses the doubts whether the bureaucratic approach taken in the ENP can guarantee the success: “Euro-Mediterranean partnership and the ENP presuppose stability, peace, shared values and the development of dialogue. None of these objectives can be achieved in a stable way solely through the action of institutions or administrations.”

While the European Parliament took global approach, the Committee of the Regions goes ‘locally’ and “stresses the importance that local and regional governments has to play in this process and is concerned at the absence of any substantive mention and defined role for local and regional governments within the policy”.¹⁰

The threats to the ENP are twofold, and come from 1/its own internal weaknesses, and from 2/ the politico-social deficits in the partner countries.

Of course, the ENP is still in her infancy and too young to be guilty for all evils but, nevertheless, that gives some indication of its present real ability to influence the course of events, to stabilize the situation or to promote peace in the region.

The ENP aims at democratization and, consequently, Europeanization, but it still remains to be seen whether European concept of democracy is applicable in the target area:

Through its new ‘neighbourhood policy’ idea, the EU sets out in principle to extend its gravitational field in favour of democracy and human rights, but without the incentive of accession perspectives it seems most uncertain whether this can work. This reluctance to extend further the perspectives for EU enlargement is driven by concern that the EU itself would become ungovernable, which would in turn destroy the magnetism of its field of gravity.¹¹

For the most of Muslim partner countries ‘democratization’ means ‘Europeanization’ which is symbol of un-welcomed ‘westernization’ or tolerated ‘modernization’. Eastern European Orthodox and Caucasus old nations feel

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⁹ European Economic and Social Committee, REX/202, The role of consultative bodies and socio-occupational organisations in implementing the Association Agreements and in the context of the European Neighbourhood Policy, Brussels, 16 September 2005.
Europeans. Armenia and Georgia are the oldest Christian states. The partner countries are clearly different one from another in terms of culture and religion, in a way they perceive democracy and “Europe”. Some of them (6) have vocation éuropeenne, some are democratic or quasi-democratic or authoritarian, some would welcome westernization, some exclude it. The diversity of ENP’s area, is denied by no one. So, is one single frame of “European Neighbourhood Policy”, most suitable one for such different pictures? There was no serious debate on the reasons for and the degree of differentiation:

“…that can be heard in the Brussels institutions that the member states have been worried about the way the ENP was developing, because the Commission was taking too much into its own hands. The EU’s new neighbourhood policy is a somewhat ambiguous attempt to set in motion the Europeanisation of its partner states. The idea of Europeanisation fits well the current political objectives of Ukraine. For the Arab states of the Mediterranean, one may aim at notions of a Euro-Mediterranean identity, which already has some resonance in countries such as Morocco or Tunisia. The EU’s power to influence its neighbours is clearly strongest for those European states that have membership aspirations, even when this is not reciprocated for the time being by the EU. It is less obvious whether the same logic can work in the much weaker setting of close neighbourly relations, and this lies at the heart of the case.”

The success of democratization and modernization policy of the European Union in case of Central Europe in the 1990s, can hardly be repeated in case of present neighbourhood policy. There was a feeling of community and general trust on both sides, geared and fuelled by membership perspective for Central European countries. All ENP’s partners (Israel is different case) do not return to democracy, as the countries of Central Europe, despite all deficiencies, did. They neither know nor practice democracy and the ruling elites have no great appetite and respect for it. There was a cross-regional cooperation in ECE along non disputed borders (The Visegrad Group, The Stability Pact for Europe etc.) – what is not the case with the countries covered by ENP presently: many hot and frozen conflicts flowing from disputed borders, ethnic and religious tensions. In the result, mistrust and tensions

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prevail among partner countries themselves and among the UE and its neighbours. Those differences are regrettably real and firmly based on different cultural, social, economic, and political structures of both partners. This raises the question of policy’s differentiation and the universal applicability of Western model of democracy and modernization. Not only President G. W. Bush methods of democracy promotion by force, but also European soft power promotion concepts, are being questioned by the American and European experts:

“…the problem of jihadist terrorism will not be solved by bringing modernization and democracy to the Middle East. The Bush administration's view that terrorism is driven by a lack of democracy overlooks the fact that so many terrorists were radicalized in democratic European countries. It is highly naive to think that radical Islamists hate the West out of ignorance of what the West is. Modernization and democracy are good things in their own right, but in the Muslim world they are likely to increase rather than dampen the terrorist problem in the short run.”

