



EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY:
POLITICAL ISSUES

COMMON INTERESTS,
SHARED VALUES

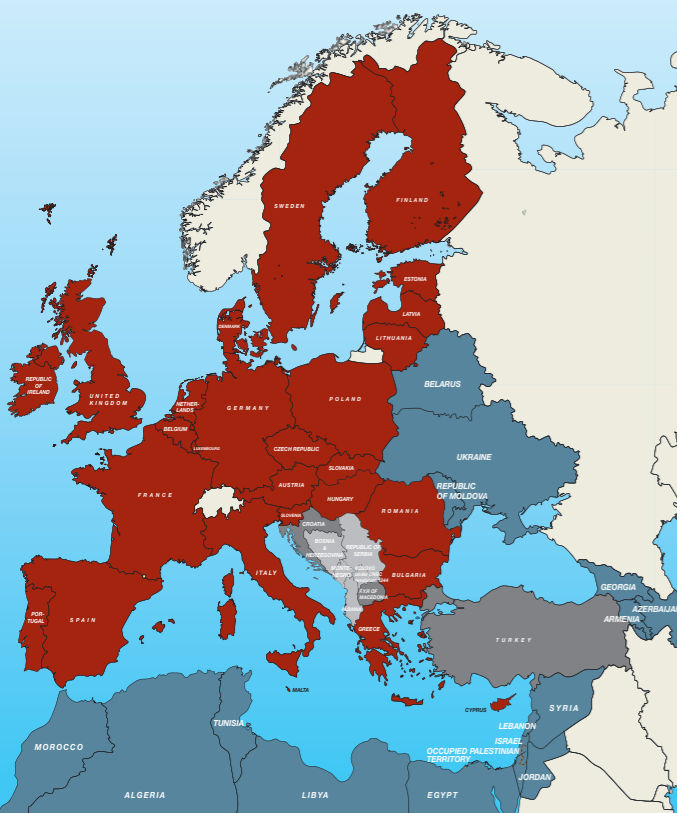
European Neighbourhood Policy

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- EU Member States
- ENP partner countries
- Candidates for EU membership
- Potential candidates for EU membership



Helping Ukraine go with the flow of migration

Ukraine shares some 500 kilometres of the EU's eastern border. In addition, it borders three non-EU countries, including a 1 500-km frontier with the Russian Federation. This makes it an ideal transit spot for irregular migration to the Union – over 30 000 unregistered migrants attempted to enter the country in 2007 – which places a massive strain on the country's resources.

The Ukrainian Ministry of Internal Affairs and other authorities are co-operating with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) on an EU-supported programme to improve the government's ability to manage migration flows.

The programme supports a wide range of activities, from building physical infrastructure to training and research, in order to help Ukraine develop a comprehensive system for managing migration.

New frontiers in border management

The programme also provides training to improve the skills of border guards and other personnel dealing with migrants. The State Border Guard Service works with their Hungarian and Polish counterparts on recruitment, training and career-development systems, as well as on improving legislation.

"These projects have laid the foundation for a modern human resources management system," says Jeffrey Labovitz of the IOM, the international migration watchdog. "IOM welcomes the Ukrainian efforts to reform in line with EU standards. Together, we can ensure that our assistance builds upon the foundations of fundamental change that the service is working to achieve."

"This is one of the first programmes that does more than just provide equipment," observes Oleksandr Panchenko of the State Border Guard Service. "We use the reports prepared by EU experts to raise our own capacities and capabilities. We have a strategy that will make us fully compliant with EU standards by 2015."

Making the right moves

Millions of Ukrainians now work abroad and many others are attracted by the idea. However, a lot of them go illegally and this makes them vulnerable to exploitation by human traffickers and unscrupulous employers. Centres for migrant advice (CMAs) help Ukrainians to make informed choices and provide them with practical and legal support.

With the aid of these centres, hundreds of Ukrainians have found legal work opportunities abroad and have managed to extract themselves from difficult situations. Oleg, who had once lost a substantial amount of money pursuing a fake job abroad, was able to find a decent and legal employment in the Czech Republic.

Natalya, while working legally in Denmark, was refused her wages by a local employer. A CMA put her in touch with a free Danish legal advice service for migrants which solved the litigation.

"All nations are equal." – Migrants' Day Fair



The majority of European Union citizens, a recent survey found, are in favour of closer co-operation with neighbouring countries. They believe that closer ties could strengthen peace and democracy.

This is precisely what the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) is about. Developed in 2003/2004 with the aim of drawing the enlarged EU and our neighbours closer together, the ENP is about taking concrete action to support reforms and to enhance prosperity: to improve the daily lives of people in our neighbourhood.

So how does it work? The EU and each of its neighbours agree on how to build closer relations and support reforms over a three-to-five-year period. The joint commitments are spelled out in so-called Action Plans. Expertise and funding (almost €12 billion from 2007 to 2013) is available under the 'European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument' (ENPI) to assist with modernisation and reform.