There are many reasons to think that present political elites in most ENP’s partner countries do not share fully our interest in democratization and modernization of their countries along European concepts (Europeanisation), and see them as a potential threats for their regimes. Until both sides will not work on similar assumptions concerning the implementation of binding agreements with the goodwill and all due efforts, according to their spirit and letter, respect the independent judiciary and the separation of powers, and the separation of state from religion, the results of political dialogue will be limited. This is real problem because the need of cooperation is obvious. At the same time, the ENP cooperating with the present regimes, may find itself in a position of the supporter of façade democracy in the neighbouring regions. Also, one may argue that technocratic approach may lead

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14. R. Cooper, The Breaking of Nations. Order and Chaos in the Twenty-First Century, London 2004, p. 178: “But after the tyrant has fallen, the problems begin (...) behind every well-functioning democracy lie not just constitutions and institutions but a series of unwritten rules: that the army does not seize power, that the courts are politically neutral, that the losers in elections do not take to the hills, that certain levels of social justice will be preserved, that some balance among different communities will be preserved, that those in power will govern (up to a point) for the good of the country and will keep personal enrichment within bounds. (...) The difficulty is that these sorts of understandings cannot be exported, imposed or taught, even by the most benevolent foreign friend.”
to a superficial Europeanisation, with actions taken by partner countries sufficient for the Commission to make ticks on its checklist of formal requirements.\textsuperscript{15}

Lack of political parties and solid institutions makes the situation in the post-Soviet and Muslim/Arab world comparable, despite all differences in the façade’s ornamentation:

“\textit{In both the eastern and the southern neighbourhood of the EU, a type of party has emerged, the ‘party of power’ characterised by its dependence on the state, the absence of ideology and the linkage with specific sectoral groups. Examples of such parties can be found in Ukraine during the reign of President Kuchma and in present-day Egypt. The ideological weakness of parties of power and their dependence on the state is both a symptom and a cause of the failure of democratic consolidation. Because they prevent the emergence of a multi-party system based on competing ideological-programmatic currents, these parties and their legacies should be seen as an important stumbling block in the transition towards and consolidation of democracy. (...) Western policy-makers should support the formations of such parties. Equally, parties should be encouraged to translate ideological precepts into coherent policy positions, so as to achieve in the long run the shift in loyalties from clientelistic practices to programmatic principles.}”\textsuperscript{16}

To pursue the democratic reforms in practice will not be easy because the lack of coherence, may be seen not only in the target regions but also within the EU itself. This makes the EU’s official neighbourhood policy a subject to ambiguous interpretations - at least, by the majority of member states - that claims it is a foreign policy, and various partner states that view it as a pre-accession strategy:

“The EU also reveals fairly profound divergences and ambiguity of priorities in relation to democracy promotion. These divergences are different, however, from those found in the US (hard power realists versus soft power diplomats). The

\textsuperscript{15} M. Emerson, \textit{Democratisation in the European Neighbourhood}, CEPS, Brussels 2006: “... democratisation has to be seen first and foremost as a home-grown process. The gravitational forces of influence and incentives emanating from the European Union, pulling these states into democracy, are themselves important (...), but still ones that have to take second place behind the domestic driving forces for political reform.”

individual member states of the EU are naturally inclined to give priority to neighbours that they are closest to geographically. This dictum also often relates to historical experiences that resonate in the foreign policy reflexes of national capitals. Thus France, Spain and Italy always put the Mediterranean high on the agenda; Germany, the Baltic and Central European states are most interested in their northern neighbours, while the UK still looks across the Atlantic. Nevertheless, these obvious interests flowing from geographical, historical and cultural proximities provide no simple indicator of whether the member states in question will be harder or softer, or more or less vigorous in democracy promotion in various areas of the neighbourhood. The historical colour of these close relationships has to be brought into play. Former colonial powers tend to be hesitant to intervene politically in their former colonies, as in the case of France and Spain in the Maghreb. The legacy of World War II makes Germany very reluctant to see the EU take a strong position towards Israel over issues of international law, and this may also partly explain a rather soft line towards Putin’s de-democratising Russia. On the other hand, the Baltic and Central European states, having been occupied by the Soviet Union, reveal the opposite logic, with a much greater inclination to make points of political principle towards Russia.\(^{17}\)

As of now, the balance of obligations in relation to incentives is too heavy for the policy to achieve strategic leverage in the sense of Europeanisation and transformation of the target states. The lack of membership perspective and EU high demands of political, economic and social nature, which are, after all, politically sensitive and risky for the parties of power in the target countries, make the ENP partners’ much less attracted by European weapons of mass attraction. The experience gained since 2004 shows that the stick and carrot policy (explicit political conditionality) works much less efficiently in countries ruled by the parties of power. The carrot is definitely too small while the stick is, practically not envisaged, but the price for avoiding its own rules may be high for the ENP:

In practice, the EU has never punished miscreants: one or another member-state has always found a reason for wanting to excuse the guilty government. The neighbourhood policy is supposed to get round this problem by introducing the

\(^{17}\) M. Emmerson et al., Reluctant Debutante..., op. cit., p. 6.
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The concept of ‘positive conditionality’: neighbours that perform well will gain access to extra money and benefits from the EU.\(^\text{18}\)

In the end of 2006, the signs of the European Neighbourhood Policy’s own weaknesses are numerous:

1. weakness of strategy,
2. lack of political will,
3. overall strict bureaucratic rules,
4. insufficient human and financial resources,
5. inter-institutional tensions\(^\text{19}\),
6. no incentives for cross-regional cooperation and for SME,
7. poor information coverage (both, within the EU and ENP area),
8. lack of differentiation ("all eggs in one basket"),
9. no role for the US and other important partners,
10. national diplomacies of member states’ not involved.

The cumulative effect of the above weaknesses, combined with the politico-social deficits in the target countries, makes

"…that the European Union has decided to continue with its traditional policy towards this area. Such a policy is limited to achieving partial political reform, rather than a genuine democratic transition. This statement is based, in particular, on the fact that the Commission has not translated into political priorities the necessity to respect the principle of the separation of powers, to increase parliament powers, to strengthen the role of political parties, to guarantee judicial independence and legal accountability, and to guarantee the equal implementation of human rights. Thus (...) it does not seem possible to affirm that the European Union is moving towards a new and more successful strategy for democratization in the Southern Mediterranean. The EU approach to democracy and human rights in this region


seems to continue to be very cautious and it is not possible to assess whether it will be credible…”

2. The European Union needs the United States - as well as Russia, Turkey, Iran and China - to make the ENP a long-perspective success.

One may be very critical on the US' present approach to the use of force in promotion of democracy, but it was a history, geography and global economy which made the US an important player in the region covered by the ENP, on a scale often greater than that of EU. To ignore or neglect the role of US in ENP area is an ostrich’ policy of eyes’ closing not to see the embarrassing problem. However, the ENP ignores the US presence and influence in the regions of ENP. It remains unclear why ENP does not follow EU Strategy: Secure Europe in a Better World, which stresses the inescapable need for “working with partners” and pointing out that: there are few if any problems we can deal with on our own”:

The transatlantic relationship is irreplaceable. Acting together, the European Union and the United States can be a formidable force for good in the world. Our aim should be an effective and balanced partnership with the USA. This is an additional reason for the EU to build up further its capabilities and increase its coherence.

While ENP stresses “important role for Russia”, and rightly so, sees no role for the US and this is evident weakness of this strategy. Thus, the neighbourhood policy has no basic link with EU Strategy on which ENP is politically grounded. The interests of the United States in the regions covered by the ENP, are no secret. Leading American strategists and politicians, from Henry Kissinger to Zbigniew Brzezinski, lost no occasion to point, that:

“The Middle East lies at the crossroads of three continents. Because of the area’s strategic importance (...) for the US a diplomatic role in the Middle East is not a preference but a matter of vital interest: - because of our historical and moral commitment to the survival and security of Israel; - because of our important concerns in the Arab world, an area of more than 150 million people (300 million in 2006 – A.H.) and the site of the world’s

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largest oil reserves; - because perpetual crisis in the M. East would severely
strain our relations with our most important allies in Europe and Japan.”

The same applies to Northern Africa, Southern Caucasus and Ukraine in the
beginning of the twenty first century. Zbigniew Brzezinski, 30 years after Kissinger’s
remarks, identifies an arc of global instability in the southern and eastern belt of
Europe, almost exactly matching the area covered by the ENP, stressing that:
“Ultimately, America can look to only one genuine partner in coping with the Global Balkans:
Europe”. While he insists that Middle East is strategically vital to America, he argues
strongly that the American-European rivalry in the region would be destructive for
both, adding that:

“Somewhat the same considerations apply to the volatile region of the
Caucasus. Formerly under exclusive Russian imperial control, it now includes
three independent but insecure states (Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan)... The region (...) has also been the traditional focus of power rivalries among
Russia, Turkey, and Iran”, which presently block the free world’s initiatives:
“Yet without some active external involvement, the internal social, political,
ethnic, and religious conflicts of the Caucasus will not only continue to fester
but are likely to erupt into periodic violence...”