Ideals in action

Democracy and human rights are core values of the European Union. Moreover, the rule of law is indispensable for sustainable long-term development and prosperity. For these reasons, the European Neighbourhood Policy is founded on a mutual commitment to promote human rights and democracy.

The EU supports partner governments and civil society in their political reform efforts: from legislative reform to guaranteeing press freedom; from helping the victims of political oppression to combating torture.

The jointly agreed ENP Action Plan enables each country to focus on the most important priorities. Political dialogue on issues of mutual concern, such as migration and terrorism, are also an important part of the Neighbourhood Policy.



Transforming a painful legacy

The so-called 'Years of Lead', which lasted from the 1960s to the 1980s, were a difficult chapter in Morocco's modern history. This period witnessed the systematic targeting of dissidents and wide-scale crackdowns on protesters.

Now, as part of his democratisation efforts, Morocco's king, Mohammed VI, has sought to heal the wounds caused by this painful period. Since 2004, the Equity and Reconciliation Commission has helped reconcile and compensate victims of abuses and atrocities.

But it was not just individuals who suffered during the Years of Lead. Certain rebellious regions were left behind through a policy of socio-economic neglect. One such area was the working class Mohammadi district in Casablanca, Morocco's commercial hub.

As in other parts of the country, the EU is supporting a multifaceted initiative to revive and rejuvenate this once dynamic neighbourhood, which has given Morocco many of its top names in literature, music, art and sport.

Repairing the damage

"We back projects that help to repair the damage that has been done to this community, such as youth and women's groups, housing associations, health dispensaries and cultural centres," explains Fatna el-Bouih, a civil rights activist and former dissident who coordinates the committee. "My role is to ensure that all these projects complement one another."

The revival of the local youth centre, which was established in the 1950s, is one of the projects receiving support. "In the past, this centre has graduated generations of actors, poets, writers and playwrights," one volunteer declares proudly.

Today, the centre, which is evolving to meet the needs of a new generation, is again a lifeline for young people in the impoverished district. There, boys and girls can play a host of sports, from volleyball to wrestling, receive music lessons from leading musicians, take part in cultural events, and even learn hip hop and break-dancing.



Nidal Mansor

Easing the birth pangs of a free press

While press freedom has progressed in Jordan, complex legislation, legal ambiguities and a lack of awareness of the law mean that journalists can still unwittingly fall foul of the system.

Given the media's important role, it is crucial that Jordanian journalists receive sufficient legal protection to carry out their professional work without fear of reprisal. "The media is the cornerstone of reform and democracy," says Nidal Mansor, president of the Centre for Defending the Freedom of Journalists (CDFJ). "For that reason, we decided to set up a unit to defend the legal rights of journalists."

Born defenders

With EU support, in 2002, the CDFJ set up its media legal aid unit, Melad, which means 'birth' in Arabic. "Melad is truly a birth. It is the birth of something new for journalists after years of struggle. It is the first project to offer journalists free legal aid in the Arab world," Mansor notes.

Not only does Melad represent journalists in the courts free of charge (more than 50 cases in 2007 alone), but it also provides them with free consultations, as well as information and training on their legal rights.

The unit also carries out advocacy work, both in Jordan and other Arab countries, to try to improve the legal climate and bring it up to international standards. This includes proposing legislation and amendments to existing laws which limit press freedom. "When we recently proposed an alternative draft press bill, conservative members of parliament were taken aback by this novel intervention," recalls Mansor.

Melad also seeks a broader reach across the Arab world. "We'd like to transform Melad into a regional project encompassing countries with similar press freedoms, like Egypt, Morocco and Lebanon," Mansor hopes.

Breaking the torture taboo

In the past, Jordan's human rights record had come in for international criticism, and torture was identified as one of the problem areas. Following a report from the UN Special Rapporteur on torture in 2006, the Jordanian government and civil society decided to redouble their efforts to eradicate the practice.

At the forefront of this campaign is the Jordanian non-governmental organisation (NGO), Adaleh (Justice), which has launched an EU-backed project to monitor cases of abuse and to advocate against torture. "Torture is a sensitive issue in Jordan and Jordanians find it hard to accept that it goes on," explains Adaleh's Luna Sabbah. "We are the first local NGO to address the issue, and so we have to tread carefully."

Out in the open

"The fact that we have brought on-board the minister of justice, civil society, the police and security services, forensic doctors, government officials and other stakeholders is a major achievement," Sabbah stresses.

In addition, Adaleh has produced the first-ever comprehensive local report to identify where incidences of torture have occurred so that action could be taken to end future occurrences.

"And for the first time, Jordan has a legal definition of torture on its books," says Talib el-Saqqaf, a leading Jordanian human rights lawyer who was closely involved in the report.

"There is no tolerance of torture among ordinary Jordanians and the media has taken an interest in our work," adds el-Saqqaf.

Adaleh is tapping into this sympathy. "We are creating a broad coalition to combat torture and raise awareness of the issue," says Sabbah. El-Saqqaf adds: "We also intend to set up a monitoring and documenting system through collaboration with NGOs and the judiciary."