Most European thinkers and practitioners are of similar opinion, arguing for
more US’ presence in the EU’s vital security area:

“The problem for the Middle East and Africa has been not too much
America but too little (...)To sustain a long-term commitment in difficult
areas such as Africa and the Middle East the widest possible coalition will be
needed: a global coalition for security and democracy.”

Who is more interested and better prepared to initiate the process of global
neighbourhood if not Europe? The transatlantic cooperation could become the most
solid fundament and the essential part of this voisine mondiale. The ENP seems to be
the best suited policy of the EU to work with the US. This lack of coordination and
the policy of “not seeing the US” promises no success but clashes on many fields
and will weaken the ENP’s potential in many sectors: 1/ security (terrorism, non-

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proliferation regimes, organized crime), 2/ energy and environment, 3/ visa and immigration policies and procedures, 4/ political dialogue, 5/ assistance and financial/technical support, 6/ trade regimes, 6/ culture, education, information, technology. Of course, the EU-US cooperation will need power-sharing, what may be difficult, as we know from the past, but also may create a “formidable force for good” when it is founded on the cooperation. Also, there are many arguments that the European Neighbourhood Policy might offer better chances of success if it is implemented in a way which combine - at least, do not contradict - the parallel efforts and resources of the EU and United States:

- more resources in terms of human, finance, material, military, and policing power;
- more trade and investments;
- assistance better targeted;
- parallel programming and monitoring (“think globally, act locally”).

From the American perspective, there is a room and the need for EU-US cooperation in the wider Black Sea region and Greater Middle East, which in today’s world begin “to look like a core component of West’s strategic hinterland”:

“Today, all too many people see Russia as a reason for the West not to engage in the wider Black Sea region — for fear that engagement will generate new tensions with Moscow. The opposite may actually be the case. The long-term goals of the West are to support the democratization of the Russian state and to encourage Moscow to shed its age-old zero-sum approach to geopolitics. A policy that essentially cedes the Black Sea to Russian influence is likely to retard both. The anchoring and integration of the countries of the Black Sea to the West is likely to enhance both.(…) Once again, the West faces the dilemma that a strategy aimed at further extending stability will in all likelihood be seen by many Russians as hostile. And once again, the West will have to reject such thinking and instead be prepared to defend its own integrationist logic.”25

Despite the fact, that neither the United States nor the EU have made this region a priority nor have they identified strategic objectives there, and the Euro-Atlantic cooperation in the area is weak, the Black Sea region needs to be at the forefront of the Euro-Atlantic agenda. The energy supplies also calls for EU-US cooperation:

The wider Black Sea region straddles and indeed dominates the entire Euro-Asian energy corridor from trans-Ukrainian oil and gas pipelines running to the markets in Europe’s north to the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline running to the Mediterranean. A new Euro-Atlantic strategy geared towards anchoring and stabilizing the region can potentially bring the vast energy reserves of the Caspian Basin and Central Asia to European markets on multiple, secure, and environmentally safe routes. Not only will these energy supplies secure the prosperity of a politically independent Europe for decades to come, but the construction and maintenance of these routes will provide an important economic stimulus to the economies that were left behind in the revolution of 1989.\textsuperscript{26}

Some experts go even further and see the role for NATO in solving numerous frozen conflicts which undermine the stability of the region:

Much as NATO responded to the changed geopolitical circumstances of the Visegrad and Vilnius states, it must develop a comprehensive Black Sea strategy that complements the political objectives of the European Union. (…) North America and Europe, working through the OSCE and the United Nations, must step up and make a concerted effort to resolve the frozen conflicts that continue to plague the region, thereby setting the stage for the withdrawal of Russian troops who have remained since the end of the Cold War. Persistent conflict and occupying forces are childhood cancers in relation to the development of peaceful and prosperous regions. In place of economic development, a frozen conflict will substitute criminal enterprise and trafficking. In place of a shared regional approach to security cooperation, Russian military bases have only fostered the proliferation of arms, a climate of intimidation, and protection rackets. (…) it is time to make the resolution of the frozen conflicts from Transdnistria to Nagorno-Karabakh a top priority of our diplomacy with Moscow. Such steps can help contribute to a new dynamic of reform in the region. To be sure, the impetus for reform and change must come from within these countries, but the West can both assist in that process and help create a foreign policy environment that reinforces such trends.\textsuperscript{27}

\textsuperscript{26} R. Asmus…, op. cit.
\textsuperscript{27} R. Asmus, The Black Sea region… see also: G. Harpaz, The Obstacles and Challenges that Lie ahead for a Successful Implementation of the ENP as a Social Engineering and Peace-Promotion Instrument, The Israeli Association for the Study of European Integration, Working Paper 2/2004, Hebrew University, Jerusalem, p. 31: “The EU, relying on soft power instruments, and the United States, relying more on coercive instruments, must learn to act together in order to bring peace in the Middle East.”
For any foreign or external policy to reach the level of strategy, the connection between the democracy, development and security, must be clearly made and promoted. Yet, the security sector reform in the vast region so unstable as the south-eastern belt of Europe is almost untouched in the ENP, while UE Strategy is very clear on this point:

Security is a precondition of development. Conflict not only destroys infrastructure, including social infrastructure; it also encourages criminality, deters investment and makes normal economic activity impossible. A number of countries and regions are caught in a cycle of conflict, insecurity and poverty.

“Although - the Action Plans in the context of the ENP include some requirements that can be linked to democratic governance of the security sector”
- generally, the promotion of democracy in the ENP is not linked to security sector reform. Probably, this inconsistency resulted from the fact that in the ENP area “the EU is confronted with the question of how to promote democracy and security sector governance with partners that are reluctant or unwilling to reform”.28

Yet, the need for efficiency in the promotion of security sector governance in this inflammable region, calls for EU – US (NATO?) cooperation. The Euro-Atlantic dimension of the ENP seems unavoidable, to make the ENP a strategy. Until now, the security sector reform in the region is a victim of both:

- the EU gradualist and low-key approach to political reform and democratization in the context of security;
- weak EU-US cooperation resulting from their diverging threat perceptions and related policies, mainly in the context of counter-fighting the terrorism.

The above mixture makes the ENP more placebo than a strategy. The ENP has failed to become a real promoter of cooperative security, what resulted in “an implicit agreement to keep political reform and security sector governance issues off the common agenda”. But avoiding to tackle these sensitive issues will also have the price to be paid:

“the EU has been de facto supporting precisely the status quo regimes that play a part in putting the region at risk by undermining civil and political rights, and human and social development (...) the endurance of more or less authoritarian regimes has created a vicious circle whereby the democratic deficit breeds fundamentalism and fundamentalism provides the justification for authoritarianism.”

And again, the need for US - UE cooperation in the form of “…concerted effort by all actors involved”, is recommended: “American traditional leverage in the Middle East, accompanied by EU’s relations with the countries in the region which have suffered less from the “war against terror”, could together provide a strong stimulus for change.”

The EU, in its eastern and southern neighbourhood, should develop an approach that positions security sector governance in the broad framework of development cooperation, democracy and human rights promotion as well as conflict prevention, crisis management and peace-building. The good message is that European Commission starts to acknowledge the important role of the security sector reform for the peaceful stabilization of the ENP regions. Although Commissioner B. Ferrero-Waldner admitted that “The European Neighbourhood Policy is not in itself a conflict prevention or settlement mechanism, she concluded, however, that:

Resolving or at least de-escalating the conflicts must be the first priority, but their sustainable resolution is largely dependent on deepening and anchoring democratic and economic reform throughout society. ENP tackles the underlying issues which enable conflicts to fester: bad governance, underdevelopment and insecurity. But only if society as a whole participates in this transformation process will the region begin to prosper”.

These are promising remarks from European Commission and they open strategic perspective for its beloved child: the ENP is on European Union’s security and it cannot succeed without having conflict solving mechanism. It should start from good diplomacy and might develop further as a process of national and regional

30 H. Hanggi and F. Tanner, op. cit., p. 83
reconciliation. The peace making in today’s world is more social than military phenomenon in nature, which involves and engages people, opens the perspective of justice, stability and prosperity. And here is the ground for Action Plans. There is no other way round and this is basic experience of European integration in its relation to peace and external activity.

Russia’s important role in the implementation of the ENP deserves openness and attention. Again, we may be very critical on the quality of “order oriented” democracy in Russia and her past or neo-imperial sentiments, but this is a history and geography which makes Russian Federation an important player in the wider Black Sea region, including the littoral states of the Black Sea, Moldova, and the Southern Caucasus countries of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia (that borders with Chechnya!). Russia has the potential to undermine the implementation of the ENP in this region, at the same time being herself vulnerable to serious threats related to ethnic and religious prejudices combined with the weakness and brutality of the parties of power. Russia’s relations with Turkey and Iran, two another strategic players in the region, will keep much impact on the ENP. The Russian expert observes with the calm rationale:

“Russia regards the ENP as too condescending – in so far as the EU has tried to apply it or Russia itself – and as too competitive with its own perceived interests in the common neighborhood.(…) For Russia to take an interest in neighboring countries is not only natural but imperative. Just as it is for the EU.(…) The EU needs to engage more constructively with its eastern neighborhood. And Russia has to develop a more enlightened view of its ‘national interest’ in countries such as Ukraine and Belarus, and in ‘frozen’ conflicts Moldova and Georgia (…) namely Transdnistria, Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Nagorno-Karabakh.

EU-Russia cooperation will not be easy but, author concluded, “it also offers them an opportunity for reflection and learning from past mistakes.” Russia, most probably, confronts the same dictum that Z. Brzezinski formulated earlier for US: “Ultimately, America can look to only one genuine partner in coping with the Global Balkans: Europe”. Good cooperation will pose a challenge for both sides. Highly centralized and uniform Russian Federation presently confronts the deficit of wish and capacity to cooperate

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32 D. Trenin, *Russia, the EU and the common neighbourhood*, Centre for European Reform essays, September 2005 ([www.cer.org.uk](http://www.cer.org.uk)).
along ENP lines. For the European Union, a challenge comes from the different historical and geographical perspectives presently dividing 25 (27 soon) member states of the EU, on how to define the political and legal frame for the partnership with Russia. On both sides, the soft and hard security issues and energy supplies, will remain in the center of relationship. For this reason, the value and the credibility of European - Russian partnership will be tested best in the process of ENP’s implementation.

3. Conclusions

European Neighbourhood Policy, after two years in operation, in the end of 2006, remains to suffer from the lack of vision and inadequate resources. The greatest potential method of the ENP: horizontal, multifaceted approach characteristic for the External Relations of the European Union, combining Common Foreign and Security (Defence) Policy, development policies, trade, assistance and conditionality etc., was not fully explored. The strategy level has not been reached, and the ENP’s numerous invocations to the EU Strategy, Secure Europe in a Better World, remain verbal. The United States are consequently ignored as a potential partner. The “important” role for Russia is not clear and member states diverge on this point. Democracy promotion is weak and ambiguous, if not opportunistic, and not related to political reforms. The security sector reform is neglected practically by EU’s low-key approach and the lack of political will. The ENP has no conflict-solving capacity. The plans and incentives for the cross-regional cooperation remain of secondary importance. The national diplomacies of member states are not involved in the ENP activities. The information coverage is poor. The issue of differentiation between the partner countries needs urgent decision from the member states. Present, single politico-geographical frame seems too narrow for sixteen target countries so different in all terms, belonging to three civilizations.

Yet, at the same time, European Neighbourhood Policy brought new and worthy initiatives. First of all, the European Union has developed coordinated and systematic efforts to know our southern and eastern neighbours better. Thus, the learning process, equally important for both sides, has been started. The regular formal contacts, mainly between authorities, have been established, and the political dialogue was initiated on the European Union’s level. Many new instruments of technical and financial assistance have been developed and offered to the neighbours. The cultural and academic exchanges are being supported by the ENP.
The values promoted by the ENP cannot flourish without democratic reforms in most partner countries. This unspeakable truth is, probably, the prime source of ambiguity of the ENP. The European Neighbourhood Policy is not politically neutral – contrary, it is committed to democracy and freedom. Hence, the need for the ENP to spread the wings of strategy. The ENP will need creative thinking and inventive forms of activity to meet the planned goals. It will need the courage and patience, empathy, more determination and resources. The diplomatic corps of the member states should be more involved. The ENP is a global policy played in the area which is pivotal for transatlantic security. Hence, the need for reliable partners. Ultimately, for the EU looking for allies, the most genuine partner, remain United States of America.\(^{33}\) Russia will stay both, obvious and enigmatic partner for the ENP. Turkey and Iran are strategic partners of the EU/ENP, designated to these roles by geography and demography, by history and religious allegiances. They have more leverages in Caucasus and Middle East than the European Union has.

A neighbourhood is the oldest element of any external action and people’s security: we will never stop to deal with our neighbours. The neighbourhood policy is sort of action that, once started, never ends, and cannot be stopped. To make the world around us more friendly and democratic, stable and prosperous, remains perpetual and important goal of the European Union in its neighbourhood policy.

\(^{33}\) See footnote no 23